

Timeless Wisdom for Today's Worries:

Our Favorite Proverb

Proverbs 3:5-6

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Dr. Steve Horn

Text Introduction: You have heard it said many times that the book of Proverbs is the most practical book in the Bible. Every line is flowing with God's wisdom. Indeed the book of Proverbs is categorized as a book of wisdom. We are spending some time this month in the Book of Proverbs, and we are calling our study "Timeless Wisdom for Today's Worries." I invite you to consider with me perhaps the best known Proverb of all.

Text: ⁵Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own understanding;
⁶think about Him in all your ways,
and He will guide you on the right paths.

That's a good translation, but I can't help but think about it the way I first learned it.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight.

Introduction: An overview of the Book of Proverbs would not be complete without including Proverbs 3:5-6. For many of us, we might say this passage is our favorite passage of Proverbs. Some might even say that this passage is their favorite of the entire Bible. Indeed, this promise is precious, yet at the same time powerful. But, how many of us live by this powerful promise for our worries of today?

The Point of Proverbs 3:5-6 and the Point of this Sermon:

It is always a good exercise for me to try to state the point of every sermon in a single sentence. Here is the point of this passage and thus the point of this sermon.

Trusting God is the key principle in every matter of our relationship with God.

That trust of course starts with our relationship with God. We are saved not as the result of our initiative, but God's initiative. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot be good enough in order to be made right with God. Salvation is God's gracious gift to us. That is a matter of trust. When we understand that our basic need in life—to be saved—is a matter of trust, we ought also to acknowledge that every other issue of our relationship with God is also a matter of trust. So, whatever your list of worries looks like, all things are matters that ultimately rely on trust. Our health, our children, our future, our relationships, our addictions—all things—are a matter of trust. Trusting God is the key principle in every matter of our relationship with God. So, let's develop that this morning with a couple of basic questions.

Who are we to trust? The LORD!

This is important! Our trust is not in some stranger who has walked up to us and asked us to trust him. We are being asked to trust the LORD.

How do you describe God?

This is not an easy question, but I like the help that the Psalmist gives us in Psalm 139.

- (1) He knows all things. (Psalm 139:1-6)
- (2) He is everywhere. (Psalm 139:7-10)
- (3) He can do anything. (Psalm. 139:11-12)
- (4) He personally knows me. (Psalm. 139:13-16)

Trusting seems like a difficult thing to do because our human nature is so self-reliant. However, when we can get our minds wrapped around Who God is and how much He loves us, trusting God is such a comforting idea. Relationship is actually central to trust. The more we walk with the LORD, the more the relationship is developed, the easier trust becomes.

What does trusting God mean?

So, what does trust mean? Trust is kind of an abstract idea. A close look at this text helps us to define trust. We see trust from a negative statement and a positive statement.

The Negative Answer: Do not lean on your own understanding

We are not to lean on our intellect, our own abilities, or even our own moral standards. In all things, we must refuse to lean on our own understanding.

The Positive Answer: Acknowledge Him in everything

Stated positively, we must acknowledge God in everything. Literally speaking, this phrase means that we “recognize God’s presence” in all things. There is nothing in our lives that should be outside the reach of God’s perspective or even stronger, His Lordship.

How much are we to trust God? With all our hearts!

Completely! Our trust cannot be a partial trust. Remember the instruction of James? In reference to asking God, James said, “But let him ask in faith without doubting.” In the Bible, most often the heart is not the organ of the physical body, but instead the heart is the seat of the emotion. Our hearts are the centers of our lives. Our heart is the complete surrender of our lives. That’s why when we use a term like “Ask Jesus into our heart” we are not talking about the organ that pumps blood throughout our body, but instead we are talking about the center of our will.

Total surrender. This idea of surrender is a serious thing. At the end of WWII, Germany was surrounded by the Allied Forces. A few days after Hitler's suicide, the Germans surrendered to the Allies. The actual wording of the surrender document contains these words: The German Command agrees for all German forces to lay down their arms and to surrender unconditionally. Furthermore, the Germans agreed to "carry out at once, and without argument or comment, all further orders that will be issued by the Allied Powers on any subject." Are you willing to say that to God?¹

When are we to trust God? Always

There is never a time to not trust God. Whenever we face a crisis, we have two choices. We either trust God or we trust ourselves—there really are no other options. When we trust ourselves, in essence, we are saying that we trust the crisis is bigger than God.

Why should we trust God? Because He gives us a promise!

Many years ago, King George VI of England addressed the British Commonwealth on New Year's Eve at a moment in history when the whole world stood on the brink of uncertainty. Despondency and uncertainty filled the air. The King's own body had been invaded with cancer. He would die before that year was over. Unaware of his own physical condition, he uttered these memorable words: "I said to the man at the gate of the year, 'Give me a light that I might walk safely into the unknown.' And he said to me, 'Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God. It shall be to you safer than the light and better than the known.'"²

We all stand today on the brink of uncertainty and the unknown. The truth is every day is unknown. But, God makes the path straight in our unknown future.

Church, let's renew our commitment today to totally trust God.

¹ From Sermon by David O. Dykes, "Surrender Your Trust," January 9, 2005. Information verified on web from multiple sources.

² Ravi Zacharias, "If the Foundations Be Destroyed," *Preaching Today*, Tape No. 142.