

How is life not turning out the way you planned? How can you learn to trust God in that reality?

Out of Control—Into Trust

-Going Deeper

You can't control what happens to you, but you can control who you are becoming. How can you respond to what God is doing and become the kind of person God intends you to be?

On this journey called life the only guarantee we have is that God will journey with us. Why is that the most important thing?

What does it mean when you consider that Jesus says, "Follow me." And then, doesn't give very many more details?

What will it look like for you to follow him?

When you step back and think about it, so much of our lives is about trying to gain and maintain control. We want to feel safe and secure. There's nothing wrong with that, it's just that maybe we find ourselves relying more on ourselves than God. We try to exercise control over our provision for the future, our direction for the future, our relationships, our dreams, etc. And we try to make sure that we can prevent ourselves from being attacked in any way. Admit it, that's a lot of hard work-and often times, it's a lot of effort spent with very little return.

Maybe this is why, time after time in the Scriptures, we are reminded of the importance of trusting God first and more than anything or anyone else. This has been our problem from the beginning, the lingering question, "Can you really trust God? Does He really love you and desire what's best for you?" As you think through coming out of the darkness of trying to control everything and into the light of trusting God, remember that this life is a journey that God is leading us on-we don't have all of the answers to the "why?" questions, and that needs to become ok.

Enough for today: God tells us He will provide what we need for today and then, just trust Him for tomorrow. Why do you think God operates in this way?

Read these scriptures and meditate on what they tell us about God trusting God to provide for today.

Matthew 6.9-13

Matthew 6.19-34

In what ways are you trying to store up provisions for tomorrow? How is it affecting your experience of 'today?'

How is it affecting your relationships?

Direction for the next step: God promises He will give us direction for the next step—He usually doesn't give us much more. Why doesn't He give us more?

Read these scriptures and meditate on what they tell us about trusting God for the next step.

Proverbs 16.9

Jeremiah 29.11-13

Proverbs 3.5-6

Describe the ways that you are trying to take unnecessary control of your direction. How is that affecting your awareness of and response to God's direction in your life?

Relationships: We never know which relationships will experience turmoil and generally, the more we try to control them, the better the chances for turmoil. How can we trust that God is in control when our relationships hit the wall?

Read these Scriptures and meditate on what they tell us about trusting Him when our relationships spin out of control.

Romans 12.9-21

Psalm 91.1-4

Deuteronomy 31.6

What relationships in your life are experiencing turmoil? How can you entrust them to God?

The next attack: We never know where the next attack is going to come from. How can we trust God to be our Protector and to carry us through the attack?

Read these Scriptures and meditate on what they tell us about trusting God when we are under attack.

Psalm 46

1 Peter 2.21-24

How are you being attacked? How can you trust God in the midst of the attacks?

Our dreams: We have no guarantee that our dreams are going to come true, that our dreams for us are God's dreams for us. We have this sense that if I do this for God and other people do this, then obviously, God will do this. But that's not reality. How can we learn to trust God even when life doesn't turn out the way we expected it to?

Read this statement by Phil Vischer and reflect on what it means to trust God when life doesn't turn out the way we expected it to.

. . . Beware of your dreams, for dreams make dangerous friends. We all have them—longings for a better life, a healthy child, a happy marriage, rewarding work. But dreams are, I have come to believe, misplaced longings. False lovers. Why? Because God is enough. Just God. And he isn't "enough" because he can make our dreams come true—no, you've got him confused with Santa or Merlin or Oprah. The God who created the universe is enough for us—even without our dreams. Without the better life, the healthy child, the happy marriage, the rewarding work. God was enough for the martyrs facing lions and fire—even when the lions and the fire won. And God is enough for you. But you can't discover the truth of that statement while you're clutching at your dreams. You need to let them go. Let yourself fall. Give up. As terrifying as it sounds, you'll discover that falling feels a lot like floating. And falling into God's arms—relying solely on his power and his will for your life—that's where the fun starts. That's where you'll find the "abundant life" Jesus promised. . .