An open book is shown at the bottom of the frame, its pages glowing with a soft blue light. The background is a dark blue gradient, overlaid with a complex network of thin, glowing white lines that form a web-like pattern, suggesting a digital or interconnected theme. The overall mood is serene and intellectual.

Love...

The Call of Always

“Love,...

...It always Trusts...

1 Corinthians 13:7 (NIV)



There Is A Maxim That Says...

“Past behavior is the best
indicator of future behavior.”

It Sounds Right

- In a way, it makes sense to me...but...
- Is it categorically true in all situations?
- Is this research based psychology or pop psychology?

How does that maxim comport
with Jesus' ability to redeem and convert?

Can an encounter with Jesus so change
people, who have a history of bad behavior,
that they become trustworthy?

Would You Trust...

- You're guy on blind date and find out the lady has been married multiple times, is divorced now and shacked up with new guy?
- You buy a new house and the tax assessor with no justification, doubles your property taxes and it is clear that he's somehow getting rich on a government salary.
- A woman who is a known adulteress starts hanging around with your husband and his buddies. Could you ever trust her?

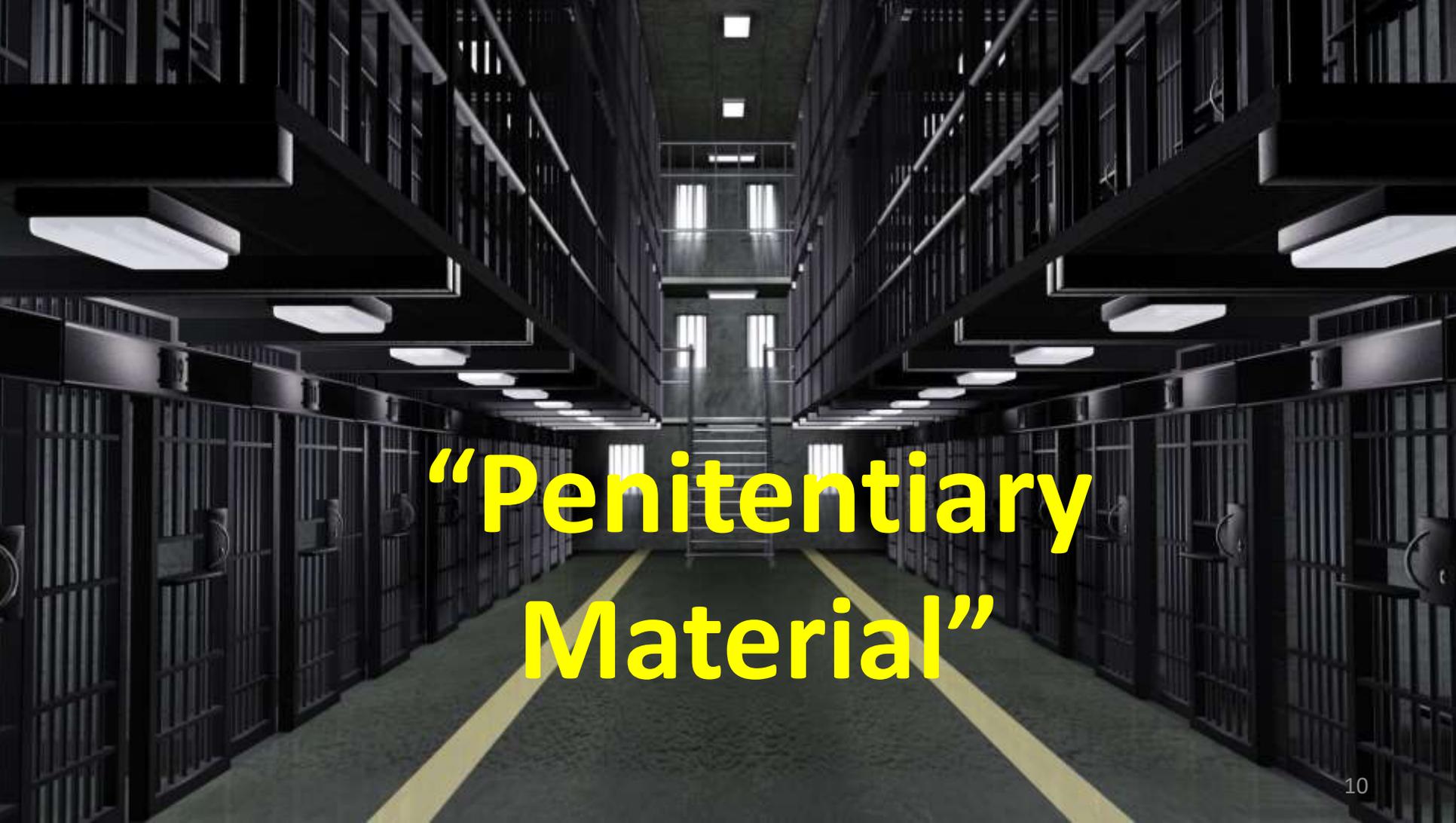
- A spoiled, trust fund, wild child who never worked a day in his life, and parties like there is no tomorrow? Could you ever trust him?
- A terrorist, responsible for the deaths of many Christians? Would you invite him to church?
- You send a young man under your command on a government mission of great importance, he deserts. Would you ever trust that soldier again?
- A boastful blow hard who brags about what he would do in a given situation melts in fear when challenged? Would you trust him to have your 6?

Encounters With Jesus Tell A Different Story.

- The woman at the well John 4
- Matthew and Zacchaeus Luke 19
- The woman caught in adultery John 8
- The Prodigal Son Luke 15
- Saul the Terrorist who became Paul the Apostle Acts 9
- John Mark the deserter who became John Mark the faithful servant and Gospel author.
- Peter the denier who became Peter the witness Luke 22

What Kind of Trust Is Paul
Advocating and Does Jesus Want
Us To Always Offer?





“Penitentiary Material”

A culture of Love, “Keeps No
Record of Wrongs.”
And, Seeks To Remember Others
With Grace.

Always Trusting...

- Creates a culture where people are inspired to live up to higher ideals that Christ calls us to.
- Is only possible when we see ourselves as we truly are.
 - Not Superior to others
 - Not Inferior to others
 - Just Equally Humbled before a Holy God

Luke 18:9-14 (NIV)

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Which of these would you be inclined to trust?

It is better for us to put ourselves on equal footing with everyone else rather than have God knock us off of our pedestal.



Love Teaches Us How To Trust.

When we love as Christ loved, we trust and believe more in what God can do in the life of someone than what that person has done with themselves.



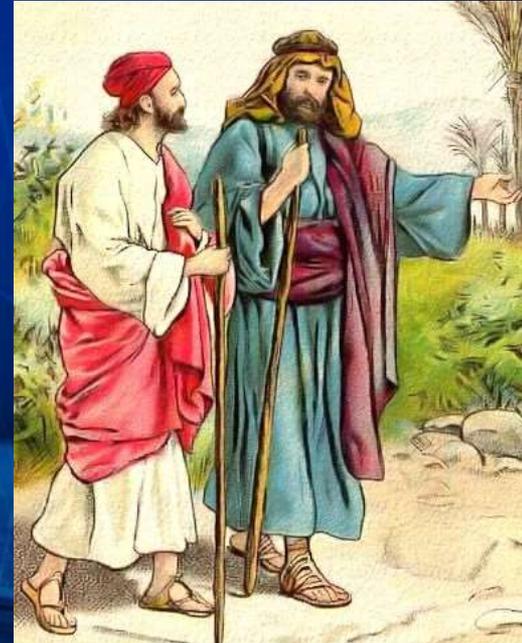
Trusting And Being Trusted Is Personal With Paul

Acts 9:19-30 (NIV)

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?"

Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ. After many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him, but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall. When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.

But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him. When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.



Barnabas

- “Son of encouragement”
- He decided that “Past behavior WAS NOT the best indicator of future behavior.”
- He trusted God and what He was doing in and with the life of Paul was the best indicator of the future.
- Thirteen epistles of the New Testament later, aren't we glad Barnabas trusted.

Full Disclosure: If We Trust, Will We Get Burned?

- YES! Since the Garden of Eden...
 - God the Father has been betrayed
 - Jesus the son has been betrayed
 - Even the Holy Spirit has been betrayed
- Jesus said we would be too.
- It hurts badly

This truth Falls in our category of “I can’t do this anymore.”

- Jesus taught his disciples:
 - To love their enemies.
 - To do good and bless “those who mistreat you.”
Luke 6:27-28
- That phrase includes, “hurt, insult, despitefully use, and wrongly accuse.” It is a heavily weighted word.
- How do we trust those who can break our hearts?

What Is Paul Advocating?

- Not a transactional trust of personal relationships where you trust everyone will always tell you the truth.
- Scripture is full of people lying. It is foolish to trust that people will never lie.
- Paul is calling for redemptive approach to humanity's potential, the belief and trust that God can raise people to new life.

Always Trusting Means...

- Trust love when it seems like love won't work.
- Trust love when we want to reach for condemnation.
- Trust love when we are inclined to hate.
- Trust love when we would rather not get involved.
- Not quitting on love when it feels like love has quit on you.
- Being love to others when they have not been love to you.

A Couple of Case Studies

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers. Peter said to him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death. Jesus said, 'I will tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me" (Luke 22:31-34).



Joey and KC Grist
Sons Jimmy and J.T.

Let's Pray This Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

You love us so much more than we could ever love you. You are patient and kind. You are long suffering and when you forgive our sins, you keep no record of our wrongs. Father, the most amazing thing to me is how much you believe in us, how much trust you have placed in us. You believe in us more than we believe in ourselves. Could that be because you know what good we are capable of and what you have planned for us? Help us to always trust in what you can do with even the worst of us. Help us to keep trusting while you are still working on us.

We ask in the name of Jesus, Amen