STUDENT HANDOUT

# Can Christ Trust Us?

*Faith, Faithfulness, and the Relational World of Pistis*

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## Central Truth

The believer places faith in Christ because Christ is perfectly faithful and trustworthy. Scripture also portrays Christ as regarding His servants as faithful and entrusting His work to them. The relationship is reciprocal, but it is never symmetrical.

**Reciprocal does not mean symmetrical.**

## Key Text — 1 Timothy 1:12

Paul thanks Christ Jesus for strengthening him, regarding him as faithful (pistos), and placing him into service. The order matters: Christ's grace and empowerment come before Paul's entrusted ministry.

Key movement: Christ calls → strengthens → regards as faithful → entrusts with service.

## The Pistis Word Family

| Greek | Relational Sense |
|---|---|
| pistis (πίστις) | faith, trust; in some contexts faithfulness |
| pistos (πιστός) | faithful, reliable, trustworthy |
| pisteuō (πιστεύω) | to believe, trust |

## Four Movements in the Lesson

**1. Grace before entrustment** — Paul was formerly a blasphemer, persecutor, and violent aggressor. Christ's confidence in Paul cannot be explained by an impressive past; it grows out of mercy, transformation, and strengthening.

**2. Stewardship requires faithfulness** — In 1 Corinthians 4:1–2, stewards of God's mysteries are required to be pistos. Something belonging to Another has been placed into their care.

**3. "Jesus has faith in us" needs qualification** — Christ does not exercise saving faith in us, nor does He depend upon us as we depend upon Him. Yet Scripture does portray Him as regarding servants as trustworthy and entrusting them with responsibility.

**4. The question becomes personal** — The lesson is not merely about vocabulary. Christ entrusts His people with the gospel, gifts, relationships, resources, and opportunities. The question is whether we will be found faithful.

## Reciprocal, Not Symmetrical

| We... | Christ... |
|---|---|
| trust Him | entrusts responsibility to us |
| depend upon Him | strengthens us |
| receive salvation | gives salvation |
| recognize His faithfulness | calls us to faithfulness |

## A Scholarly Note

Paul's phrases often translated “faith in Christ” (pistis Christou) are debated: some understand them as human faith in Christ, while others emphasize Christ's faith or faithfulness. The debate is worth knowing, but this lesson does not depend upon resolving it. First Timothy 1:12 already gives the clearer entrustment relationship.

## Questions for Reflection

- What has Christ entrusted to me?
- Am I relying upon His strength or treating stewardship as self-sufficiency?
- Where is Christ calling me to greater faithfulness?
- Do I confuse visible success with faithfulness?

**I know that I can trust Christ. But with what He has entrusted to me, can I be found faithful?**