

## Trusting Others: Safe in Christ

By Carrie Cavanaugh

One of the most challenging issues a leader faces is determining in whom to put your trust. Trust is also something leaders need to build with their staff. But in a fallen world it seems like neither those who are on staff nor the one we see in the mirror are worthy of real trust – that is without the safety we find in Christ.

The Bible teaches us the qualities of a trustworthy person. When men were being chosen to help Moses judge the disputes of God's people, they were to be "capable . . . trustworthy men who hate[d] dishonest gain" (Exodus 18:21). Also, they are to be beyond reproach, like Daniel who "was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent" (Daniel 6:4), and thus able to avoid charges by his enemies. Also, those who have proven trustworthy with a little have earned greater trust (Luke 16:10, 19:17). In those who work for us, the Bible specifically says that they should not "talk back" or "steal" from the organization, but instead, "show that they can be fully trusted" and all this so that the gospel is more believable to others (Titus 2:9-10).

The Bible also tells us who not to trust; "Not a word from their mouth can be trusted; their heart is filled with destruction. Their throat is an open grave; with their tongue they speak deceit" (Psalm 5:9). But since everyone's "tongues practice deceit" and "ruin and misery mark their ways" (Romans 3:10-18) there is no one who can be trusted not to let us down. Moreover, God rightly warns, "Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he" (Isaiah 2:22). But to live without trusting anyone is a lonely and fearful life indeed!

We can, however, dare to trust others if our ultimate trust is in God. When we trust in God we "will have no fear of bad news . . . our heart is steadfast" (Psalm 112:7) and we "will never be put to shame" (Romans 9:33). The reason for this peace is that God is a promise keeper. Also, omnipotent, omniscient and holy, we can trust that God is capable of giving us nothing less than what is for our best.

It comes as no surprise then that one of the means of developing trust between a human leader and God's people is to prove they are God's appointed. God chose Moses to lead his people out of slavery in Egypt and in order to accomplish this task, the people needed to trust Moses – a man raised by the Egyptians and then living outside of their community for the past 40 years! God established Moses as a man to be trusted by affirming His relationship with Moses: "The LORD said to Moses, 'I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people will hear me speaking with you and will always put their trust in you'" (Exodus 19:9a). And as they saw God work through Moses in "the great power the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant" (Exodus 14:31). It was not Moses himself that was worthy of trust, but rather God working through him, and so should it be with us.

God gives us other instructions as to how to behave in a trustworthy fashion. We are told, "do not plot harm against your neighbor, who lives trustfully near you." But this is more than how to earn trust, it is the responsibility that trust demands. Likewise, "it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2). Our tongue is also important, for "a gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret" (Proverbs 11:13). For these and many other things we should strive in order to build trust with our staff and others, but we can do nothing outside of Christ. Again we are only as trustworthy as we are sanctified. May we be Spirit filled so that we can be worthy of trust, like our God.

