



SCRIPTURE READING: Proverbs 3:5-6

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

INTRODUCTION:

Life is a lot like driving down a slippery road with all kinds of twists, turns, and potential danger. Not only do you have to stay on the road, but there are other cars passing by that you need to look out for. Why is it that some have crashed and burned? Quite often, it is because they did not pay attention to the warning signs. The book of Proverbs gives us plenty of warning signs and directions to help stay on the right road and drive through life safely (Prov. 1:33).

Proverbs is a book of wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to navigate through life and apply the will of God to life situations. Some would call it "the art of skillful living." Notice how wisdom cries out for someone to listen in chapter one. This is because there are far too many who aren't listening. *"Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you"* (Prov. 1:20-23).

As Christians, we rejoice in the fact that our sins have been taken away and we are on our way to Heaven (I Jn. 5:13). We know salvation comes through trusting Jesus Christ, and it is all His grace that saves us (Eph. 2:8-9). We know this and we believe this, but why are there so many Christians stuck on the roadside? Why are there believers in Christ that have lost their way and are heading down the wrong road? It could very well be that many have BELIEVED IN A GOD THEY DO NOT TRUST. This portion of Scripture will challenge us to examine how much we really believe in God by how we trust Him.

These questions are designed to stimulate spiritual conversation and open the lines of communication. Take some time to consider each verse and answer the questions to this timely subject.

DAY ONE

(v. 5) — TRUST GOD COMPLETELY

To trust God completely is to trust nothing else. Think about how you sit down on a couch. As you are sitting there, do you hang on to something else in case you fall? Do you keep a certain percentage of weight on your feet in case it

gives out underneath you? No! You completely trust your weight with the couch and rest in it. This is the way we need to trust our God. If you hung on to the wall as if the couch wasn't going to fully support you, it would look silly and people would laugh at you. Just think about what God thinks and how silly people look because they are afraid to completely trust Him (Prov. 1:24-32).

Man has a typical order or procedure in learning to trust the Lord. When a problem arises, we tend to trust ourselves first, and when that doesn't work, we go to the Lord. This is completely backwards and the opposite of what we are to do. Whom you go to first is a reflection of whom you trust the most. Let us always go to the Lord first, and trust in the One who has all the answers.

We should trust the Lord because of His infinite wisdom (Rom. 11:33), His supernatural resume (Job 38), and His great shepherding skills (Jn. 10:1-30).

What do you think is the number one hindrance to trusting the Lord completely? How has God taught you to trust Him more? Is there an area in your life that you struggle handing over to the Lord in trust? Can you honestly say you trust the Lord with ALL you have and with ALL your heart?

DAY TWO

(v. 5) — TRUST GOD WITH YOUR HEART

We are told to trust the Lord with our hearts because out of it are the issues of life (Prov. 4:23). The heart is the control center of who we are. It is the epicenter of our knowledge, intellect, feelings, and our will. The heart is the binding, blending, and balancing agent of our being and the way we act.

How do you know if you are trusting God with all your heart? When you lean not unto your own understanding. Faith begins when human reasoning is abandoned. "What about my brain" you say? "What about common sense?" "What about being practical in the real world?" Under the supervision of Him, Yes. Remember, we are limited in ourselves by our sin nature and finiteness. Our sight is very limited, but God's is infinite.

Often our hearts and our minds conflict. Faith in God and human reasoning are in a tug-a-war. From a Biblical perspective, this is actually normal. *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts"* (Is. 55:8-9).

If we are not careful, there may be a tendency to compromise our faith in an attempt to mix human wisdom with divine wisdom. The Bible says the person who does this is "double-minded" (James 1:5-8). You cannot mix the earthy and the spiritual, the sacred and the secular, the wisdom from above and the wisdom from below (James 3:15,17). When you mix the two, you lose God's wisdom. God does not

need your help or input. Until you can answer His questions in Job 38, you should be quiet and learn to trust Him with all your heart. You may have a lot of facts and figures stored in your brain, but information does not equate to wisdom. There are plenty of educated fools who think they are smarter than God. Wisdom can use knowledge and information for life, but it should be filtered through the truth of the Scriptures.

Many of us had to learn how to use the rear view mirror and side mirrors when starting to drive. Our tendency was to look back and not trust the mirrors. Over time, we learned the value and safety of the mirrors. So it is with God's Word. To lean not unto thine own understanding is to abandon self completely and trust the Lord completely.

What does God say about man's wisdom (I Cor. 1:19-21)? What should you do when your faith and your human reasoning conflict? How does the Word of God help you in this struggle? (See Hebrews chapter 11 — 12:3) How does Proverbs 14:12 apply to your life?

DAY THREE

(v. 5) — DON'T TRUST YOURSELF

Not trusting yourself goes against human nature. This is why God has given you a new divine power and nature (II Pet. 1:3-4). Most of the time, we are our biggest enemies in hindering our faith in God.

One of the biggest struggles is overcoming PRIDE. Abandoning self is a slap in the face to pride. Pride says, "I can do it myself." Faith says, "God can do better and far beyond what you could ever do or think." Trusting yourself is being "*wise in thine own eyes*" (Prov. 3:7). Isn't this how the Devil wanted Eve to think back in Genesis 3:5?

Another reason why we don't let go of self and trust the Lord is because we do not FEAR the Lord. "*For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD*" (Prov. 1:29). As we walk through life, it doesn't take long to discover that man is the root problem to all problems. "*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no FEAR of God before their eyes*" (Rom. 3:10-18).

Perhaps the greatest reason why we do not transfer our trust from self to the Lord is because we do not love God the way we should. We tend to be self-centered and love self too much. "*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*" (Mt. 22:37). The more you love God, the more you will trust Him!

Has God ever been wrong? Have you ever been wrong? Has God ever told a lie? Have you ever told a lie? How can you develop a holy fear of the Lord? How can you love Him more? What does the Bible say about your unstable heart (Jer. 17:9)? Why is it dangerous to trust your feelings?

DAY FOUR

(v. 6) — ACKNOWLEDGE HIM IN EVERYTHING

The Lord wants to be involved in every area of our lives. He is not just concerned with us on Sundays. We are to acknowledge Him in "*all our ways*." This means to filter everything we encounter through Him. In order to do this, it is crucial to have an ongoing prayer life. As Jesus is our head, we look to Him and consult with Him in all our decisions. Anything that does not please Him, glorify Him, or line up with His Word is not acknowledging Him. We are to have an intimate response in all things based on knowledge and relationship whereby pleasing Him is the goal. "*In all thy ways*" means every area of life. This would include your friends, where you go, what you do, what you say, how you think, what you eat or drink, what kind of music you listen to, what you watch, etc. The greatest way to acknowledge Him is to trust Him.

Do you acknowledge Him in every area of your life? Can you think of an area where He needs to be more involved? How can you acknowledge Him in your home? How can you acknowledge Him in your private time? How can you acknowledge Him in public? How can you acknowledge Him at church?

DAY FIVE

(v. 6) — RECIEVE HIS GUIDANCE

As we trust in the Lord, He will direct our paths. His path is one of faith and obedience. It is also straight, clear, and narrow. It is often a path misunderstood by man, but clearly ordained of God. Regardless of who else is on it, walking with the Lord is our source of joy and peace. Don't get caught up in where the Lord is bringing you in this life, but get caught up in the One who is bringing you. In other words, it's not about the destination, it's about enjoying the journey.

The path of the Lord is a path of happiness (vs. 13, 18), grace (v. 22), safety (v. 23), and rest (v. 24). "*Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore*" (Ps. 16:11).

How does the Word of God help us stay on the right path (Ps. 19:105)? How does the Lord teach His children to stay on the right path (Heb. 12:5-13)?

REVIEW:

- Trust God with every fiber of your being.
- Don't let your human reasoning get in the way.
- Don't think that you are wiser than God.
- Acknowledge God in every area of your life.
- Stay on the Lord's path and enjoy His fellowship.

CONCLUSION:

Far too many have trusted the Lord for the afterlife, but not for this life. They have trusted Him to get them to Heaven, but not to navigate through life. Perhaps this is why there are so many who have run out of gas and are stranded along the roadside of life. They have believed in a God they don't trust. Let us pay attention to God's warning signs and directions. Let us trust Him more and more.