

DON'T TRUST YOURSELF

JAMES 4:8-10 AND PROVERBS 3:3-8

INTRO: WISDOM COMES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES... HERE'S SOME WISDOM FROM KIDS

1. Felt markers are not good to use as lipstick. - Lauren, 9
2. Stay away from prunes. - Randy, 9
3. Puppies still have bad breath, even after eating a tic tac. - Andrew, 9
4. Never hold a dust buster and a cat at the same time. - Kyoyo, 9
5. You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk. - Armir, 9
6. Never trust a dog to watch your food. - Patrick, age 10
7. When your dad is mad and asks you, "Do I look stupid?" don't answer him. - Michael, 14
8. Never tell your mom her diet's not working. - Michael, 14
9. Never allow your three-year old brother in the same room as your school assignment. - Traci, 14
10. If you want a kitten, start out by asking for a horse. - Naomi, 15
11. Don't pick on your sister when she's holding a baseball bat. - Joel, 10

A series in Proverbs would be incomplete without a look at Proverbs 3:5-6. Many of us learned it in Sunday School in the old King James Version, and the translation of the passage that I chose to have read today reflects that. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not on thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths."

I don't think I will be telling you anything you don't already know. But I do believe that anytime we open up the Word of God, that He has a way of bringing His truth home into our hearts and souls and He promises that His Word will not return to Him empty but it will accomplish that thing for which He sent it. So, my hope is that we can open up our hearts and minds and allow the Holy Spirit to say to us whatever He needs to say so that we may be more like our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Focusing on five words today: TRUST, LEAN, ACKNOWLEDGE, DIRECT, and smallest and last but not the least: ALL. I dug down deep into the Hebrew this week... I really did, but don't worry, I'm only going to talk about one Hebrew word. The rest of it really means what you think it means. It's simple, it's straightforward, and hopefully, it will be short... famous last words.

TRUST

Confident; placing reliance in a person or object.

In **the LORD**

Who are people in our circles whom we trust, or at least who we ought to be able to trust?
(Policemen, judges, doctors, teachers, pastors, parents, etc.)

The Olympic gymnastics community is in an uproar because of scandals involving at least one individual whom it was assumed could be trusted. Unfortunately, he misused his trust and his lack of accountability and used his position to feed an apparent addiction that he had. But because of his position, and the privacy and secrecy he was able to maintain, his crimes were not discovered for 30 years.

In some instances, police officers have abused their power. These unfortunate instances have set a stage for overreaction and a painting of all people in blue as colluding in some oppressive conspiracy. Voices of others who should be trusted have entered in and have stirred a pot of distrust and emotion to make a bad situation worse, and now – like many situations in our nation – it is impossible to have a rational adult discussion about this, and a variety of other issues.

Yet in the midst of this sea of distrust stands our great God. Trust in the Lord...

Why can we trust God?

We can trust God because He is God, and we are not.

Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. [Psalm 100:3]

We can trust God because He keeps His promises.

Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; He is the faithful God, keeping His covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments. [Deuteronomy 7:9]

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is trustworthy in all He promises and faithful in all He does. [Psalm 145:3]

We can trust God because He is good.

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; ²³ they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. [Lamentations 3:22-23]

Trust in the Lord with all your heart...

- What is “your heart”?
 - it’s the source of your being.
 - If your heart stopped beating, what would happen to you?
- So if I’m trusting God in my heart, what does that mean?

It means ***I am trusting Him AT the center and source of my being, and it means I am trusting Him WITH the center and source of my being.***

LEAN

Not on your OWN UNDERSTANDING

Resting on something and depending on it to the point of being in jeopardy if the object of leaning were to fail.

Twice Proverbs reminds us, in 14:12 and 16:25 that

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is destruction.”

Now... put that up against the age-old mottos of the world: “If it feels good it must be right,” or, “You only live once.”

Jeremiah 17:9-10

⁹ “The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? ¹⁰ But I, the LORD, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve.” (NLT)

Jesus our Savior spoke of a broad way that led to destruction. Those who were on that way choose it because they fail to trust in the Lord. They are instead relying on themselves. “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. [Matthew 7:13-14]

Don't lean on your own understanding. Don't trust yourself! It only leads to falling over and destruction!

Lean not means I am going to be humble. Not hold onto my agenda. And be open-hearted toward the Word of God.

ACKNOWLEDGE – “Duh!” הַעֲדָה

What is known... your belief, opinion, what you think. “What is... what it is...”

Or, “we hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, and that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

And it is self-evident. We heard Pastor Richard just two weeks ago speak of the foundations of wisdom. God is Creator. One of my favorite boyhood memories is looking up at the Ohio night sky with my Dad. Dad could identify and name all the constellations... the Big Dipper, the Little Dipper, and Orion were my favorites. And he used to sing the first line of a big Beethoven masterwork, “The heav'ns are telling the Lord's endless glory, through all the earth, His praise is found.” The seas re-echo the marvelous story, O man, repeat that glorious sound! The starry hosts He doth order and number, He fills

the morning's golden springs, He wakes the sun from his night-curtain'd slumber; O man, adore the King of Kings!

He is thy Maker whose love shall not waver, a God of wisdom, ever kind; Praise Him and love Him with all thy endeavor, in Him salvation shalt thou find.

Duh...

Look up and see the handiwork of God. He IS GOD! But that's not the only part of "duh"... the other part of acknowledging God is **actually knowing Him**.

I can know who somebody is and not know them.

I know who Billy Graham is. If he were to enter this room, I would be able to pick him out of a crowd. I even know the Billy Graham rule – you know it, too: don't be alone with a woman who is not your wife. But just because I know the Billy Graham rule and what Billy Graham looks and sounds like doesn't mean I know him. The last time I tried to call him I couldn't even find his number. And if I did find it, it would be completely by mistake! And if I did call him, I'll bet whoever answers his phone wouldn't put me through to him.

There are lots of people who know who God is. There are lots of people who can even say the Ten Commandments, the 23rd Psalm, and the Sermon on the Mount by heart (by the way if you can't, maybe that's something to add to your goals for 2018). But that doesn't mean they know God, much less keep Him at the center and source of their being.

Once upon a time, I knew a bank president. I didn't just know who he was. I knew him. I was in his home often for dinner. I know his adult sons, one is serving as a pastor in New England and he and his wife have 6 children, and the other who is recently engaged is a music producer in LA. He has a puppy. I'll never forget one day, this bank president told me to call him at work. He was a busy man! Not only that, he was an important man! And I thought, "Sure I'm gonna call him at work!" But he told me to, so I did. I asked for him by name and was put through to his executive assistant. He told me previously that her name was Mary. I said, "Mary, this is Andrew Irvin," and before I could say anything else Mary said, "Oh yes, you're Mr Smith's pastor. He was expecting you to call him. Please hold on for just a moment and I'll put you through." I think I was on hold for a half a second, and he was on the phone. The bank president.

If you know God, you know One who is infinitely more important and has infinitely more resources than any bank president. And when you call His Name you don't even need to go through an executive assistant. Because if you know God, you have immediate, constant access to the Creator of the universe.

Recognize who God is, and seek to know Him.

In all your ways ACKNOWLEDGE Him and He will

DIRECT...

Who's supposed to trust in the Lord? Who is supposed to lean NOT on their own understanding?

Who is supposed to acknowledge Him? Who is supposed to do the directing?

How many times a day do we get this backwards in our lives? You may have your life together better than I have mine together, but I get this backwards many times. I like to make my choices based on what I know. I like to direct my life and everyone else's, too.

“Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.” [Ecclesiastes 5:2]
God has an elevated perspective on life. It's not that He's distant and aloof, it's that He sees things from a different angle, so He knows which way you need to go.

The word “direct” is not in this passage in our Bibles today. Most translations now say what the more formal English term “direct” meant... and that is to make your path straight.

The prophet Isaiah speaks of every valley being exalted, every mountain being made low, all the rough places smooth and all the crooked pathways becoming straight. This is something that God is able to do, and one day promises to do in all the world. But until that Day He is choosing to do it one surrendered life at a time. As you surrender your life to Him, He can take the tangled web of your life and straighten it out. That won't necessarily stop you from messing it up again, but just as a father pities His children, so the Lord pities those who trust Him. And as we come running back to Him, like a child runs to Mommy with a skinned knee, He will scoop us up, receive us, bandage the wound, and – like I as a Dad did with my daughters after Mom did all that – He will kiss it and make it all better.

You may have made a royal mess out of your life. I'm going to be brutally honest... I have, too... more than once. And as long as I'm a resident of planet earth I'm not going to guarantee that I won't make another royal mess. And it probably would be foolish to promise you won't either.

However, as we trust in Him, as we lean not on our own understanding, as we acknowledge that God is and we seek to know Him, we can rely on Him to straighten things out and remove obstacles from our path.

ALL

As I close I want to pay attention briefly to one more word that is in this passage. It's the word “all.”

With all your heart

In all your ways

Holding back is what gets us in trouble time after time.

⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. ⁶In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.

[Proverbs 3:5&6]