



Sermon Discussion Guide

The Word of Trust

The Seven Greatest Words of Love – Part 7

Rick Warren

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“By this time it was about noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o’clock. The light from the sun was gone. And suddenly, the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn down the middle. Then Jesus shouted, ‘Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!’ And with those words he breathed his last. When the Roman officer overseeing the execution saw what had happened, he worshiped God and said, ‘Surely this man was innocent.’” Luke 23:44-47 (NLT)

The “Word of Trust,” “*Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!*” is the last of the “Seven Greatest Words of Love” that Jesus spoke from the cross. Jesus gave up his life voluntarily, confidently, and trusting God. His example teaches me four truths to remember in my darkest hour: (1) I have a Father in heaven who loves me, (2) my Father can be trusted, (3) my Father is taking care of things I can’t see, and (4) my Father can handle anything I put in his hands. God’s hands are big enough to bless me, strong enough to keep me eternally secure, and scarred so that he cannot forget me! Let’s *Talk It Over!*

OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.

1. Read the verse Luke 23:44-47 above from the perspective of the Roman officer. He has seen many crucifixion and this one stood out. He said, “Surely this man was innocent!” Why do you think he said it?

“For the word of the Lord holds true, and we can trust everything he does.” Psalm 33:4 (NLT)

2. Read Psalm 33:4 above. Remember a situation in your own life where you really needed someone you could trust but you thought you had no one to turn to. Now imagine how it would have felt if you had had someone that you could trust completely. Discuss in your group how different the situation could have been.

“That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.” 2 Timothy 1:12 (NIV)

3. Read the verse above. Which area in your life do you worry about? What would trusting the Lord look like for you in that area? Discuss with your group what specific steps you can take this week that demonstrate your trust in Him.

“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! I have engraved you on the palms of my hands!” Isaiah 49:15-16 (NIV)

4. In the above verse God proclaims his inability to forget us, foretelling the timeless scars Jesus would bare for us through his crucifixion. Consider a promise you have forgotten that you regret. Now imagine God’s hands engraved with unending forgiveness stretched out in love for you. If comfortable, share your regret with the group and how it makes you feel knowing that the scars on his hands are symbolic of God’s unconditional forgiveness for you.

“I think you ought to know, dear brothers, about the hard time we went through in Asia. We were really crushed and overwhelmed, and feared we would never live through it. We felt we were doomed to die and saw how powerless we were to help ourselves; but that was good, for then we put everything into the hands of God, who alone could save us, for he can even raise the dead.” 2 Corinthians 1:8-9 (TLB)

5. Consider a powerless event in your life that you successfully put into God’s hands. Share with your group the process, triggers, or signs the Holy Spirit graced you with that helped you entrust your life into his hands.

Diving Deeper (optional)

“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.” John 10:28-29 (NIV)

1. Read the verse above and discuss what Christ means by, “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish”.
2. With this verse in mind, is there anything you can do that would keep you from being eternally secure. Discuss how you would explain this to a non-believer.

REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.

Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Suggestions for This Week’s Study

- **Icebreaker:** Describe a time as a child when you were asked to trust others – perhaps with parents, siblings, classmates, or team members, etc. How it did it feel to put your trust in another? Were they trustworthy?
- **Goals:** The last thing Jesus did on the cross was to entrust his spirit into the Father’s hands. Jesus’ example teaches us truths to remember in our darkest hour: (1) we have a Father in heaven who loves us, (2) our Father can be trusted, (3) our Father is taking care of things we can’t see, and (4) our Father can handle anything we put in his hands. His hands are big enough to bless us, strong enough to keep us eternally secure, and scarred so that he cannot forget us!
- **Final Prayer:** Heavenly Father, Jesus entrusted his spirit into your hands on the cross. I don’t understand it all, but I entrust my life into your hands. I give every worry and fear, every doubt and question to you. Help me to trust that in every way you are holding me safely in your hands. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God’s wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God’s instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God’s five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn’t. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We’ve designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as “I need to spend more time in prayer.” It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, “How are you going to begin?” An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.