

THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF TRUST

NEHEMIAH – The Restorer!

I invite you to walk with me through the Old Testament and discover how God uses the stories of broken men—not perfect ones—to help us learn to trust Him.

These lives aren't just ancient history; they are windows into our own struggles and hopes. Each story leads us closer to Jesus, the one in whom all trust finds its meaning.

Along the way, your “trust muscle” will be stretched and strengthened as we explore what it means to truly follow the One who is trustworthy.

Let's take the journey together.



Series Overview

1. Goal: Strengthen trust in Jesus through Old Testament characters.
2. Theme: Who Do You Trust?
Who Do You Follow?
3. Outcome: Build trust in relationships, make discerning decisions, and deepen your relationship with Jesus.



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Introduction – Setting the Stage

Nehemiah's story is one of leadership, courage, and trust in God. He was not a priest or prophet but a cupbearer to the king of Persia who was burdened for God's people and city. His life shows us how to trust God while facing impossible odds, external opposition, and internal struggles. Nehemiah demonstrates that trust is the foundation for building anything lasting in life. The Model of trust through Nehemiah looks like this:

1. PRAY FIRST → Trust in Prayer Before Action. When Nehemiah heard of Jerusalem's ruined walls, his first instinct was not to rush into action but to fall on his knees. He wept, fasted, confessed, and prayed. His trust was anchored in God's direction before he lifted a finger. – Nehemiah 1:4-11.

REMEMBER: True trust begins with prayer. Before we act, we must bring our burdens before God and depend on His wisdom.



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2. ASSESS RESOURCES → Trust in God's Provision Amid Opposition. When Nehemiah set out to rebuild the wall, he faced ridicule, threats, and intimidation. Yet he boldly declared, "The God of heaven will give us success." Even as the people worked with one hand and held weapons in the other, they trusted God to provide protection and strength. Nehemiah 2:17-20; 4:1-20.

REMEMBER: Trust does not mean ignoring challenges. It means working faithfully while believing God will supply the strength and resources we need.



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3. LEAD SACRIFICIALLY → Trust in Integrity and Stewardship. As governor, Nehemiah could have demanded food allowances and lived in luxury. Instead, he chose integrity and sacrificial service. His trust in God freed him from greed and self-interest. Nehemiah 5:14-19.

REMEMBER: Trust is built through integrity. When leaders act with humility and stewardship, they reflect God's character and inspire trust in others.



Special Insight – Nehemiah 9:1-3

Confession and Covenant Renewal

After the wall was completed, the people gathered to confess their sins and remember God's faithfulness. They rehearsed their history, acknowledging their failures and celebrating God's mercy. This act demonstrated that they had learned to trust God—not just for walls of protection but for covenant relationship.

REMEMBER: Trust is restored when we confess our failures honestly and root our confidence in God's unchanging grace.



REPAIRING BROKEN TRUST

Step 1 – Acknowledge the Breach → You cannot repair what you won't admit. Be specific about what happened and how trust was damaged. TRUST: Denial delays healing; humility begins restoration.

Step 2 – Own Your Role → Take responsibility for your part—even if it's partial. Avoid blame-shifting or minimizing. TRUST = Proverbs 28:13 —
“Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”

Step 3 – Understand the Impact → Show empathy for the pain or consequences caused. Listen fully before offering solutions. TRUST = People trust again when they feel seen, heard, and understood.



REPAIRING BROKEN TRUST

Step 4 – Make Amends → Offer a clear, specific plan to repair the harm done. Follow through on your commitments. TRUST = Trust grows when words and actions align.

Step 5 – Rebuild Through Consistency → Trust isn't rebuilt overnight; it's restored one consistent choice at a time. TRUST = Dr. Cloud calls this the “deposit effect”—small actions that slowly refill the trust account.

Step 6 – Establish Healthy Boundaries → Moving forward requires clarity on expectations, responsibilities, and limits. TRUST = Healthy relationships balance grace and truth.



Dr. Henry Cloud – TRUST, Chapter 14 Summary

Step 2 – Move Beyond Anger and Revenge and Turn Toward Forgiveness

Forgiveness is one of the most vital steps in rebuilding trust. In Chapter 14 of *TRUST*, Dr. Henry Cloud emphasizes that unresolved anger and the desire for revenge are among the greatest barriers to healing and restoration. Until we address these deeply human reactions, trust cannot be rebuilt. This chapter offers a powerful pathway from wounds to freedom, showing us how forgiveness sets the stage for new beginnings. As followers of Jesus, this process is not optional—it's central to our faith. Scripture reminds us, 'Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger... be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you' (Ephesians 4:31-32).



Dr. Henry Cloud – TRUST

Chapter 14 Summary

Step 2 – Move Beyond Anger and Revenge and Turn Toward Forgiveness

1. Acknowledge and Process Your Anger

Betrayal and broken trust stir deep anger. Pretending that anger doesn't exist or trying to suppress it only keeps us stuck. Dr. Cloud teaches that anger itself is not sinful; it is a signal that something deeply wrong has happened. However, when anger festers, it becomes destructive and erodes our capacity to heal.



Dr. Henry Cloud – TRUST

Chapter 14 Summary

Step 2 – Move Beyond Anger and Revenge and Turn Toward Forgiveness

2. Surrender the Desire for Revenge →

Our natural response to betrayal is often revenge. We want the other person to feel the pain they caused. But revenge keeps us bound to the wound and prevents healing. Dr. Cloud emphasizes that surrendering the desire for revenge is not about excusing the wrong—it's about releasing control and trusting God to handle justice.



Dr. Henry Cloud – TRUST

Chapter 14 Summary

Step 2 – Move Beyond Anger and Revenge and Turn Toward Forgiveness.

3. Choose Forgiveness as a Path to Freedom Forgiveness is not a one-time feeling; it is a daily decision that begins the process of healing. Dr. Cloud explains that forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation. Reconciliation requires mutual trust and often takes time. Forgiveness, however, is unilateral—it is something we choose to do between ourselves and God.



Take Action!

Journal Prompts

1. Be like Nehemiah, begin with prayer instead of rushing into action. What opposition or challenge are you facing that requires you to trust God's provision?
2. How is your own integrity and sacrificial leadership a source of trust in your own relationships?
3. How does confession and remembering God's faithfulness (Nehemiah 9) help restore trust today?

