

Introduction

We are starting a new series in our Bible Study time called *Trustworthiness*.

- Trustworthiness: *noun* - worthy of confidence: **dependable**

I'm basing this study on a book called

The Trustworthiness of God's Words

Why the Reliability of Every Word from God Matters

Layton Talbert

In his preface, Layton Talbert notes that his book is:

NOT about: inspiration of the Bible

NOT about: apologetic defense of the canon

NOT about: how the Bible is the Word of God

but... Can We **Trust** God's Words?

I. What does it mean to trust?

A. The Bible is God's message to man:

"It is our only window into God's perspective of reality."¹

- God tells us about the past
- God tells us about the present
- God tells us about the future

Question: Can God ever fail when he speaks? No, God's word is trustworthy

Another term: Infallibility

B. Trustworthiness calls forth a response from hearers

- The question isn't, "do you believe this?"
- But "Do you rely on this?" "Do you trust this?"

¹ Layton Talbert, *The Trustworthiness of God's Words: Why the Reliability of Every Word from God Matters* (Geanies House, UK: Christian Focus, 2022), 17 [Note: most quotes will come from this book and will simply be indicated by a number in square brackets hereafter].

II. Understanding faith

A. "Faith is a kind of knowledge" [18]

1. Everyone believes something they have never "personally witnessed, experienced, or calculated" [18]
 - a. "Everyone" includes the most hardened anti-supernaturalistic atheist
 - b. The reliability of such knowledge depends on
 - 1) Accuracy of the evidence
 - 2) Accuracy of interpretation

For example, most of us don't know that much about how a car operates. Yet we make decisions based on testimony, experience, observable signs in operating our cars. (When the starter goes, I usually know what that is.)

2. "Faith begins with knowledge: acquaintance with certain necessary facts" [18]
 - a. Biblical faith depends on the Word of God being true
 - b. Biblical faith depends on my right understanding of the Word

Biblical faith starts with *knowing* what God's word says.

B. "Faith ... acknowledges (assents) that what God says is so" [19]

^{1Th 2.13} ¶ For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, **you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God**, which also performs its work in you who believe.

1. Received → accepted
2. Heard → assented (it is the word of God)

C. "Faith is a personal persuasion that acts" [19]

^{1Th 2.13} ¶ For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God*, which also **performs its work in you who believe.**

Components of Biblical Faith

Knowledge	Assent	Trust
One can have knowledge without assent or trust.	One can have assent without correct knowledge or personal trust.	One can have trust without correct knowledge or complete assent.

“How is a field tilled? By the farmer, the plow, or the horse? ... None of them individually, nor even any two of them together, can till the field; the field is plowed only when all three work in unison.” [20]

III. Sanctifying faith

“Sanctification: set apart to God and made more like Christ.” [21]

- A. A new believer (or an old believer) might find it hard to trust the everything in the Bible
1. He knows, assents, and trusts that Jesus is the Christ, the only one who can take away his sins (salvation)
 2. He may know that he should trust the Lord for his daily needs (the Bible says so): but he worries
 - a. He might know Scriptures that call for trust
 - b. He might not be able to fully trust (or even assent)

Lk 17.5 ¶ The apostles said to the Lord, “**Increase our faith!**”

2 Cor 10.15 not boasting beyond *our* measure, *that is*, in other men’s labors, but with the hope that **as your faith grows**, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you,

2Th 1.3 ¶ We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, because **your faith is greatly enlarged**, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows *ever* greater;

3. Consider Elijah

- a. 1 Kings 18: trusted God to send fire to consume his sacrifice, send rain to end the famine
- b. 1 Kings 19: didn't trust God when Jezebel issued her threats — he bolted and ran

Jas 5.17 Elijah **was a man with a nature like ours**, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

4. Consider the testimony of barren Hannah

- a. She prayed for a son in great distress and misery (1 Sam 1.6-8, 10, 15)
- b. Eli (when he understood her) blessed her with an assurance that God would grant her request (1 Sam 1.17)
- c. Hanna “went her way and ate, and her face was no longer *sad*” (1 Sam 1.18)

She changed her whole outlook, “even though nothing in her circumstances had changed.” [23]

IV. Believing and Trusting

A. Synonyms: overlapping meaning with distinctions

1. Old Testament words

Hebrew Word	LXX (Greek OT) Word
Believe = 'āman	<i>pisteuō</i> (believe)
Trust = <i>bātach</i>	<i>elpizō</i> (hope)

2. New Testament collapses both meanings into *pisteuō* (believe); hope is used in NT but not usually in the sense of trust but anticipation

B. Old Testament distinctions

1. *Believing* is predominantly an act of *thinking*, it processes information
2. *Trusting* is the choice to act on that knowledge, but with the emotional addition of *confidence*

“Some people believe airplanes can fly and [that they] do fly safely and successfully every hour of every day, but they would never dream of actually getting into one.” [24]

C. Relationship between Belief and Trust

1. Belief is not inferior and trust superior
2. They are *complementary* — “Believing is incomplete without trusting.”

“It is possible to believe without trusting — like the guy who sees planes overhead all day long yet refuses to fly, or the housewife who fusses and frets over the bills even though she believes that God provides for His own, or the father who subscribes to the doctrine that God sovereignly rules over the affairs of men and yet is constantly out of sorts over the prosperity of the wicked in society.” [24-25] (Or worries overtime about the conspiracies of politics!)

3. When you believe God’s word and put your trust in it, you approach the challenges in life with confidence
 - a. Trust decides to lean on a word from God
 - b. Trust produces confidence, security, serenity

Salvation	
Belief → <i>Deliverance</i>	Trust → <i>Assurance</i>
Result: <i>Factual security</i>	Result: <i>Felt Confidence</i>

Lack of assurance comes from “a failure to *trust* in the truth of the Gospel despite *belief* in the facts of the Gospel.” [27]