

Build A Bond of Trust

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[0:00] Well, Paul Tripp, what did you expect? Six daily commitments that make for a marriage that flourishes. Marriage as it was meant to be by God's design.

! Anybody remember the first commitment that we need to make to each other? Every day it needs to become a habit. Confession and forgiveness. So we need to have this daily habit of confessing to each other and forgiving one another as needed. The second one? Saw it last week? To make a daily, on our daily agenda, to grow, to change. That involves two aspects. Pulling the weeds of the flesh and planting the seeds, the fruit of the Spirit.

And then after studying the fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5, we went through them and I told you, well, there, there's seven, one-a-day vitamins. And none of you corrected me. Pardon? Well, I only gave you six. Okay, well, that was why you didn't correct me? Okay. How many fruit of the Spirit are there listed? Nine.

Nine. Some reason I was thinking seven at that moment. And so you were very kind to me, gracious. But if I do something like that again, which I might, you don't feel shy to correct me. Yeah. Yeah. So did you complete your homework this week? Your assignment? One evening this past week, being given over just to completely considering the desires and needs and longings of your spouse?

[2:07] If not, have another week. And if you did, do it another week. Do it again. And I trust we'll see both how easy it is for us to continually think of our needs rather than the others.

And so see our need for the Holy Spirit, that he produces this kind of life in us, but also that we'll begin to see what that does for our marriages and how it does indeed build a marriage of understanding, love and of mutual joy.

Well, we come then to the third daily commitment. We will work together to build a sturdy bond of trust. A sturdy bond of trust.

And Tripp begins with a story, as many of his chapters do. Will and Krista were married during their college years. She dropped out of school so that he could continue studying. Will was too busy for her, always studying. He was also unpredictable, not doing what he said he would do.

And when she confronted him on it, he accused her of not being understanding. Something was happening inside of her that scared her. She felt herself withdrawing from Will, thinking, if I cannot trust him, if I cannot entrust the little things of life to Will, how can I entrust the big things of my heart and life to him?

[3:39] And it bothered her that he would not hear her out on her concern. Well, Will's experience was very different from Krista's. He saw himself as a dedicated and busy guy who just needed to be cut a little slack.

He wasn't irresponsible, just busy. She was too demanding rather than understanding. He was tired of not measuring up to her standard and tired of being accused of not caring.

So Will started spending more and more time at the library studying to escape. Most of the time, he talked to himself about his problems.

But the problem was that he always agreed with himself on how he saw things. Krista withdrew into a circle of friends at church and started sharing more of her heart and life with them than with Will. They didn't trust each other to place themselves into the other's hands. Their marriage was no longer a marriage in the real sense of what marriage means.

[4:43] No, there had been no adultery. There had no there had been no physical violence. No, they weren't screaming despicable things at one another. No, neither of them was a liar or a manipulator.

Their trust wasn't destroyed in an explosion of unfaithfulness. But through the drip, drip, drip of relational laziness and personal selfishness.

And because it happened this way, they didn't see it happening. Nor did they work to avert it. And I'm convinced that the story of Will and Krista is mirrored thousands of times by couples all around us.

Perhaps you're one of them. Let me encourage you to look into the mirror of the following questions. And we're going to get to those questions in a moment. But it's a story of a failure of trust.

And so this commitment is to build a strong bond of trust. Mutual trust is an essential foundation stone to any healthy marriage. Marriages thrive when we trust each other.

[5:47] Trust is being so convinced that you can rely on the integrity, strength, character and faithfulness of another that you're willing to place yourself into his or her care.

So their character is so faithful that you're willing to entrust yourself to them. That's the kind of trust that makes marriages flourish.

So here's the trust questionnaire, about 10 questions. And it'll take us probably about 10 minutes to work our way through them. Question number one. So it's asking, how is trust factor in your home? Number one, do you do what you promise in the time that you have promised? Now, whether you like it or not, whether we follow through the way that we follow through with our promises will become the barometer of your trustworthiness in the eyes of your spouse.

And that really is the way it should be. If you love her, then you will keep your word to her. She will know that she can count on you. Now, Tripp says the problem is that most of the promises that we make to one another in marriage are not just the ones that we made up here at the marriage altar, but the problem, the promises that we make are little moment promises, chores that we said we do duties that we said we'd take care of or a schedule that we said we'd keep.

[7:23] And since they're not big promises, we can think that not following through on them is no big deal and we'll have no big consequences on our marriage. But do they?

Remember, the character of a marriage is not built on three or four significant moments, but on 10,000 little moments.

And so the character you build in the little moments is the character that you carry over into the bigger moments. How did Jesus put it? He who is faithful in little can be trusted with much.

And if you can trust your spouse in the little, then you can trust them in the bigger. So that's the first question. Secondly, would your spouse say that you keep your word and are faithful to do what you said you would?

The Bible says that our own sin blinds us to what we really are. That we can easily deceive ourselves. That's one reason we need to be together. Hebrews chapter 3 tells us so that we not be deceived.

[8:39] And we don't let our hearts be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. So we need to encourage one another and exhort one another and be the eyes for one another. Lest we have an inaccurate view of ourselves and we're becoming hard in heart.

And there are none better to help us than the ones who live with us in our homes, right? Who knows you better than your spouse? Who knows the way you operate?

Who you really are when your guard is down? And so they and their eyes are helpful. Now they won't be totally objective eyes.

They'll have their own bias. But he says it will probably be much more objective than your own view of yourself. So his whole point here is take this question of your trustworthiness to your spouse.

If you really want to get a good answer and read out on it. And value their viewpoint on your reliability to do what you say. Three. Do you make excuses for failures to do what you've promised or are you ready to confess?

[9:47] Now that bounces back to an earlier commitment, doesn't it? The commitment to daily confess and forgive.

But notice here how it feeds into our trust. If when I'm confronted with an area of need in my life, I get all defensive and start making excuses for myself or even lashing out against my wife, will that encourage her to come to me?

Will she be able to trust herself to me easily? More easily or harder? Well, it's clear that these things are toxic to trust.

Self-defensiveness gives off the message that I'm more concerned about being right and more concerned about me than I am about her. So we don't build trust by defensiveness.

Rather, trust is built when we're willing to face our failures and to confess them. Such a man or woman can be trusted. Number five. Are you attentive?

[10:52] I'm sorry. Number four. Are you attentive to what your spouse sees as important? Now here, Tripp just says that love means that you take an interest in things simply because it interests your spouse.

Do you have any of those interests? That by yourself, you wouldn't take an interest in those things. But because your spouse has an interest in them, you're interested in them.

Maybe it's the 10,000 color swatches of paint that he talked about at Home Depot. You take an interest in things simply because she's interested in it.

And that builds trust. It means that he or she cares about me. And it's seen by the interest that they take in what interests me.

People will gladly entrust themselves to those who are convinced that the other is truly concerned about them and troubles themselves with what troubles them.

[11:57] So are you attentive to what your spouse sees as important? Fifth. Do you work together on planning and scheduling priorities or do you expect the other to do it your way?

Remember, God's plan in marriage is that the two become one. And that means no longer thinking independently. Not two independent thoughts, but bringing two into accord, into one.

And so that means to get from here, two minds into one. There's got to be a lot of open discussion. There's got to be a lot of give and take until we come to that decision.

So the plan, the decision is to be a blended plan reflecting the input of both partners as we have two brought into one.

But if your spouse gets the idea that you're only interested in them being a rubber stamp to what you want, that won't help trust. It won't make them to rest assured that their well-being is safe in your hands.

[13:05] So do you work together on planning and scheduling priorities? Six. Do you listen to your spouse and act on what you've heard? We're drawn toward people who listen to us.

We are more willing to open up if someone is a good listener. I remember someone just telling me how flabbergasted she was that so-and-so considered her a close friend when all she had done was listen.

And it just shows how important listening is. It causes people to trust you with their hearts and with their thoughts.

And they're much more willing to open up. Tripp speaks of how often he's heard the complaints in the conference or in the counseling room of not being heard. He just won't listen.

It's like talking to a brick wall. I'm so tired of her saying, do we have to talk about this now? The time never seems right to talk about it. And so on. He says, eventually, the one being ignored stops talking.

[14:10] And even worse, quits trusting. Listening is essential to trust. Number seven. Do you share with your spouse your thoughts, desires, hopes, dreams, and concerns?

Or is it easier for you to be quiet or to share with someone else? Yes. So, however long you've been living together, does that mean that today finds you sharing more than a year ago, ten years ago, twenty years ago?

Have you learned that you can say anything to your spouse because they approach you with a heart that's gentle, kind, understanding, sympathetic, patient? Have you seen yourself starting at opposite ends of an issue?

And have you seen honest and open communication bring you together? Do you go into the conversation confident that you'll have the other's attention and concern?

Or do you find it easier to talk honestly with someone other than your spouse? When someone outside the home becomes the replacement confident, it's a sure sign that trust has been broken down.

[15:25] Number seven. Is your spouse your best friend? Or are you withdrawing from your spouse to a protective distance? That was Will heading off to the library. If you're afraid to be honest and say what you really think, you're afraid to disagree, afraid to confront, like feeling like you're walking on eggshells, that you need to protect yourself.

Withdrawing, in some way, are signs of a trust that's broken down. And then, do you carry wrongs around with you? Or do you trust one another enough to confront and confess?

In other words, is it a safe atmosphere in which to confess your sins? Or do you fear that you'll get your head bit off if you confess? And is it a safe place to confront? Or will you pay for that big time? These are issues of trust, Tripp reminds us. And he says it could be that the problems between you remain unsolved because you don't have the bond of trust necessary to work together on a solution.

And then he asks a sobering question. Do you ever wonder if you made a mistake in marrying your spouse? If so, seek help.

[16:44] That's a serious breakdown of trust and the relationship. And then lastly, do you ever wonder what your spouse is doing when not with you?

If you need to check up on him or cross-examine her when they get home, those are indicators that you do not trust them. Trust means you know your spouse would not do anything away from you that they would not do in your presence.

A faithful spouse wins that kind of trust from their mate. Trust is living with each other, knowing that neither of you have anything to hide from the other.

So that's chapter 9. The whole chapter is given over to this questionnaire of trust to see how is the trust factor in our marriages. Chapter 10 then says how to become someone to be trusted.

Whatever our level of trust, how do we become someone to be trusted? Well, the Lord Jesus is faithful, isn't he?

[17:55] He's trustworthy. And it would be good for us to think about him for a minute. After all, faithfulness is one of the nine fruit of the Spirit. The ninefold fruit, isn't it?

Faithfulness. Trustworthiness. Trustworthiness. And the Lord Jesus was faithful, Hebrews tells us. He was a faithful son over God's house.

If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us. So he is the faithful one par excellence.

We see Peter willing to step out of a boat on water because Jesus called him to do so.

That took some faith, some trust in the Lord Jesus, didn't it? Well, he didn't just get there on the spur of the moment. There was a track record.

There was a track record. That Peter saw that the Lord never said anything untrue. That his word was always good. But whatever he said, it was always perfectly true and faithful.

[19:06] So when the Lord says, come to me, Peter, he's willing to trust him. How can we build that kind of trust in our marriages where we're completely free to entrust our entire being into the hands of our spouse?

Well, we need to prove ourselves trustworthy. Think about this book. How many times would it take for, or to put it, how many errors, times where the Bible claims something that wasn't true, how many of those would it take to upend your trust in the trustworthiness of this book?

Just one, David says. Because after that, then what happens? Well, if it was not true here, would it be true here? And so we see that unfaithfulness can begin to raise a huge question.

What happened to the perfect bond of trust between Adam and Eve when sin entered? How did their trust of each other, how was that affected by their sin?

Do you remember? Is there anything in the opening, in chapter 3, that gives you an indication that something of their trust with each other was broken down?

[20:37] What did they do as soon as they sinned? They tried to cover themselves up. And that wasn't just to hide from God. They went and hid in the trees to hide from God as well.

But there was a sense of which something came between themselves. They had been completely exposed to each other, but now there was something hiding.

And is Adam a man to be trusted now? Well, when you come before God and God says, have you eaten of the tree? What's Adam doing? Is he protecting his wife as the loving head?

He's blaming her. He's leaving her out to dry. It was the woman you put here with me. And so she finds he's not the kind of head that I can trust in. And so trust is being eroded by sin.

Now, trust is something that we readily give, something that's easily broken, and that's very costly to restore.

[21:38] It's something as well that's easy to take for granted. It must be built, maintained, protected, and restored when broken.

And that's what this chapter is about then. First of all, how do we build trust? Trust. The fact is that we usually start out with a good measure of trust in each other, or we probably wouldn't have married each other, would we?

If we didn't trust each other, we wouldn't have married each other. So we start with a sense of trust with each other. But then those early years of marriage, Tripp says, our trust is on probation, and we're watching and we're seeing, is he, is she worthy of my trust?

And we're learning how much we can trust each other. But Tripp says it's rarely a conscious goal. It's rarely something that we're consciously thinking. How will this affect my husband's trust in me? If I do this, how will that affect my wife's trust in me? He's saying this whole area of trust is rarely a conscious thing that we're pursuing throughout our day.

[22:53] Therefore, we easily damage trust without even knowing it, little by little. So what happens in marriage? Well, it exposes our selfishness. Marriage, by being brought together, we see our sin and our self comes out.

It's like putting the pot on the fire, and out comes all this that was inside, and we can start damaging each other and each other's trust.

But Tripp says how we handle our sins is the bigger thing. Not whether or not we sin. That's the given. But how we handle our sins is the ultimate issue in whether or not we will be building trust in our relationship.

Tell me how to handle our sins in a way that destroys trust. And then someone tell me how to handle it in a way that builds trust.

How would trust be destroyed in a marriage by the way you handle your sin? Sorry? Okay, relying on the flesh.

[24:04] And then once you fall in sin, then how do you handle it in a way that destroys your spouse's trust? Okay?

Not taking responsibility. What else? Hiding it. Blaming the other. Excusing it.

Blowing it off. All those things that don't take it seriously. Oh, not only does he splash his sin on me, but he doesn't own it.

That does a real number on our trust for our spouse if they won't own up to it. All right? Now, tell me how the opposite response builds trust.

And how would that build trust in your spouse? There? You're being open?

[25:11] You're being transparent? You're being open? You're being open? This person's approachable? They're not living in denial? I can trust myself to that kind of person? Unless you know that they understand weakness, and it's possible for you to come to mind.

Excellent. If you've got a spouse that understands their own sin and weakness, then it opens the way for you to feel safe opening your sin and weakness.

That's trust. That's building trust in the relationship. And it's healthy. So in the early years, we're sinning against each other a lot. Remember, we've talked about us being naive and being so young, usually, when we're married, and immature in the way that we sin against each other. But how we handle our sins is a huge matter in whether or not we're building trust in those early years. And Tripp says it's important to know that building of trust between you begins first with God. Now, we've seen this in other things with confession, that we go first to God and then to each other. It's the same thing with trust. Trust first begins with God.

[26:32] If you trust God to love you, to forgive you, to be committed to you, to never forsake you, well, then you're free to step out and to trust a spouse that isn't perfect like God and isn't always as forgiving as God.

And yet, because you know that things are well here, you can entrust yourself to your spouse. Not placing your eggs in your mate's basket, hoping that they will not drop them.

Rather, you first place your eggs in God's basket and you know that they're safe there. You know that even if your spouse fails you, God won't.

So that's what frees us to trust others who are still flawed like us so that we are not devastated with their failures. We have a Father in Heaven that understands us and has forgiven us and loves us. So, building of trust starts first with God and then is strengthened as we confess our sins to our spouse.

[27:39] So, we're building trust. What does it take? Well, it takes open, honest communication. If we've got to read between the lines to figure out what they really mean, that doesn't build trust.

We need to take words at face value. We need to keep our word. And here, Tripp says, there are simply no shortcuts to being trusted. If you're faithful in little promises, they will know they can trust you with the big ones.

If you're serious about your word in the little things, then you will be serious about it in the big things. Even as the psalmist says that the godly man speaks the truth from his heart and he keeps his oath even when it hurts.

If your wife sees, your husband sees, that you keep your word even when it hurts, see how that builds trust in the relationship and then that we face up to our failures when we don't keep our word. So, building trust, communication, open communication, open confession, keeping short accounts. [28:59] Turn to Ephesians chapter 4. Tripp says that this practical wisdom kept the struggles in their early years from completely destroying their marriage. Ephesians chapter 4, verses 26 and 27.

In your anger, do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry. And do not give the devil a foothold. So, keeping short accounts was the thing that saved the Tripp family from destroying their marriage.

because when we allow our anger to continue from one day into the next and the next, we're giving the devil a toehold, a foothold from which to launch further attacks at our family.

So, the question that Tripp asks is, what kind of things tend to happen when you give offenses time? Time to marinate in your heart?

What kind of things happen when you don't keep short accounts and deal with the matters as they come? Grow bitter?

[30:34] What else happens? What are you thinking about during all that time? Pardon? How to get even?

How you were wrong? Okay. All sorts of things, it's like the pot.

It's stewing and it's there and it's boiling up and it's more time for the evil one to suggest many other things to your heart. Remember, he's a divider.

He's a thief. He comes to steal and to destroy, to divide and offenses can easily grow in size and in importance when you just let them stew.

Your hurt grows as well. Your anger grows as well. Your bitterness grows as well. And as you look at it over and over, you're liable to over-exaggerate the problem.

[31:40] Even then, when you do finally come to talk about it, maybe you've already blown the thing way up and so now you're saying, you never this and you always that. Well, you see, that's because you had all that time for that offense to grow and fester and that creates further heat and causes the other to be further defensive because they aren't always this and are never that.

And then, they feel justified in their anger and now each are waiting for the other to give in first and the stalemate is on. So, Tripp says, Ephesians 4 was what saved our marriage because that's where we would have headed.

But we were forced to deal with our anger every day. Not to go to bed angry. Don't let the sun go down in your wrath and give the devil that foothold. Keeping short accounts.

Tells your spouse, my relationship with you is important. I don't want anything to come. I don't want to spend a day with something between us.

And that builds trust. So, we build trust in these ways. Then, we protect trust. Again, many of the same ways.

[32:59] Talking, listening, praying together. And then, we restore what's broken. Tripp says, trust is like the fine china of marriage.

It can be shattered either by years of small moment neglect or one huge moment of unfaithfulness. So, what do we do when the trust is broken?

Well, he says, first, we admit our need both to God and to one another. Then, we get help. Tripp says, when trust is broken, you're going to need to reach outside your marriage for help.

Why? Because you don't trust each other enough to work together and do the things that are necessary to get you from where you are to where you need to be. So, we need someone from the outside to hold us accountable to speak truth objectively.

And then, he says, don't give up. When trust is gone, it's a serious thing. And the temptation will be to cut and run. It'll never be any different.

[34:01] There's no hope here. But Tripp says, don't give up. Get angry. Don't give up. Get angry.

Not at your spouse, but at the sin, weakness, and failure that has broken your marriage down. And fight these things together. Stand together and fight and get angry with your sin.

And it means sticking your neck out again. What happens when we get burned? We tend to pull back, don't we? Well, I'm never going to get burned again.

No, we need to stick our neck out again, Tripp says. There are no guarantees here unless it's the guarantee that you will get burned again because we're sinners. But he says, if when the trust is broken down, we withdraw.

Then we're pulling back when we need to be moving toward our spouse. So don't let yourself be derailed.

[35:03] Be willing to take the risk. Trust God and take that risk. And when you fall, because rebuilding trust doesn't go perfectly, there are setbacks, there are moments of failure and disappointment.

Don't let them derail you. Get up and go on. Your trust is still fragile and new. But get back up and trust in the Lord and keep building.

And then, last, remember Jesus. Because ultimately, our trust is not in our husband, our wife, but it's in the Lord Jesus who's with us and for us with all of His faithfulness.

He designed marriage. It was His plan. He knows what you need. He knows how trust is to be rebuilt in your home. He has plenty of forgiveness.

The grace of forgiveness to give you. The grace of patience. The grace of love. strength of strength and wisdom. He wants your marriage to sing.

[36:03] He wants it to reflect the glory that God intended it to reflect. So we ask Him and we pray to Him and we cling to Him.

and we remember that He suffered rejection. Didn't He? Real close rejection. It was one who ate His bread with Him that lifted up His heel against Him.

He was wounded in the house of His friends, He says. That's your Savior. So He understands something about having peoples prove unfaithful to Him.

And just as He had grace to persevere through that, so He has grace to give us in rebuilding trust.

Well, commitment three is we will work together to build a sturdy bond of trust.

any other comments or questions on that commitment to each other? The importance of trust in our relationship and how it's built, how it's restored.

[37:15] Any questions or comments? Let's pray. Yes, Dare. Yeah, I think that what we've got to maintain is what Trip harped on in the video series is that I need to see myself as the biggest problem in my marriage.

And she needs to see that, he needs to see that. And as long as both are focusing on that, then there can be this growth as we look to the Lord and cast our hope on Him.

But you're right, there's got to be each one owning up to their sin. And one sin in the one tends to pull out sin in the other.

and so each has to focus on their own problems. And where that's not being done, as Trip says, I'm out of a job. I'm no longer needed here. Nobody needs help in this counseling situation.

So, you know, we can't enable one another. We need to speak truth pointedly and each side needs to own up to what that truth has to say to them. We have a trustworthy Savior and we're to be made more and more into His image and the more we are, the more our marriages will be strengthened.

[38:33] The more we fix on our Savior and His faithfulness, the more we're made like Him, that will reflect in our marriages and do them good. Let's ask the Lord for His strength.

Our faithful Lord, we've never come to You and had to say, I'm disappointed that I ever trusted in You. know whoever trusts in the Lord will never be ashamed and we've never confessed our sins but what we found You faithful and just and willing to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We've never found one of Your promises to fail. We've never heard You to say something that You did not do and if You have not yet done it, it's because You will do it in Your own time.

You've said that You are coming again and though You've not come, we believe You will come. And so we can believe every word that You've spoken to us and how blessed we are to have such a spouse, such a bridegroom.

It does enable us to just cast all of our cares upon You. It enables us to come freely to You. And so make us to know and to rely upon the love that You have for us.

[39 : 53] Make us more into Your image. Bless our marriages. Do them good. Each one strengthen them. Those that are broken down, fixed. Those that are strong make stronger. And do it all, Lord, that people might see that there is a God who is with His people and who is blessing His people. and that Your ways are right and holy and good. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.