

## DON'T WASTE YOUR LIFE

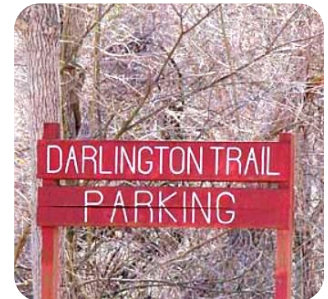
SERIES: HOW TO: LIFE | WEEK 4 | 7.5.2020

Hey, good morning church, thank you for joining us online.

My name is Pastor John Lawley and one of the executive pastors here, and so it's an honor to bring you the Word of God. I hope you had a great Fourth of July weekend. I hope you spent time with your families; spent time with the Lord. Uh, before we get going I just would invite you if you are coming in in your living room or maybe you're watching us on your phone grab, your Bibles or pull up your YouVersion Bible app on your phone and turn to Proverbs. We're in the book of Proverbs all throughout the summer and we're just looking at some of the key wisdom literature all throughout Proverbs and kind of diving into it. But this morning we're gonna be in Proverbs Chapter 3 and look at verses 5 & 6, which is a really popular Proverbs, many of you have already heard this but we're gonna dive a little bit deeper in and talk about what does it mean to trust in the Lord, but before that I want to tell you a little story.

I grew up, uh, kind of in central PA in a place called Enola and I actually grew up in the middle of the woods, and so my playground was the woods. And so oftentimes me and my buddy, who was a couple years younger than me, we would just kind of go in the morning into the woods and we would just do anything we would want to. It was actually a pretty awesome childhood. We would run throughout the woods and just make tree houses. We used to actually take, my poor dad, we used to take the broom handles from my dad's, like, brooms and we would run up and pretend we were Ninja Turtles and my dad was so angry because he would never have any broom handles. But we were just kind of – we would run on through the woods, it was great.

But often we would go really deep into the woods to the point where we were lost. We didn't have any phones back then and so we were just kind of completely lost not knowing how to get home, and so what we would do is we would always walk to the top of the mountain. No matter where we were we'd always just kind of walk up because we knew at the top of the mountain there was this trail, it's actually called the Darlington Trail, and we knew that once we kind of hit this trail then we would just follow the trail and then we'd have a couple markers that would lead us home. So as long as we got to this trail on the top of the mountain we were good. And so we had this kind of safety net to wander but we were dependent on this path. Right?



And so what Solomon's gonna do in this Proverbs in Chapter 3 is he's going to kind of lead us into this path of saying hey listen, if you don't want to—uh, and John Piper wrote a book called *Don't Waste Your Life* and so I'm gonna kind of use that line because I really like it—Solomon is saying listen, if you don't want to waste your life, this is what you need to do. And he kind of puts it into kind of a step-by-step process. And so we're gonna filter this verse and really lean into the text because this is what the text is actually calling us to do. Right? What does God's Word have to say about this and how do we apply it to our lives. So let me read the passage for you, it's in Proverbs Chapter 3, verses 5 & 6, it says this:

*<sup>5</sup> Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
and do not lean on your own understanding.*

*<sup>6</sup> In all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make straight your paths.*

– PROVERBS 3:5-6 (ESV)

Man, this is, you know, this is the verse, this is the verse you have on your wall in your home. This is the verse that you want to share. Actually, I did some research, this is the top five most shared verses on

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social media. And so even as Christians we really like this verse, it sounds good, but I'm kind of laying out this conversation that's like imagine if you were sitting at a table like this and Jesus was sitting in front of you and you literally are like, "Listen, I feel like I'm no longer walking with You. I feel like You're distant. I feel like I don't know how to get back. I took the wrong path. Help me to get on the best path, Lord." I feel like Jesus would say this; Jesus would say these three things and He would really break it down. And so this is the conversation we're having: How do we not waste our lives? How do we kind of identify areas of our lives where maybe we stepped out of the path that God has for us? And how do we step back in?

So the first thing here is Solomon says listen, you need to trust in the Lord with all of your heart. And so here's the question – Right? – because when we say trust in the Lord, man, trust sometimes can be this, like, imaginary word, like it's like I understand that God wants me to trust Him but what does that even mean to trust God? And so that's my first question. And so I would argue that if you want to trust in the Lord you have to bank on the promises of God. You have to look at your life and say listen, I can't trust somebody if I don't know what they're saying. And so you have to pursue the Lord in order to trust Him. You can't just say, "God, I acknowledge You and I trust You" without any relational pursuit. It just doesn't work like that.

And in fact, when we see in Scripture there is this response that God has for us to say hey listen, if you give your life to Jesus it requires you to turn from your old ways towards the Lord. What does that look like the turn towards the Lord, to trust in Him? That's why when you have a pastor often say hey listen, are you in your Word, are you praying/ It's not because these are like spiritual disciplines that have no fruit; it's that when you do those things you're gonna grow in your trust in the Lord. And we do this all the time, right? If you say I want you to trust me there's either two responses, right? One is, "Yes. I'll totally trust you," and two, "Why should I trust you?" Right? Those are the only responses when asked to trust somebody. And the second response is really kind of what I want to iron out here is if you want to trust in the Lord, you have to understand why He is worthy of that trust.

But let's be honest, we trust in things every day of our lives. Like right now you are trusting – Right? – that whatever television you're watching or whatever phone you're watching this the sermon on it's gonna work. You're trusting that the home that you're watching this in was built by hands that knew what they were doing and it's not gonna fall on your face. You trust when you step into a plane that that airplane pilot is not going to crash you. Right? And why do we base our trust in those people without even thinking about it? Well, we believe that those people are equipped with the knowledge needed to provide something that we can trust in. Right? So we need to know the person in order to trust.

And it's the same thing with our relationship with God. When God says to trust Him what He's saying is grow in your knowledge of Me, grow in your understanding of who I Am. Because the more you learn about who God is the more you'll gain trust in Him. And so this is the main reason that we are to learn about God is because as we learn our trust grows. And listen, He's worthy of our trust. He's worthy of our time and energy [AUDIO GLITCH] men, right? And we're gonna have this conversation all throughout this message about men and God because really, when you ask the question about trust you really only have a few options of who do you trust in this world. There's really only a few options and most of the options are really, really foolish if you really apply it to your lives and you look at it objectively. But let's break this down.

If you trust in God – right? – you know that God's character is different than man. That God is steadfast. That He is true. That He's the Creator. He has governed all these things. And so I want to highlight a couple things in Scripture. It says God is not a man; it says that He should not lie, like man, or that He

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should change his mind like man. He doesn't have a promise that He offers and He doesn't fulfill it like man. And we see this in Numbers [23:19], in Psalms, where He's saying listen, you may understand trust as it relates to maybe a parent that you have or a sibling that you have, but we have to remind ourselves that God is greater than man. That He doesn't make promises that He doesn't keep. That He's faithful to what He says He is faithful to. I, um, think about in Scripture there's oftentimes really all throughout the Old Testament narrative that God proves His faithfulness and often the people of God like the prophet Isaiah, He speaks to the people in the midst of their fear and He reminds them of who God is and compare to the circumstances that they face.

And so I think about the Babylonian Empire as they're threatening God's people in Isaiah, namely the Assyrian Empire, Isaiah is speaking to the people of God who were fearful and he says this in Isaiah 14:24:

*<sup>24</sup> The Lord Almighty has sworn, "Surely, as I have planned,*

— this is what God's saying —

*so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand."*

– ISAIAH 14:24 (NIV / ESV)

And so what Isaiah's saying is listen, why do we trust God? Because His promises are always true, always perfect, always righteous, and man's aren't. And so when you're stepping back and you're looking at the circumstances – like Joe Zappy in his testimony this morning was such an amazing example of saying in this time that we live in here's a question: Who else can you trust? And so as you remind yourself of who God is you are reminded that God is worthy of His trust, just like Isaiah says look at God compared to the circumstances and know that the circumstances around you does not change the power that God has over it. And so let me kind of apply a couple of these concepts here in first understanding what does it look like to trust in the Lord.

Well, no matter what's happening right now—church, look at me—no matter what's happening right now, so you step back and the world is kind of crazy so whether it's the sickness around us that we don't feel like we can control, we just hope it doesn't impact our family; whether it's the economy in which some of us are losing our businesses, losing our job, and just like Joe talked about, there's a season right now but we gotta trust the Lord with our finances in a way that we never did before. Whether it's racial reconciliation, which you look at the world and you're saying, "Lord, how can You fix this stuff that's happening in the world? It doesn't seem like it's getting fixed; it seems like it's getting worse." How do you step back and remind yourself that God is in control. His very nature is sovereign and good, and so I can step back—not be ignorant to anything—but step back and say, "Lord, I'm depending on You because You are good." That is acknowledging God's character and saying listen, I'm gonna grow in my knowledge of You. I'm gonna spend time in the morning reading the Word and reminding me of who You are so as I look at this world I don't forget.

And so this is what he's saying is the first thing if you want to grow in your trust, you must grow in your understanding of who God is. Listen, if you feel like God is an evil God who's offering judgment upon the world without grace, man, you're gonna – you gotta step back and you're gonna not only fear God but you're gonna fear the circumstances around you. But if you see God as a sovereign good God, which He is, man, that gives strength to your soul. That increases your faith and it increases your trust in Him. And so how do you grow in your trust? You know Him, you grow in your knowledge of Him.

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Another way that we grow in our trust and we've talked about this is that we remember His faithfulness. You know, we think about how God has proven Himself trustworthy not only in the Scripture but in our own lives and we remember those things, we dwell on those things. I think of Solomon as he celebrates—and oftentimes in the Scripture we see this even in the New Testament—they celebrate God's promise specifically to Moses, they look back and they think of Moses and his people and how they established the land of Israel and how they have this past that isn't always pretty, that's sometimes doesn't look like it should, but yet God was in control and He was sovereign and He was good. In 1 Kings Chapter 8, verse 56, it says this:

*<sup>56</sup> "Praise be to the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.*

– 1 KINGS 8:56 (NIV)

And so it's just a reminder in the passage in Kings that God, as He spoke promises upon Moses and his people, that not one word of what He spoke did not come true. And so as we're stepping back we think about God's promises in the past. But listen, yeah, as a church, like if this auditorium was filled right now I could ask, listen, raise your hand if you know that God's promises have been true in your life. Like, as Christians we could look back and say, "Listen, when I gave my life to Jesus, man, He gave me what He told me He would give me. He gave me rest for my soul. He gave me peace that surpasses understanding. He gave me clarity to see the world through His eyes. He was faithful to forgive me of all of my sins, to give me a new life. God was faithful to deliver me from sin and slavery that I was once living in. And so you know as a believer we are testimony of God's past faithfulness and that brings into the future of faith of saying listen, because You have been faithful yesterday You will be faithful today and tomorrow. And so how do we grow in our trust of the Lord? We grow by understanding as we learn more about who He is – our trust will grow. As we remind ourselves of the promises and the faithfulness of God – our trust will grow.

But I want to stop and kind of go back to this point that I made earlier. When we grow in our trust in God there's a couple things logically that I just want to challenge us with. So if you're watching this and you're maybe not yet giving your life to Jesus. By the way, we love that you're here. We love that you're watching this message even though you still have a lot of questions, but one of the things in my life was I had a lot of questions that I needed to navigate towards in order to find Jesus. And often I'd say this: Jesus doesn't need me to answer all those questions; He doesn't need you to answer all your questions in order to reveal who He is in your life, and so I pray right now that He's doing that.

But I had a lot of questions in which I struggled to say well, well if God is good – Right? – I'm talking about His character, then why does He do this? And so I had to navigate through this idea of I'm questioning the character of God; in order to trust Him I need to know Him and that's a good process to say who is this God that you're calling me to trust? But then in the midst of these conversations I was having, I remember a spiritual mentor of mine once looked me right in the eye and he said, "Listen, I understand that you have sometimes a hard time trusting God, but let me ask you a question." And he said, "What other options do you really have?"

And so that's the third point to this idea of why should we trust God is what else is there? I mean, really, stop and think about it, what other sensible alternative is there than to put your faith in God? Should we trust in ourselves? I mean, should we trust in sinful, broken people? Like right now as a church we have a choice, right? Do we trust in the world around us? Do we trust in the governmental powers and the influencers in this world? Do we trust in these people –OR– do we trust in the Lord –OR– do we

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trust in ourselves? There's really kind of only three options here, and so I would argue that if you trust in yourselves one of the things that I've learned in my life is that I make a horrible god. I say this often because I have to remind myself of this every day that man, if you trust in yourself you're unpredictable, you're unreliable, you have limit in your wisdom, you don't know all things. Man, you have emotional outbreaks that you aren't often able to control. You are a mess and so if you are going to trust in yourself, man, your life is gonna be filled with anxiety and worry because you're not enough. And listen, when I say you're not enough it doesn't – it shouldn't make you feel like you're not worth anything because the Gospel is a beautiful message to say listen, when you humble yourself to know that self-worship ends in destruction it allows you to soften your heart so that the Lord can come in and show you what your purposes are, to show you that you actually have eternal worth but it's not found in you. And so the idea of trusting in yourself—look at the circumstances of look around us, look at what Joe shared in his testimony. Joe had no control over the circumstances around him, but yet God does. And so do you trust in yourself who has no control, or do you trust in God who is sovereign and good? Logically, think about that.

Or let's say you're saying you know what, I don't trust myself, I'm gonna trust in other people. You know there's this funny narrative that we see a lot in films where you have this kind of romantic film – right? – and the guy says to the girl something like this, "You can always trust me. I will always be there for you. I'll never let you down." And what's funny is my wife always laughs because she knows I'm gonna say something because I just can't help myself, and I always look at the television screen, I'm always like, "Yes you will! You totally will let her down. You will let that girl down thousands of times this week. And in fact, chances are one day you're gonna die and when you die you're gonna be in front of the Lord and she's not gonna be able to trust you with anything, you're gonna be dead and you're gonna be in judgment." And so this promise that you can trust in a person, it's just a faulty promise, it's a lie. And so yes, you can have good, godly relationships that are going to stir your affections and point you to Jesus that you can lean into, but man, if you trust in people – people are sinful, people aren't perfect, politicians aren't perfect, rulers in this world aren't perfect.

And so for us as believers we recognize that the three options, man, God is the best one by far. And so then if it is true that to trust in God makes the most sense logically, then we ought to pursue Him wholeheartedly to say, "Father, if I can't find it in You, there's nowhere else to go." And then that should give us a sense of conviction and saying, "Yes, I need to hunger after God more. I need to pursue Him more.

You know, I was just meeting with our small groups a couple days ago and it's funny, we're starting to meet outside together, it's so wonderful. I hope for some of you you're connected in the community, it's so wonderful to be able to talk to people, fellow believers, just encourage each other, just even to talk about what's going on in the world and just see godly wisdom from brothers and sisters in Christ. But one of the things that's funny is that I was telling them that I recently joined kind of this debate Facebook page and my wife warned me not to but I was just so, I was so hungry for good conversation because we're just stuck inside all day that I wanted to kind of join this because I thought hey, I know that I can't change your heart but man, hopefully I can plant seeds of truth.

And so what happened was it's just like most stuff online, it's not filled with a lot of wisdom, it's not filled with a lot of truth, but there's a lot of good conversations. And so a lot of the conversations had to do with God and some of them, you know, came at it aggressively like, "Aw, it's silly to believe in God" or "The Bible isn't real," and so I would enter into these conversations with people and, really, at the end of the day it really got to a place where that person had a battle: Do I trust in my own ability to know

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truth, logic, purpose, or do I submit to God? Do I say that yes, it makes sense that there's some being of greater intelligence, greater understanding that I need to lean into to understand why things are the way they are. And so it really came down to do you want to self-worship or do you want to self-worship death to worship the Lord, like, do you want to die to self to worship Lord? Those are really the two options in all the conversations that I have online. And I pray that the Lord would humble their heart to repent and to give their life to Jesus; to step into wisdom, to step into trust to know who He is and by knowing Him – as we are just talking about – you'll grow in your understanding. And so that's what we're talking about when we talk about trust.

But the next part of this passage after it says trust says, "*and do not lean on your own understanding.*" And so in this passage it kind of has a complimentary pair of commands here. Right? It says okay, you are to trust – if you don't want to waste your life – trust in the Lord and do not lean on your own understanding. And so I stop as I read the Word, it's good to stop and say okay, what does this mean to not lean on your own understanding? Now on face value it's a little bit odd to say okay, wait, what else is there. Right? I wake up and my mind thinks and whatever I think I think is right. Right? Like, how do I stop myself from not leaning on my own understanding? Isn't that my understanding? And so it's a challenging verse because you have to step back and say okay, wait a second, how do I apply this? Do I just take all my thoughts and just completely do the opposite? Like, how do I really do this? And so let me break this down.

I believe that what the passage is saying is that you are to make a conscious choice—and this is a daily thing—you are to make a conscious choice every day not to be self-reliant. To literally wake up and say, "Self, you are not enough." Just like we were sharing. I am not enough to be able to live this life without the Lord. I'm not enough. I'm not enough to understand how I am to love, understand how I am to serve, understand how I am to walk out my purpose. I am not enough. And so every day you are to be reminded that I need to die to self and lean into the Spirit of God. Let me try to make you understand this a little bit better.

C. S. Lewis, which is one of my favorite artists, an author really, he's just a brilliant man, he wrote this book called *Mere Christianity* which I actually just read over my vacation at the beach again; one of my favorite books. And he uses this brilliant illustration with a piano and so it's very similar—if you've ever played an instrument, you're gonna kind of understand this illustration maybe more intimately than others—but he talks about how like when you think of a piano one of the things that's very clear when you sit down at a piano is that there is a purpose to what you're seeing. Right? So whoever first made the piano, you know, there are black keys in a certain position in the piano, there are white keys, there are certain places those keys operate, ensure when you step into that piano if there is no one around you and you have no guide you can play that piano as much as you want and you will get sounds to come out of that piano. But, in fact, the piano is meant to be played a certain way.

And so if you play the piano and you never have anybody teach you the purpose of that piano you may start to occasionally get a good melody but you're gonna be stuck, because what you need is a person who knows the piano to teach you. Right? And as a musician some of you will relate to this, a lot of times you start off not really playing well and then occasionally you actually sound awful, worse than you started, and then eventually you kind of play and you play a little bit and it's better and then you start to grow in your understanding, and then your mind starts to embrace that new truth of how to play and then all of a sudden you start to get better and better and better. And what C. S. Lewis is saying is listen, when you look at this thing called life you have to remind yourself everyday that God is the

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author of all that we see; that He created all that we experience—the emotions, the circumstances, He knows these things intimately. He wired those together.

And so if you want to understand how to best operate in the world around you, you have to spend time with the Person who made it. That as you begin to have God step into your life it's like having a professional piano player step into the room and as you start the play he says, "No, do this." *Oh, this is better.* Or, "What you don't understand is you are to play this way." *Oh, that? I never knew that before.* As God starts to speak into your life through His Word, through His saints, that He begins to speak truth into your life and you begin to open up this thing called the world and start to see it for the way God has called it to be.

And so it's embracing this idea that Lord, I cannot learn this without You. I need to know what your thoughts are when it comes to this world. I need to understand how You meant this to be, whether it's my relationships, Lord, how did You make – how do You make relationships to work? Whether it's seeing my future, Lord, what did You call me to do in this life? And so it's leaning into that teacher and saying this is your instrument, Father, teach me to play.

And so in Scripture we see a lot of this. Solomon, who wrote these very words as an example. Just to highlight this, Solomon himself doesn't always play the tune that he's calling us to play. I mean, Solomon as he's writing these things we see in even Solomon's own life, he starts out as this brilliant King and then Solomon starts to grow in his power and starts to grow in the lie and—join me in just kind of maybe raising your hand if you agree with this—one of the greatest lies that got the devil that gets us every day is that we sometimes believe and, in fact, most of the times we believe that we know more than God, and this is what happened with Solomon. Though he knew intellectually that God's way was better, he began to think that he knew more than God and so he built an army for himself. He started to oppress his people. He started to get away from God's wisdom and God's authority and God's guidance and he started to say, you know what, I'm on my own, I've got this. And sometimes we do that. Right?

Like, let's go back to the piano illustration. How many of us maybe have learned the piano and have learned a couple chords, or maybe you've learned like a song on the piano, just one song, and you're like you know what, I'm good. And so every time you get around people that play the piano, you play that one song thinking you know what, they're gonna think that I know how to play the piano. But, in fact, man, you just scratched the surface of what that piano can offer you when it comes to being played and you settle for just a minimum amount of knowledge. Sometimes we think if we give our lives to the Lord, then we just need to say a prayer or get baptized or walked forward at a Christian camp 20 years ago and we're good and the rest of life is just up to us to figure it out. I'm gonna call that out right now to say that is not what God is calling us to do. He's saying as you gave your life to the Lord, you are stepping into this surrender to say, "Father, not my will but yours be done. Teach me how to live every day of my life. You are my instructor." It's not, "God, I got this." It's Lord, every day teach me something new about who You are and why You created this world.

And so just like Solomon we ought to be very careful not just to speak these words that I'm speaking today, but yes, I'm gonna put this plaque on my wall that says I trust in the Lord and I lean not on my own understanding, but in my heart I do the opposite. We are to be very careful not to live our lives thinking we've got this.

And so one of the things that I just want to challenge you with is what Paul challenges the Church of Corinth. He says in 1st Corinthians Chapter 13, verse 12:

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*<sup>12</sup> For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.*

– 1 CORINTHIANS 13:12 (ESV)

And what he's challenging the church with is that the things that maybe are foolishness of God is wiser than the human wisdom, or he says that again in 1st Corinthians, that God's way is here [*raises his arm up*] and our natural understanding of this world and how we should love and how we should treat each other is here [*places his hand in front of himself – see FIGURE 1*]. And that because of that there's a humility to say I am only seeing a bit of what is to be known; I am an ant to an Internet when it comes to my understanding of who God is, and so our first instinct should be humility. It should be humility to say Lord, I desire to understand more and more about what *You think* about the world rather than what I naturally think about the world. In Isaiah he says:



FIGURE 1.

*<sup>8</sup> For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.  
<sup>9</sup> For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

– ISAIAH 55:8-9 (ESV)

God sees the whole picture while we only see at a tiny corner of it. And let me make this real because this is something that God's laid deep in my heart. Okay. I know right now that the church has the tension and the opportunity to divide right now in many different ways with many different topics, and a lot of us because we are consumed by social media—and a lot of us know this—we are having a thought that we like, I like this thought, and then here's what the world does; the world will formulate a pattern to say okay, I'm going to feed that thought, I'm gonna feed it. I'm gonna make sure that everything you see agrees with that thought you have.

And here's where I want to bring this Paul passage to life here, this is our thought and a lot of us we think we're right, we're convicted that we're right, we're passionate about we're right, and then the Word of God says this: Believers are to be of one mind. And we have to step back as a church and we—I have to do this and I have to say okay, if I am not one minded with my brothers and sisters in Christ, then there is a gap between what God wants the church to be and what it is. And the way to get there is to lean not on our own understanding, not on the social media formula that's being created, but to lean back into the Lord and say, "Lord, help us to love the way You love. Help us to think the way You think. Help us to filter this world the way You filter the world. We need You in order to become one minded because, Lord, we're not right now. And if we're not unified and we're not of one mind it is not of the Lord.

And so we need to lean into the Spirit of God to say Father, produce humility in us, produce patience in us, produce kindness in us, because our own thoughts are going to create division. We need you, Lord, because here's what You call us to do and that gap between is your power and your grace to get us from one to the other. Are you hearing me, church? This is a desperate prayer. Like, man, how many of us how many of us have prayed during this season for our enemies? How many of us have stepped back and said, "Lord, take my thoughts captive right now; take it captive"? "I want to lay this thought before You and wrestle with it, Lord. I don't know if this this is godly. I don't know if this is good. Help me to



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understand your will." How many of us are so quick to run with that thought thinking that we know and they don't? We believe and they don't. Somehow we have this knowledge that they don't. Listen, if you think that you can have knowledge, true knowledge and wisdom apart from God, then you are believing the enemy's lie. That we can reach knowledge of how to love each other truly and neglect God – we're lying to ourselves. So how as a church can we lean back into God's Word, lean back into His truth, lean back into His revelation because listen, He never fails us and He never will.

Another angle that he takes is he says trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding, and he says another way you don't waste your life is that you acknowledge Him in all of your ways. Every turn, every new conversation, God is drawing you towards Himself. It's this conversation that we often have in church, uh, there's this debate, this idea of like secular and sacred divide. It's this concept that oftentimes we say we trust in the Lord and we say that we believe His Word but we divide ourselves when it comes to our actions.

And so it means this, that some of us think, you know, God cares about what I do on a Sunday but He doesn't really care about what I do on Monday. This is the divide. You following me? Or that God cares that I give money to the Kingdom but He doesn't care about how I make it with the job I work in. Or man, God wants this thing from me but He doesn't really care, like, He wants my eyes to be pure but He doesn't care that I watch this Netflix show that's kind of bad. Right? And so we do this. Right? We make these compromises to say that we love the Lord but in our ways we're gonna be like 50/50. And listen, when I study this passage and I see this passage and in the absolute statements, like, listen, in all of your ways acknowledge Him – here's what I get from that. It's not 50/50, it's not 70/30, it's not 99.9/1, it's all of your ways, 100% of your ways you acknowledge Him. Father, is this job glorifying to You? Is this relationship glorifying to You? Is this friendship glorifying to You? Is my post I'm making online glorifying to You? In all of your ways you acknowledge Him, not half. And so as we begin to not create that secular/sacred divide in our lives, as we begin to draw near to the Lord, He is going to make our paths straight. This is what the Scriptures is teaching us.

Francis Chan said this and I use this often, I love this quote, he says if what you do is not for the Lord it is ultimately a waste of time. And I believe that quote is challenging us to say everything in your life has to be filtered through the glory of God – everything. You can't step away and say listen, I can speak something and not live it and somehow it's still gonna be true. It doesn't work like that. That God wants all of you; He wants your actions, your attitude, He wants your heart, He wants your time, He wants your energy. This is what we see in Scripture. And as we do that He will make our paths straight. And so here's some practical things that we need to dive into in application of this text.

One is this, as we pursue the Word of God, as we pursue knowledge of who He is. Listen, God's Word is the revelation. If there is a God, what is He like? Well, there's two ways to know that. One is by looking at the world around us and saying, "What are we like?" Well, we love justice, we love compassion, we love relationships, we are beings that think and reflect. Well, then God is that. But then how do we know more than just what we see? Well, there's a revelation that He's given us called the Word of God, and so as we open up the Word of God we are to see and hear from God Himself as He's talking about who He is, about His character, and how we can trust Him, how He's faithful. And so we spend time in the Word, not just to check off the box but to understand and to pursue God more. And so if you've ever said in your life, "You know what, this Bible thing, I get it," you've missed the point of God's Word. It is an intimate, daily, relational pursuit that is spending time with the Lord offers us.

Another one is that we are to be quick to pray because prayer is a reminder that it's not my thoughts but yours. Lord, this is what I think, help me to understand that this is the job You want me to take. If You

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want me to move over here, if You want me to reach out to this place, if You want me to give this place, Lord, I'm gonna ultimately check my thoughts through prayer to say, "Father, this is what I think, is it what You want and is it what You will?" And so it's a check to say, "Lord, as I quick to pray my thoughts to You, help to shape my thoughts for your glory."

And then another thing we talk about often is the importance of a biblical community, to be connected to community more so now than ever is a reminder that as your thoughts go astray, as you begin to trust something else, godly people are to come alongside of you and point you back to Jesus, to remind you that listen, where are you running towards? Man, He is safe, He is good, there's no other option for you but to go into the grace of God and to hold that tight.

And so in closing I want to share I actually recently went back to the path that I grew up in that I talked about, the Darlington path, and I did this probably a couple months ago as a grown man. And it's kind of crazy when you go back to your hometown because everything looks smaller than it actually was. You guys know that feeling? And so I went up and I went up to the top of the mountain to find this path and I found it and what was shocking about this path was, um, you know, there are many different ways to get to the path so I knew, again, just like as a young boy, if I just go straight I'll get to that path. But when I got there it looked different. It looked different; there were trees that fell down in that path and you have to kind of walk around, there were some areas that were a little bit harder to walk through, there was some broken lumber, and it was just kind of – places that, it wasn't as wide open as it used to be and it was all these things that it wasn't once was. And so I remember being up there thinking man, this path looks differently, but then God just laid an amazing thought in my mind that I think was from Him, I really do, and He just spoke into my life and He said, "Listen, though the path looks different it still leads home." And I think this passage is the same way.

Listen, we have many obstacles that we face in finding Jesus; many different backgrounds that you and I have had until we got to Jesus. And some of you, you have yet to find His righteousness and forgiveness upon your life, and I pray right maybe this morning that you give your life to Jesus. That you step into that path that He has for you. But for others we're walking the path and we're gonna face different obstacles. There are gonna be different obstacles for all of us but yes, we stay faithful to who He is, faithful to His Word. He promises that as we stay there He's gonna take us home, and He's faithful and good.

And so this is my challenge to us this morning that no matter where you are right now that you would just take a time in your life to just ask the Lord, "Father, am I walking in the ways of righteousness? Am I depending on You with my mind and my thoughts, my time and energy?" So what are you doing right now in this life? Are you depending on yourself? Are you depending on somebody else? Are you trusting in the Lord? Church, I pray that we would grow in our trust. I pray that this message if anything would just cause you to take a moment, turn your eyes to the Lord and say, "Father, help me to love and trust You more." Man, what a beautiful prayer there is, especially during this time.

So let me close in prayer and then what we would like you to do is we'd like you to take a time of offering, and so after my prayer we're just gonna give a little moment here in our online service for you to give back. Our worship team is gonna play and listen, we believe that giving to the Lord is an act of obedience. It's an act of trust just like Joe shared in this testimony that as we establish these disciplines to trust, God is faithful in those things. And so for right now maybe some of you you're just recognizing right now that you can't trust your bank account because it could be taken away from you in a moment. But why God calls us to give is just a reminder that He's in control and so we would challenge you if you've never given, maybe this is the day you start to give. Not for this church, but for the glory of God

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and for the furthering of His Kingdom because we won't take any of this money with us but we will take the legacy of godliness that we leave here, and man, I want to be part of that; I don't know about you. But let me pray.

*Father,*

*We love You and we thank You that in the midst of this time that we can anchor ourselves upon your Word that teaches us to trust in You. To not lean on our own understanding but to acknowledge You in all of our ways. And Lord, be faithful to know that You will direct our paths.*

*And so Lord, I pray right now for everyone at home no matter way they are that, Lord, they would not rush towards the distractions around them. That they will take a moment to just seek your face and ask the question where are they putting their trust. And Lord, I pray right now that You would increase that trust in their life towards You.*

*And we love You and we thank You. We celebrate this holiday day, Lord. Most importantly we celebrate that You've given us freedom, freedom from this world and a promise of the everlasting Kingdom.*

*In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.*

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