



“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding,” Proverbs 3:5.

Trust in the Lord

Lesson Aim: to lead to a settled confidence in God.

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“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths,” Proverbs 3:5-6. There is the heart of Christian obedience. There is the secret of the rest of faith. There is the key to today's study. There is the guide to lead you to a settled confidence in God. Today's study is entitled, “Trust in the Lord.”

The text is taken from the Book of Proverbs. If you read the book through, you will observe how often it changes subjects. That is because the book is a collection of wise sayings. There are seven major divisions to the book. It contains poems, essays, and formal proverbs. Sometimes only a single verse is given to a subject, whereas in another place an entire chapter follows a single theme. Several authors are mentioned by name: Solomon (1:1), Agur (30:1), and King Lemuel (31:1). Though Solomon “spake three thousand proverbs” (I Kings 4:32), he was not the author of all the Book of Proverbs.

Today's study seeks to lead you to an unshaken faith in God. The lesson comments are in four divisions. (1) Trust God's Word, verses 1-4. (2) Trust God's Direction, verses 5-8. (3) Trust God's Provision, verses 9-10. (4) Trust God's Correction, verses 11- 13. You should come forth from the study with your faith renewed and your resolve set to trust Him. Watch for personal applications which you may make of truths set forth herein.

I. TRUST GOD'S WORD, 3:1-4.

A. With the mind, verse 1 — The mind must be involved in the Word of God for true benefit to come therefrom. Psalm 1:2 declares that the blessed man does not forget the law of God, but meditates in it day and night. Hidden thus in the heart and kept constantly in the mind, the law of God keeps man from sin, Psalm 119:11.

No one who does not know Him will trust God. The best way to gain faith is to be exposed to the Word of God because faith comes by hearing His Word, Romans 10:17. You will trust God more as you know more of Him as revealed in the Holy Bible.

B. In the heart, verse 3 — Moses received the law of God written upon tablets of stone. That was but a picture of how the Word is to be written in our hearts. Through the Word of God the polished tablet of the heart receives its message.

God is concerned with man's heart. Ezra is noted in the Old Testament as a great saint of God because he “. . . had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.” Ezra 7:10. Jesus lamented, “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me,” Matthew 15:8.

A man may have God's Word in his mind but not in his heart. The heart includes the intellectual, emotional, and volitional powers. For the word to be in the “heart,” in the Biblical sense, it must be known, loved, and obeyed.

C. For your benefit, verses 2, 4 — Look at the blessings attendant upon one's having the Word of God in the mind and heart. Enumerate them—length of days, long life, peace, favor, and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Those are great rewards, are they not? “Walking in God's chosen path, the disciple will . . . live his appointed years without coming to a violent and premature end, to which they who choose evil ways are exposed”—A. Cohen.

Observe that the reward promised anyone who trusts God's Word relates to both “God and man.” That is because life is lived on two planes. On the horizontal plane, men naturally are pleased with the good man and let him live in peace. On the vertical plane, God is pleased with the good man and multiplies his goodness. It is written that as a boy Jesus increased “in favor with God and man,” Luke 2:52. Surely the disciple can do no better than the example set by the Lord.

“The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth

Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men,” Romans 14:17-18.

Make practical application of that truth by proposing these questions to your heart: Do you have the Bible in your mind knowing what it says and meditating upon its truths? Do you love its message and delight to obey its precepts? Only thus can it be said in truth that you trust God's Word.

II. TRUST GOD'S DIRECTION, 3-5-8.

A. Totally, verse 5 — Here is a call for utmost confidence in God: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart . . .” To trust God with ALL the heart means to trust with an undivided heart. Watch that your confidence is not divided, part upon God and part upon man. “Such a confidence may keep you from the lions (II Kings 17:25), but it cannot keep you out of hell. A house built partly on firm ground, partly on sand, will fall. To trust in God is so to lean upon Him that if He fail thee thou sinkest”—Francis Taylor. Depend solely upon God. He is the only refuge for your life.

B. Continually, verse 6 — “In ALL thy ways acknowledge him . . .” There is the practical application of trusting God with ALL the heart. To “acknowledge” Him is to know Him, to have Him in mind, and to walk in the light of His Word which abides in the heart.

Trust in God is not an occasional confidence in times of high religious experience, nor is it reserved for times of crisis, nor is it applicable to spiritual matters alone. If one acknowledges Him in “all” ways, God becomes a part of his home life, business life, and social life. If He is not such a part, He is not acknowledged in “all” of one's ways. He is God of each individual. He is concerned about all the ways of each.

C. Profitably, verses 6-8 — Three evident blessings are mentioned as being the heritage of those who trust God: direction, healing, and strength. Direction—“. . . he shall direct thy paths,” verse 6. To “direct” paths means “to make straight; to remove obstacles.” To walk with God as one's guide is the highest quality of life possible in the world. **“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left,”** Isaiah 30:21.

Healing and strength -- - “Two sadnesses flow from not fearing Jehovah—worn muscles and dried bones. The two are perfectly distinct. One means 'aching labour,' the other, 'horrible despondency.' The fear of God delivers from both,”—Miller.

“Vice saps the health both of body and mind.”—Arnot.

Look at what that amazing verse says: Even physical and mental health

are related to obedience before God. One Christian psychiatrist stated that fully one-half of the mental and emotional sicknesses which he treated could have been prohibited by a devout religious faith. It is profitable to know and to serve God.

What application does that have to your life? Do you really trust God's direction in ALL your ways? Can you depend upon Him in rearing your children in His ways? Do you trust Him in matters of business judgment? Do you pray about your place or residence, the partner whom you marry, the church where you serve? Are you ready to go anywhere He leads with assurance that He will provide? Do you trust God's direction?'

III. TRUST GOD'S PROVISION, 3:9-10.

A. God gives to us. A discussion of stewardship should begin with a settlement of the matter of ownership. If what we have is solely ours, it is nobody's business what we do with it; but if it first belongs to God, who still has a claim upon it, then it is His business what we do with it!

The very word, "stewardship," suggests that what we have is not ours, but God's. We have been highly honored by being made His stewards. Strict integrity and devotion to His interests should be the responses of our hearts.

God commands man never to say, **“. . . My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth . . .”** Deuteronomy 8:17-18. The Bible is quite clear that it is “the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy,” I Timothy 6:17.

God gives to us all that we have. He is owner; we are administrators of His bounty. That makes us responsible to Him for what we do with what we have. Hence, we become stewards of God.

B. We give to Him, verse 9. Here is the distinct command, **“Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.”** Two ideas are paramount: (1) God is honored by the rightful use of our material wealth. (2) We are to give Him first choice in our wealth —“the firstfruits of all thine increase.”

The ancient Israelite brought the firstfruits to Jehovah as a kind of “rent” payment since Jehovah was owner of the land. Even so, the believer brings his offerings first to God as the most important Person in his life and owner of all that he possesses.

How much do we give to God? We return at very least one-tenth of the increase since, **“. . . the tithe . . . is the Lord's . . .”** Leviticus 27:30. Freewill

offerings may be added thereto, if the offerer desires. The tithing is obligatory; the offering is voluntary. Failure to recognize God in one's material stewardship brings His disfavor and judgment, Malachi 3:8-12. Believers are to give their offerings "upon the first day of the week" when they meet to worship, I Corinthians 16:2. One who contracts such debts for personal luxury that he cannot be a good steward of God's bounty is a poor disciple indeed!

C. He gives to us again, verse 10. God pledges that, when He is honored in faithful stewardship, He will see that the steward suffers no lack. God is a faithful banker. That which is given into His treasury will produce a larger dividend than that deposited for bank interest or invested without thought for the Lord. Try it and see!

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work . . . Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness; being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness," II Corinthians 9:8, 10-11.

Some people say, "I cannot give to the church for I would have nothing on which to live." The text calls for trust in God's provision. It promises that those who honor Him in disposition of material wealth will suffer no lack whatsoever. Do you trust God's provision enough to tithe?

IV. TRUST GOD'S CORRECTION, 3:11-12

"As God should not be forgotten in days of prosperity, so one should not suffer himself to be estranged from Him by days of adversity"—Frank Delitzsch.

A. Fact—God disciplines His children. Accept that fact without argument. It underlies this entire section. God is a Father whose household is marked by holy order. His family must be under His discipline. If one can live in sin, without the discipline of God, it indicates that he is not a child of God. Discipline is no indication that God has forgotten or forsaken a believer. It indicates that He is dealing with him as a Father deals with his child. Read Hebrews 12:5-13 at this point.

B. Reaction, verse 11—How will a believer react to the discipline of God? The Scriptures relate the tendency of man to become discouraged and to lose heart when difficulties come. They admonish "do not despise" and "do not be weary" of discipline. That is the admonition of Hebrews 12:5.

"To despise" means "to loathe, shrink from, melt down," "To be

weary” means “to faint or fall by the way in discouragement.” The admonition of the Scripture is, “Do not despise the Lord's discipline nor be weary of His reproof.” It means that no believer should become estranged from God because of any trial which He permits to come.

C. Motive, verse 12 — God's corrections are not signs of anger, but of love. They produce only those pains which are needed to cure us. Egard has written, “God's strokes are better than Satan's kiss of love; God smites for life, Satan caresses for death.”

Discipline is the sign of sonship. It means that God has taken us into hand, enrolled us in His school. He disciplines as a loving father disciplines the children of his heart. If it causes pain to us, it is only that pain which is necessary. A loving parent may cause his child to receive painful medical treatment, if thereby a serious disease may be overcome. So it is with God. Be sure your suffering is a sign of God's concern for you. His motive is always love. Read Hebrews 12:6-8, 10 and Revelation 3:19.

D. Profit — God always disciplines for our good. His discipline “. . . yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby,” Hebrews 12:11. His discipline is like the husbandman's pruning of the fruit tree. It causes more and finer fruit to be produced, John 15 :2.

Those who suffer under the hand of God find that the God of all grace, after the sufferings are endured, strengthened and settled, I Peter 5:10. Discipline causes one to keep the Word of God, to stay close to Him, and to know by experience what God teaches, Psalm 119:67, 71.

To pass through discipline is to be refined as silver in the furnace, Isaiah 48:10. It is no wonder that Eliphaz said to Job, “Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty,” Job 5:17.

Here is the ultimate end of the matter: “, , , **we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us . . . after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby,**” Hebrews 12:9-11.

“The just shall live by faith,” Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17. It takes faith for one to recognize the hand of God in his daily life. It takes faith for him to honor God daily. Today's study has surveyed some areas where faith should be exercised. Look back over the lesson comments. (1) Have faith in God's Word, verses 1,4. (2) Have faith in God's direction, verses 5-8. (3) Have faith in God's provisions, verses 9-10. (4) Have faith in God's corrective

discipline, verses 11-12.