

To Lean —or— Not To Lean? That Is The Question

Proverbs 3:1–12

A Supplement To **Encourage** Additional Study
Some Relevant Statements About Trusting God

“It’s better to get an A+ for consistently trying to trust in the Lord than an F for never trusting the Lord enough to move forward. Determine to jump headlong into whatever things God has prescribed for you and trust Him in the doing. You will not regret it.” —**Jack Hibbs**

“So often, it seems as if people struggle over the question, ‘What’s God’s will for me & why is it so hard to find?’ This is an authentic reality for many people, but it’s also a mistake to make the assumption that God’s will is mysterious. One of the most important steps we all need to take involves taking a serious look at the instructions found in the Bible. God’s will is defined by them & obedience to His Word will expand our ability to know how perfect His plans are for us!” —**GAD**

“We cannot move forward with words alone but with our deeds, our resolve, and a renewed dependence on God” —**Erwin Lutzer**

“We must cease striving and trust God to provide what He thinks is best and in whatever time He chooses to make it available. But this kind of trusting doesn't come naturally. It's a spiritual crisis of the will in which we must choose to exercise faith!” —**Chuck Swindoll**

“God knows everything we are going through at this very moment and everything we will go through in the future. He knows the best way to handle every situation so we get the best possible outcome and we need to trust him with that.” —**Erwin Lutzer**

“It doesn't always make sense, but we must trust God with what we can't control. God's plan for us is always better than anything the world has to offer because He always leads us step by step with perfect vision. His faithfulness is the one constant in the equation. He is the Rock on which we stand.” —**David Jeremiah**

“God moves into our lives by divine design, to periodically disturb our equilibrium. That’s how He develops us.” —**Howard Hendricks**

“Trusting God means thinking and acting according to God's word in spite of circumstances. So, when circumstances become difficult and you are in the furnace of testing, remain where God has put you until He tells you to move.” —**Warren W. Wiersbe**

—**Some Personal Thoughts to Introduce This Week’s Devotional Study:**

—This week we’re studying Proverbs 3:1–12 which is one of the most foundational passages in the Bible. Everything in God’s Word is inspired (2 Timothy 3:16–17) and is beneficial for the purpose of teaching theological truth, enabling us to recognize when we need to be corrected, guiding us back from those times when we’ve sinned, & training us about how we can stay on the paths of righteousness where God wants us to walk. So when I describe this particular passage as a foundational text of scripture, I should explain what I mean.

The statement, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart” is an instruction that defines what’s necessary to have a personal relationship with God. It introduces where it begins & what’s involved in maintaining a healthy attachment with the Lord. There are several other biblical passages that provide us with additional information, but Proverbs 3 is fundamental in helping us understand our responsibility by trusting the Lord!

—**1**— The central theme of our sermon is “Trust is absolutely essential to finding & following God’s will! Without trust, our lives typically sink into confusion & chaos!” We could expand this idea into a more general focus by saying that “thru–out life our lives are calmer & more peaceful when we’re able to trust the Lord, the people around us, & the promises of those in authority.” **Think about this in a personal way & ask yourself if you have that sense of security? How would it change your attitude, actions, ambitions, & anxieties if you had that level of trust?**

—**2**— In Proverbs 3:1–12, we find three steps that encourage us to trust in the Lord by defining how our focused faith in God leads to the godly guidance we need to discover His will for our lives. There are many passages thru–out the Bible that emphasize ideas that relate to God’s will, but it seems that’s it’s typical for people to describe God’s will as mysterious or complicated. Please carefully read & observe Proverbs 3:1–12 to prepare for the questions that follow. Here’s a summary outline based on Proverbs 3:1–12, provided in 3 steps:

1— The 1st step involves **obtaining godly guidance!** (3:1–4)

—The only way to know God’s will is to study His Word!

2— The 2nd step involves **obeying godly guidance!** (3:5–8)

—The only way to follow God’s will is to obey His Word!

3— The 3rd step involves **owning godly guidance!** (3:9–12)

—God desires that His people honor & respect Him!

Simply stated, in this day & age, God revealed His purposes & plans for us in what He directed the authors of the Bible to write. **The only place where we can begin to find His will is from reading/studying the Bible.**

Hebrews 4 teaches us that His Word is living, active, & able to cut thru the chaos & confusion we experience because of sin. It unique from any other book ever written or produced! If we say that we trust God, we should trust & believe the Bible because that’s where we find His Word!

—**Why is it logical that God would exclusively reveal His will for us in a book like the Bible?**

—God is sovereign, all-knowing, & all-powerful, and He has the right to reveal His purposes & plans in any way He desires. In addition to this, based on 1 Corinthians 14:33, God doesn’t want us to be confused about His will. (Also 2 Timothy 2–3 highlight the idea that God reveals His desires for us exclusively in His written word.) **How is the Christian faith different from all other systems of belief? Why should this give us a sense of security?**

—**Some people seem to struggle with seeing the connection between what the Bible says about God’s will & obeying the instructions given in the text of scripture. What are some challenges that might hinder us from obeying the instructions we read in God’s Word?**

—3— Now let’s focus our attention on Proverbs 3:5–8.

Our most valuable lesson is **learning** to **RELY** on God. {Proverbs 3:5}

The Hebrew word for trust means *to put oneself wholly at the mercy of another; this refers to reclining* against something & **relying** on it totally for support.

—**How would you explain the idea of leaning on God for support to some one who questions whether God is the answer they need. Maybe they’ve been emotionally hurt by a loss or difficult event in life. What would you say to encourage them that God is trustworthy?**

—Notice the contrast in this verse between being able to rely or rest on God rather than leaning on our own ability to support ourselves.

—**What are some reasons why we want to “do it for ourselves” instead of giving it over to the Lord?**

—**What are some circumstances that God has placed in your life that He could use to teach you to rely on Him?**

—4— We need to learn how to **RECOGNIZE** God’s authority! {Proverbs 3:6}

The word used in the text that’s translated *acknowledge* means to be aware of and have fellowship with God, not just to tip one’s hat to Him. It includes submitting to & obeying God’s sovereign authority. The promise that God will make our paths straight strongly suggests that God will not only show us the path of righteousness, He will enable us to be successful in what He shows us to do.

—**How does the idea that submitting to God’s authority will lead us to success, motivate us to obey God will? How does it provide us with a sense of encouragement?**

—**How can we find balance between expecting God to provide our wants & wishes and realizing that God will withhold things that might not be in our best spiritual interest? How can we avoid the “name it & claim it deception that some people teach?**

—5— God deserves our **RESPECT & REVERENCE.** {Proverbs 3:7-8 & 9–12}

Often the Bible reminds us that God gives grace to the humble. Proverbs 3 places a unique emphasis on that idea. Notice the warning in these verses. The **REQUIREMENT** of HUMILITY is defined by the specific warning against being **wise in our own eyes.**

The **RESPONSIBILITY** of HUMILITY is seen by the exhortation to **Fear the Lord & turn away from evil!**

The **REWARD** of HUMILITY promises a sense of **personal peace, well-being & refreshment to our bones.**

—**What connection do you see between the problem of pride & the idea of being wise in your own eyes?**

—**How does our society tempt & deceive us into becoming wiser than we really are?**

—**What steps can we take to help us remain humble?**

—**Why is false humility a problem that we might face?**

—**How can we avoid acting as if we’re humble, when we’re really struggling with pride?**

—**How should this impact or influence our prayer lives?**