**Step 3: Learning to Trust Others**

Have any of you ever tried something extreme, such as **skydiving**, running of the **bulls**, rock climbing **without** ropes, or bungee jumping?

**VIDEO: Bungee (TRT – 0:37)**

I would NEVER do something like that! I don't know how anyone could allow themselves to think that was a good idea, let alone do it. However, as I've watched several videos on YouTube of people doing this completely insane activity, I realized how much trust it takes to do this.

* First, you must trust the guy putting you in the harness. Has he done this before? Has he checked every buckle? Is this guy a serial killer who’s looking for another victim?
* Next, you have to trust the weather conditions. Is a giant gust of wind going to push you sideways so that you smash back into the platform? Is the heat going to snap this giant elastic band?
* Speaking of elastic bands, when did they last inspect it? Is it too long so I'm going to slam into the ground?
* Then, you have to trust that the guy isn't going to suddenly decide it's his lunch break and leave you hanging there. It could happen!
* I just thought of another one… You’ve got to trust that you won’t **soil your undies** when you realize you are going **9000 mph** with nothing but a rubber band and a flimsy harness keeping you from slamming into the ground. Listen, soiling your britches is a real possibility for old folks like me!

Extreme activities such as skydiving, running of the bulls, rock climbing, and bungee jumping require **some insanity,** but they also require a whole lot of **trust**—trust in yourself, equipment, or another person. Faith and trust are just a part of the process on the road to recovery. As the old 80s song says, “you gotta have faith!”

Step 3 is often referred to as the faith step. This is where **we decided to turn our lives and wills over to the care of God.** You make a decision. You decide that your way is no longer working for you. You have tried and tried to quit engaging in an unhealthy hurt, habit, and or hang-up to no avail. You decide that something has to give. Your decision leads you to say, "I can't do this on my own. I'm ready and willing to give it to God and turn everything over to Him.”

Two weeks ago, we learned that Step 3 is about **learning to trust God.** In honor of Pastor John Baker, we learned a new acrostic…TRUST. The first step in the process of trusting God is to **T**urn it over to Him. Give Him your hurts, insecurities, addictions, relapses, divorce, pain, suffering, failures, doubts, lies—all the bad stuff!

Then, give Him the good stuff. Give Him your hopes, dreams, desires, plans, marriage, kids, finances, job—everything!

Next, you start to **R**ely on God. You begin developing God-reliance and ditching your self-reliance. You start living out Proverbs 3:5-6 and begin to trust in the Lord to direct your steps rather than leaning on your own understanding and then, begin giving Him the glory for helping you to stay on the right path.

Then, you **U**nplug from unhealthy influences—disconnect from people, places, and things that have caused you to stumble and interfere with your relationship with God. This can include the music you listen to, hobbies you have, places you go, and the people you spend time with. Learning to trust God requires change, and change requires that you unplug from unhealthy influences.

The S in trust is that you decide to **S**urrender your life and will to God—you give it **all** to God! Surrendering everything is a process. Keep going even if you struggle with complete surrender. By working the steps daily, you will gradually learn to trust in God.

The last step in learning to trust God is **t**alking to Him. You accomplish this through prayer. Your relationship with God will grow as you spend more time communicating with Him. Now, remember that it is also critical to listen to God after you have prayed, which is referred to as meditation. All talk and no listening leads to a dysfunctional relationship. Talk and then listen to God **every** chance you get, **every** day.

This brings us to part 2 of our teaching on Step 3. Tonight, I will share how your trust in God will also translate into **learning to trust others** and, in turn, learning to trust the process of working Step 3.

We will answer three questions: **How** do you learn to trust others**? Why** is it important to trust others? And **Who** should you trust?

We’ve come to the audience participation portion of the service. I want you to open your bulletin and take out your outline (show outline). This lesson may change the trajectory of your recovery journey!

Trusting others can be difficult, especially if you've been hurt deeply by those you trusted. So, **how do you learn to trust again**? First, spend time with people whose lives bear good fruit.These are people who have a proven track record. They’ve been in recovery for a while and are stable. They are **faithful** and **trustworthy**. Their walk with Jesus is evident.

Galatians 5:22-23*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

The Fruit of the Spirit is also known as Christian character. You can't go wrong with spending time with people who display

* Love
* Joy
* Peace
* Patience
* Kindness
* Goodness
* Faithfulness
* Gentleness
* Self-Control

The company you keep affects your behavior and your actions. If you spend time with people who participate in actions or activities you are trying to rid yourself of, chances are you will stumble.

Another way to learn to trust others is to become more trustable. By being more trustable in your relationships with others, you will also begin to believe that others are more trustworthy. Follow through with your commitments. Be a trusting friend, and others will reciprocate. Luke 6:31*: "Do to others as you would have them do to you."*

Lastly,decide to trust. Give people who exhibit good fruit the benefit of the doubt. That’s how you’ll establish good friendships. Choosing not to trust others can lead to isolation and loneliness. Healthy relationships in recovery are essential. Proverbs 17:17*: A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*

The next question is, **why is it important to trust others?**

The first reason is you can’t do recovery alone. In isolation, the devil can get a foothold. You are left a prisoner of your own thoughts. You begin to believe you can't stay sober. You forget how bad it was before and how good it can be if you stay on the road to recovery. Proverbs 18:1*: "Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment.*" Relationships are essential in your recovery journey. You can't do recovery alone.

The second reason it's important to trust others is that God speaks through them. God uses others to encourage you and to speak truth into your life.Hebrews 3:13*: "But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called 'Today,' so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.*" He uses them to challenge you and to hold you accountable.

That’s why sponsors and accountability partners are so critical. God uses them to tell you when they see red flags that might lead to a downfall or relapse.

This brings us to the last question: **Who should you trust?** If you want to stay sober for the long haul, who you allow to be your most significant influence is highly critical. Trust those with a good track record--the people have some longevity in recovery and bear good fruit in their lives.

Matthew 7:16-17*, You can identify them by their fruit- how they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit.*

It is essential that your influences, the people you align yourself with, are followers of Jesus whose lives reflect their walk with Him. Far too often, I see people new to recovery start connecting with people who are also new in their recovery and their faith. This connection can be a recipe for relapse. It's good to connect with people new to recovery but don't let them be the guiding influence in your recovery.

Some of the people you will trust are your **sponsor** and your **accountability partners**. How do I choose them? Here are some prerequisites for sponsors and accountability partners:

Sponsor

* - Has completed a CR Step Study or Process Group.
* - Has a minimum of 1 continuous year of sobriety/abstinence.
* - Actively attends recovery meetings.
* - Has a Sponsor and Accountability Team.
* - Must be the same sex as Sponsee.

Accountability Partners

* - Actively attends Recovery meetings.
* - Shares a similar area of recovery.
* - Must be the same sex.
* - Committed to growing in their relationship with Jesus.
* - Shows signs of growth in their recovery.

Here are some other people with good track records you can trust:

* - Your pastor at your church.
* - Family members who are healthy and don't pose risks to your recovery.
* - Counselors or psychiatrists.
* - Those who attend Recovery meetings consistently and bear the good fruit of recovery.
* - Your recovery pastor and his wife.

I know I said I was going to answer only three questions tonight, but another question I'm often asked is, **“Where do I meet trustworthy people?”** Most likely, you will need to change many of the places that you frequent in order to connect with dependable, honest people.

When I was new to recovery, I learned to spend time with the winners—the people who had been sober for multiple years. Winners spend lots of time in meetings, so I also spent lots of time in meetings. One thing I noticed about them is that they didn't spend time in places where temptation and triggers could be found. They spent time in safe places. Some of the safest places are Recovery meetings and church.

If you spend more time in recovery meetings and church, you’ll meet a whole network of healthy people to do life with. Then, start connecting with the people whose lives you admire the most. The ones who have long-term sobriety, follow Jesus, and their lives aren’t chaotic. Those whose lives bear good fruit are the people you can trust.

You’ve heard it said before…. birds of a feather flock together. Spend time soaring with eagles rather than running with the scavengers, and your life will bear good fruit, too!

This month, we have been learning a valuable recovery skill…. **TRUST**. Learning to trust God and others is difficult, but it’s necessary if you want to move forward in your recovery.

If you put what we've learned this month into action, your life will begin to take a miraculous turn. God will start doing for you what you've never been able to do for yourself.

Now, I know some of you here tonight are stuck. Trust is something you don't possess.

* Some of you **struggle to trust yourself** because you keep running into that familiar brick wall.
* Others have been hurt deeply, and **you won’t allow yourself to trust** because of the pain.
* And quite a few of you **have yet to decide to trust Jesus**.

If that’s you, we want to pray for you. Our prayer partners are coming forward right now. If you are uncomfortable coming forward but want prayer, raise your hand, and a prayer partner will come to you and stand behind you. Let's go to the Lord in prayer….

Here is your **Leader’s Question:**

Do you struggle to trust others? If so, do you struggle with *how* to learn to trust again, *why* it's essential to trust, or *who* to trust?