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Trust in the Lord
Proverbs 3:1-6

*My child, do not forget my teaching,
 but let your heart **keep my commandments**,
²for length of days and years of life
 and abundant welfare they will give you.
³Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you;
bind them around your neck;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
⁴Then you will find favor and high regard
 in the sight of **God and of people**.
⁵**Trust in the Lord** with all your heart,
 and **do not rely on your own insight**.
⁶In all your ways **acknowledge** him,
 and he will make **straight** your paths.*

***Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
 And Do not rely on your own insight.***

How many of us want to **trust God**?
 How many of us want to trust God **even more** than we do right now?
 So—**HOW do we do that?**

How do we trust God with our whole heart?
 Proverbs gives us the **answer**:
*In all your ways **acknowledge** him, and he will make straight your paths.*

In Hebrew 'to acknowledge' means
 to **know God in everything we say and do**.

And when we do that, he will make our paths *straight*.
 Which in Hebrew means--**right, righteous, pleasant, prosperous**.
That sounds good, right?

So if we want God to give us the right path,
 We need to ***include God in everything we do.***
 In ALL of our ***plans.***

Which means our ***calendar***, our to-do lists, all of it.

How often do you have your ***phone with you?***
 Mine is almost always in my pocket or my purse.
 How many of you have your ***calendar*** on your phone?
 I've got that, and to-do lists—reminders, events.

I'm a planner—so I love calendars and to-do lists.
 Anybody here like planning?
 Where's your calendar?
 Do you keep any running lists?
 Are you thinking about them right now?

What would it mean to ***trust God with all of that?***
 What does it mean to ***rely on God***—for ***every event, reminder, and task?***

Proverbs doesn't say we can pick and choose
 the things we want God involved with.
 If we are to trust God wholeheartedly,
 then we allow God to be involved with ***EVERYTHING!***

Which may ***NOT be what we want to hear.***
 I think we all have this idea that there are ***some parts*** of our lives
 that are just ours—not subject to God's eyes or ideas.
 You know what I mean?

Have you ever thought that it would be great for God
 to help you with this area of life, or this one,
 but ***maybe not when it comes to other areas,***
 like shopping? television? internet? entertainment?

We don't always want to trust God with EVERYTHING, do we?
We don't always want God to be involved with everything!
 I think that's human nature.

But there's a **REASON we're encouraged to be 'ALL IN'** with God.
 When we do that—we find LIFE.
 Real life. Meaningful life. Joyful life.
 Letting God be involved in every area,
 means we can **LET GO of anxiety, fear, worry, and guilt!**
 Doesn't that sound good?

In Matthew 6 in his *Sermon on the Mount*, Jesus told his followers **not to worry** about what to eat or drink or wear, because if we seek God first, and God's kingdom, we'll receive everything else we need. Because God knows our needs, God will provide—
 When we are willing **to seek God first.**

**So, to Trust in the Lord with all our heart,
 And acknowledge him in all our ways—**

Means that our **PRIORITIES matter.**
 Calendars and to do lists are great,
 But not really useful unless we have our priorities straight.

And where can we **get HELP with those priorities?**
 One **place**---God.
 One **book**--The Bible.
 One **person**—Jesus---in what he did and said.
 Jesus made this very clear in Matthew 6:33:
Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you as well.
 In other words, when we look to God first,
 God takes care of all the things we worry about.
 And our priorities get straight.

This is such a key to our life as Christians.
 If we go to God first, God takes care of the rest.
 The problem is, **we seem to run everywhere else first!**

In Wednesday night Bible study, we were talking about how most people ***don't read an instruction manual***, until there's a ***problem***.

When was the last time you started a new car or computer or phone, and read the manual first?

Most of us just start using it,

and read when we come across ***a question or a problem***, right?

I did this with a ***new sewing machine*** I received a couple years ago.

I was so eager to try it out I just started sewing,

and only now 2 years later am I discovering all the great things it can do—because I've started reading the manual!

Ed's a little smarter and has often been seen reading instructions first.

I wish I could say the same for myself.

Isn't this like our faith?

We wait until there is a problem, or a question,

and ***THEN we go to God's Word***,

THEN we go to God in prayer!

But, ***what if we went to God FIRST?***

Like reading the instruction manual first?

Just imagine what we could ***accomplish***,

and what ***JOY*** we could find!

The truth is, God has all the ***wisdom and instruction*** we need---if we will just seek it from Him first.

God also provides all the ***time and resources*** we need.

Does this ***mean that we won't have problems?***

That things won't break down or break apart in our lives?

No!

It means we have the ***opportunity to find joy, purpose, and meaning***,

If we seek God's way first.

So, ***priorities matter*** when it comes to trusting God with our whole heart.

And there's something else that really matters to God, and us.

Rest.

Rest matters.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30?

He said *"Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you **REST**."*

*Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find **REST** for your souls.*

³⁰ *For my yoke is **EASY**, and my burden is **LIGHT**."*

Now that's pretty amazing, when you think about it.

We often think of **God's will as something hard, and burdensome**.

But Jesus says the **opposite**.

He says when we go to God,

We find **rest**.

Which is pretty important in our busy, frantic world, isn't it?

Jesus has a different model for life.

He wants us to have rest, and unscheduled time.

God calls this Sabbath. Traditionally observed on Sunday for Christians.

And it's actually not just a suggestion—it's a **command**.

Did you know it's the **4th of the 10 Commandments**?

Listen to this: *Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it **holy**.* ⁹ *Six days you shall labor and do all your work,* ¹⁰ *but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. **On it you shall not do any work**....For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he **rested on the seventh day**.*

Rest is not just a good idea.

It's God's **command**.

There's a great book called **"A Minute of Margin"**, by **Richard Swenson, M.D.**

The idea of margin is a little bit of extra time, or "margin"

Because we live in a fast-paced, hectic, overscheduled world.

He talks about how we think that our technology will give us more time to rest—because everything is automated and faster.

But in reality, ***the opposite is true.***

We have all this technology, and yet we work harder and longer, and have ***less time to rest.***

Swenson has practiced medicine all over the world, including developing countries, where people have a slower pace of life—time to talk to neighbors, or play with children, or share meals without rushing.

He writes: *they are **not exhausted**...whereas we often are.*

Those who maintain that progress brings rest are wrong....

*God, however, has **commanded** us to rest.*

*A **biblically authentic and balanced life** will include time to be still, to remember, to meditate, to delight in who He is and what He has made....*

‘Come to me all who are weary and burdened’ said Jesus, ‘and I will give you rest’. Just because He said it two thousand years ago doesn’t mean He didn’t say it to YOU.”

Richard A. Swenson, M.D., *A Minute for Margin*, NavPress: Colorado Springs, 2003, Reflection 126.

He quotes an old Spanish proverb:

“How beautiful it is to do nothing, and then rest afterward”.

I often struggle to do nothing,

But rest is often exactly what we need—for body, and soul.

The other side of unscheduled time is ***waiting***.

Sometimes we are called to just ***rest***.

And sometimes we are called to ***wait***.

Swenson calls waiting a ***virtue!***

An ***anchor*** of our spiritual life---Think about that.

The prophet Isaiah agrees:

Isaiah 40:31 says *“those who wait on the Lord—*

Shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles,

Run and not be weary, walk and not faint”.

When we don’t know what to do next—the ***best thing to do is WAIT!***

Because God’s timing is perfect.

And in waiting is strength, renewal, and power.

Richard A. Swenson, M.D., *A Minute for Margin*, NavPress: Colorado Springs, 2003, Reflection 169.

An old Swahili proverb says: ***There is no bad patience.***

In fact, if we look up ***waiting in the Bible***, we'll have plenty to read. It's mentioned dozens of times in just the *Book of Psalms* alone. Waiting is one of those things that ***all of our ancestors in the faith*** had to do, in order to grow in faith and follow God!

David waited to become King,
Moses waited to be restored and called back by God,
Paul waited on many occasions, including from prison.
Jesus waited to become a teacher, healer and preacher!

God's people waited to be rescued from slavery,
 They waited to be led to the promised land,
 They waited for a Savior.

And all that waiting ***was NOT wasted time***—it was ***GROWING time***.
 Waiting is ***a spiritual place we want to be***,
 Even if it doesn't sound good at the time.
 Most people do not list patience as their top virtue,
 But waiting is a gift from God that is ***truly transformational!***

Can you think of a time you waited—and you grew during the waiting?

Each time I have waited on God to give me a new pastoral call,
 I have learned more about myself, and about God,
 About what I love to do, and what God wants me to do.

Trusting in God with our whole heart means that
Our Priorities matter.
 Even our ***rest and waiting matters.***

And the way we ***know our priorities and when to rest or wait***,
 Is by ***being OPEN.***

Open to God.

In other words, ***we can't have every minute of every day scheduled.***

That's not God's will for us.

That's not the path of meaningful, joyful life.

Swenson says: *“If God were our appointment secretary, would He schedule us for every minute of every day? **No.**”*

He goes on to say that the life of Jesus was the exact opposite. *Christ’s teaching, His healing, His serving, and His loving were usually **spontaneous**...Overloaded and rigid schedules are not the way to walk ‘in His steps’.*

Richard A. Swenson, M.D., *A Minute for Margin*, NavPress: Colorado Springs, 2003, Reflection 132.

We need free time.
Time without plans.
Which is hard for some of us.

I love my calendar and to do lists, and they have a place!
But we also need **the open spaces, the free time,**
the time to **welcome what cannot be scheduled!**

And sometimes we need to just **lay down the calendar and all of our ‘plans’.**
Because we cannot plan for everything.

We often think that planning will bring us **peace and comfort.**
But we can **never prepare** for all possibilities,
and there will always be things that **happen unexpectedly** to change our plans!
That’s just the way God works!

Excessive planning is NOT what God wants for us---

a common ministry saying is that

“ministry happens in the interruptions.”

In other words—we can plan all we want, but the interruptions are often where God has us doing the most important work!

This is what happens when someone calls out of the blue, or just stops by.
When something big happens, that demands our attention.
We find God in these unscheduled times!
We find God when we have to change course!

All of us as followers of Jesus Christ,
Can make plans, but we are called **to do so loosely—**

Being open to the Holy Spirit,
and open to the ways God works through all the *interruptions of life*.

To trust God with our whole heart,
Means we let go of trying to know the future and plan everything.
We're not designed for that.
God designed us to ***trust and follow*** Him—not a calendar.

We may not know what the future holds,
But we know ***who holds the future.***
And that is enough.

Hear the Good News:

We are called to TRUST God with our whole heart,
And not to lean on our own insight.
To acknowledge God in all of our ways,
So God will give us the ***right path***—
The path to life, peace, hope, and joy!

So, our ***priorities*** matter,
Our ***rest and waiting*** matters,
Our ***openness*** to the Spirit matters,
Because all of that leads us to the ***path of life.***

And for that path,
All God's people can say, Amen.