

**Misplaced Confidence**  
*as presented by Lisa Bishop*  
Air Dates: April 25-29, 2022

**Day One**

Several years ago, 40 to be exact, my best friend and I wanted to be part of the 8th grade cheerleading squad. I had never done the splits, nor come close in my life, but we decided to practice and give it a shot. For several weeks we perfected our cartwheels and roundoffs. I remember inch by inch getting closer and closer to doing the splits as I looked in the wall of mirrors in my parent's bedroom. I was trying to build my skill and my confidence as we prepared for tryouts.

Fast forward a few weeks and it was time to put our skills to the test. I distinctly remember walking into my middle school building and approaching the gymnasium with fear gripping me and butterflies in my stomach. Have you ever felt that? We got a few feet away from the door when we both looked at each other and in total fear and panic turned around and high tailed it the other way. We had lost our confidence and fear caused us to run. I never ended up trying out for cheerleading. I will never know if I could have made the cut but to this day I wonder what would have happened if I did not let fear of failure grip me. The fear of being rejected, not making the team, looking like a fool and what other people would think of me overruled my confidence to try.

It reminds me of when Noah built the arc. Now I am not saying that 8th grade cheerleading tryouts hold a candle to Noah building the arc, but stick with me here. We see Noah's story in the book of Genesis. As God is preparing to bring judgment on the earth through a massive flood, he instructs Noah to build a huge boat when there is not even a drop of rain or a cloud in sight. Yet regardless of what he could not see, Noah obeyed God. He followed God's instructions even when they did not make sense at the time. I can imagine the mocking and jeering that must have happened as Noah labored to build and obey God. He probably looked ridiculous. Yet, if Noah would have put his confidence in what other people thought of him, he never would have picked up that first piece of wood. Even though others probably thought he was crazy, he remained faithful. His confidence was not in what others thought about him but what in God instructed him to do.

When we put our confidence in the opinion of others, what people think about us, it will cause us to miss out. When we live our lives to avoid the feeling of rejection or in the mode of self-protection, we can forfeit a fulfilling future. When we give power to the opinions of others, we play small rather than stepping into obedience and a grand adventure with God.

Where are you putting your confidence in—the opinion of others and not in God?

**Day Two**

In the book of Philippians, the Apostle Paul reminds us to put no confidence in the flesh but to put our confidence in The Lord. "Boast in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: (Philippians 3:3b-4).

And then in verses 5-6 he starts a laundry list of reasons for his flesh boosting confidence: "Circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless (Philippians 3:5-6).

In his days before following Jesus, I can see Paul pounding his chest with pride as he read through this list, but now that his allegiance is to Jesus and he is living his life for God, his posture is different. Even with his own impressive pedigree, Paul warns us to put our confidence in the Lord and not in our accomplishments, in our own abilities.

We can so easily find ourselves boasting and bragging about our achievements that we can become arrogant and prideful. Proverbs 16:18 signals us about misplaced confidence when it says, "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." Now does this mean we can't be confident in our abilities? No, but it does remind us that our ultimate confidence is not in ourselves but in Jesus himself.

On the other hand, maybe you are not arrogant and prideful and boastful. Maybe you sell yourself short and shrink back because you don't think you are enough or that you are inadequate. That is putting confidence in your flesh too because you aren't relying on who Jesus says you are and your identity in him. Thinking less of yourself is not the antidote to pride. Placing your confidence in Jesus is the ultimate prize.

Confidence in the flesh can go both ways. Boasting and hiding when our confidence is misplaced. What or who is your confidence dependent upon? Ask God to reveal areas where you are boasting in your flesh and not in him.

### Day Three

Have you ever tried to figure something out, relying on your own knowledge and perception only to be frustrated and maybe a little discouraged?

A very dear friend of mine, Mercy, lives in Zambia. She and I met five years ago when she was in the United States. We quickly became friends even though we are separated by over 8300 miles. Thanks to technology we keep in touch.

Last year when I spent time in Zambia I was able to see a project that Mercy is working on. After being in an abusive marriage and losing a niece to suicide because of spousal abuse, the Lord gave her a vision to build a safehouse for abused women and children. Mercy was pastoring full time when the Lord instructed her to quit her job and sell everything. As Mercy tells the story, it did not make sense to her so she delayed two years until finally she could no longer ignore God's call.

Mercy said yes when the Lord gave her this incredible God-sized vision. She had no clue how the funds would be raised to buy a plot of land in the bush and to build and staff the safehouse, but Mercy stepped out in faith. Her confidence in God propelled her forward. It is quite amazing to witness.

Being the planner that I am and wanting to feel some measure of control, I marvel at how Mercy has completely surrendered and trusted the Lord to provide what she needs to fulfill God's vision. Just the other day I asked her how things are going with the safehouse. She said, "I just take each day and trust. The Lord started it and he will finish it. I am trusting him to finish and accomplish what he began."

If that isn't unwavering confidence in the Lord I don't know what is!

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

Jeremiah 17:7 “But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him.”

Where is your confidence and trust? Are you in the midst of a circumstance where you are relying on your own understanding to reach a solution? Maybe a relational breakdown, work conflict or a job loss? Are you in a situation where you are trying to lean on your own understanding?

Ask God what he wants you to do at this moment. Ask Jesus to help you put your confidence in him and to submit your ways to him...and he will make your paths straight.

## Day Four

In Psalm 16:7-9 the Psalmist declares: “I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure.” You can hear the Psalmist’s unwavering confidence in receiving the counsel and instruction of the Lord. He knows God will guide him!

And notice the reason that the Psalmist is so confident in receiving godly wisdom, why he is not shaken and his flesh dwells secure. The reason he does not waver is because he has set the Lord always before him. And when he sets the Lord before him, when he puts God first and seeks him first, the Psalmist’s heart is glad and his whole being rejoices.

I love how God is so straight forward. How he makes his promises so clear in his Word and the benefits when we obey. James 1:5 instructs us when it says, “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.” Where are you relying on your own wisdom when God is inviting you to ask for godly counsel? Where are you putting your confidence in human instruction and not divine guidance?

Maybe you are in the midst of a career transition and up until now you have tried to figure out the next steps on your own. Perhaps you are in a financial crisis or your marriage is in ruin and you are seeking the counsel of friends before putting God first and asking him to instruct you.

If you are a follower of Jesus that means that you received the Holy Spirit the moment you put your confidence in and received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. And Jesus says that his Holy Spirit is your counselor, your guide, your helper, your wisdom. Bring your current circumstance before the Lord, put him first. Resist seeking human advice before seeking the counsel of God. Watch out for ways you misplace your confidence and redirect your trust to Jesus.

Ask him to help you. He is waiting to give to you generously.

## Day Five

If you want unwavering confidence in life, it matters who and what you place your confidence in. As a follower of Jesus, we need to take inventory of the ways we pursue assurance, and how we misplace our confidence in things other than him.

What is a fail proof method to grow in unwavering confidence? Immersing yourself in the Word of God so that you are reminded of the character of God and his promises to you.

When you remember who God is, your confidence will increase. I know it can be hard to remain steadfast in our confidence in the Lord. Life circumstances come, we are caught off guard and our confidence can be like a teeter totter. One minute it is high, the next minute it is low. But as we mature in our faith, we level out and we learn that no matter our circumstances, God can be trusted.

“In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and his children will have refuge” (Proverbs 14:26, ESV).

When we are instructed to fear the Lord the word fear means to show honor, reverence, and a sense of awe towards God. And in Proverbs 14:26 the fear of the Lord, means an awe of God that moves us from self-confidence and towards strong confidence in his love and greatness.

As his child, God will always provide himself as a refuge for you. This means when life is hard and you are tempted to despair, be discouraged or doubt God, he is, as the Psalmist says in Psalm 46:1, your refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

While life may throw you curveballs and loss and chaos may ensue at the most surprising times, you serve a God who is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He is not surprised by the things that life throws your way, He sees you. He knows, he cares, he is with you. “I will never fail you. I will never abandon you” (Hebrews 13:5b, NLT).

What is one step you will take in building your unwavering confidence in God? Maybe it is journaling so that you can reflect back on the ways that you saw God working in your life. Maybe it is reciting the names and attributes of God so that you remember his character. As the Psalmist says in Psalm 62:8, “Trust [confidently] in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.”