

Great Verses of the Bible

Trust in the Lord

Proverbs 3:5-6

August 20, 2023

Pastor John Mars

This is the day that the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it! Good morning, Church! Our scripture today is Proverbs 3:5-6. "Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths." May God bless the reading of His word.

I have made some monumental mistakes. But not today, yet, but the day is young! I once led a church to put red plexiglass windows in their sanctuary. In the morning it was beautiful, but in the evening it looked like the fires of hell were burning their way up through the floor. I have been absolutely certain about someone that I hired, only to have to fire them within three weeks. When I went to my first little church, they had 15 members. We grew it to 45. And there was a gentleman that used to be a member of the church, and I decided that I would get him to come back. And I begged him to come back, and people said, "You don't want to do that!" And I begged him to come back and, after all, I knew everything at that point. I was 21 years old. And I begged him to come back, and we promptly went from 45 to 15. And he is the only person that has threatened to whup me, twice. I have made some bad decisions. How about you? Well, don't be too hard on yourself. Most of the bad decisions we make, we make because we don't have all the information. And later on, when we get more information, what do you say? "You know, I shouldn't have done that!"

But I have made some great decisions, too. Not today, yet, but the day is young. I married Jeannine! Two weeks ago, we celebrated being together for 20 years. And this coming week, we will celebrate being married for 18 of those years. I've made some good decisions about people I didn't hire. One is a little bit humorous. We interviewed five people, and the first five were just more or less inappropriate. But this fifth lady, her resume was great. She had all the training we needed. She had the experience we were looking for. She interviewed fairly well. And when we finished with the interview we were talking, and we decided, "You know, there's no reason for us not to hire this woman." So, we decided that we would do that. But if I have the opportunity, I always sleep on it, at least one night. It gives the Spirit a chance to work, and I can think and kind of ruminate on things. And that night, I kid you not, that night, all night long, I dreamed about the skit in Saturday Night Live: the church lady. Some of you will admit you know what I'm talking about. And I dreamed about the church lady, except it was this woman's face, all night long. I got up the next morning, I called the chair of my SPRC, and I told the lady, "Listen, we cannot hire this woman. I'll tell you why later!"

I know that I know that I know that God's prevenient grace, the grace of God that goes ahead of us, that is preparing the way, and the sanctifying grace of God that calls us toward Christlikeness, are at work in my life all the time. And sometimes I follow and sometimes I don't. We were created in the image of God to have a relationship with God. That's what God desires. God wants us to have a deep and abiding relationship with Him and if we do, we will not make as many of those monumental mistakes. But the depth of the relationship we have with God depends on us not on God. And if it is

not deep and meaningful and abiding and impactful, it's not God's fault. Now, drive a peg down here. Hold on. We'll be back in a minute.

When God called me into ministry, it was dramatic and traumatic, dramatic and traumatic. And for me, it had to be, because doing this was the furthest thing from my mind. I never had thought about it. I never had dreamed about it. It is almost the exact opposite of the way I thought I would be spending my life. So, God had to do it in that manner, or I would not have listened. So, when it happened, I went to my oldest mentor. I told him what had happened. We talked for a while, and he gave me this passage that I shared with you today: Proverbs 3:5-6. "Trust in the Lord with all of your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path." I don't always make the right decisions, but I do so more often when I follow this passage closely. There are four parts to this passage: Trust in the Lord with all of your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. In all of your ways acknowledge Him. And He will direct your path.

Trust in the Lord with all of your heart, not partway but all the way. And trust that the Lord will guide you. And sometimes you have to trust what you do not understand. Trust what you do not understand. Let me illustrate this: Years ago, there was a gentleman that showed up at our church. There were no red flags about anything about him, but he made me uneasy. After about four months, he expressed a desire to work with our children. We did a background check, which is something that's standard procedure. We always do it for somebody working with children. It came back clean, but I could not get peace about it. And I told our director, "He just can't." He came to visit me, and I said, "Sir, I can't explain it, but I'm uneasy, and I'm following my gut, the Spirit." He got mad, he left my office, and he left the church. About six months later, I was called to another church. About a month after that, this man was arrested. He was a pedophile. Now, I couldn't explain it. I didn't understand it. And there are times that I still don't understand. But there's something inside: the Spirit's leading, the Spirit's guiding. Trust in the Lord with all of your heart. And sometimes you're not going to understand exactly what God is up to at the moment. I don't have to understand, but I must believe that God understands, and I must trust in Him.

Trust in the Lord with all of your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. Your understanding will fail you. You hear me? Your understanding will fail you. This is probably, I can't say this for absolute certainty, but this is probably the most educated church I have ever been in. Probably. There are probably more PhDs among this congregation than any other group I have ever pastored. But I don't care how much education you have, how many degrees you have, how intelligent you are, your understanding will fail you. There's more that you don't know than you do know. Do you remember those monumental mistakes you made? Your own understanding will fail you. You do not have all of the information, and you will never have all of the information. Now, I'm a trained counselor and my training says: Never use "absolutes," as in "Never use absolutes." But I want to double down on this absolute: You never have all the information. God does.

Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding, but in all your ways acknowledge Him. What does it mean to acknowledge God in all of your ways? It means to allow God to control every aspect of your life. Because those aspects of your life that you do not allow God to control, that's where the devil gets in. Those are your weak spots. Those areas where God is not in control, where you have reserved for

your own understanding, those are the areas where Satan gets in. In all your ways acknowledge Him, in all aspects.

Trust in the Lord with all of your heart. Do not trust your own understanding. In all of your ways acknowledge Him, then... Then He will direct your path. God's desire is to direct your path. God's desire is for you to be all you were created to be. You don't have all of the information, but God does have all of the information. Jesus said, "I have come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly." That is God's desire for you. God's desire is to have that deep and abiding relationship with you, to keep you from making those monumental mistakes, or as many of them, anyway. Have you ever suffered because of bad decisions? We all have. God's desire, God's longing, is to help you, to keep you from making those bad choices. You see, God loves you, and God wants what's best for you in all circumstances, and you can trust that. God loves you and wants what's best for you, and you can trust that.

Trust in the Lord with all of your heart. Do not trust just your own understanding. In every aspect of your life, not some, acknowledge Him. And then you'll have that deep and abiding relationship that will guide you beyond what you know, so you will not make as many of those monumental mistakes that cause you suffering.

Let's pray. If you have that deep and abiding relationship with God, right now is a time to thank God for that and ask that it will do nothing but get deeper and stronger and more abiding. But if not, now's the time to say, "God, I do put all my trust in You. Show me those aspects of my life that I have not given to You, and I will give them to You right now. And please, Lord, direct my path." Let's pray together.

God, we trust that You love us. We trust that You want only the best for us. And Lord, we trust that You have the knowledge, and You have the information that we do not have. Now, Lord, help us to trust You with all of our being. In Christ's name, amen.