

# Trust – Obey – Pray

## Proverbs 3:5-6

Many people know this passage of scripture from memory. It is probably one of the most often repeated proverbs of all. *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”*

If you were to permit me to suggest a theme for 2020 here at West Side, it would be **Trust God – Obey God – Pray to God**. “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.” I would love to burn that into our memory for the coming year. And I think that’s Solomon’s message for us in Proverbs 3:5-6.

## TRUST.

Solomon says that we need to trust in the LORD with all our heart. To trust Him means to place our confidence in Him. It means to believe in Him, have faith in Him, rest in His promises, count on Him, depend on Him, reckon on Him, hope in Him...trust in Him. And Solomon says to do it with **ALL** our heart. The heart is the worship center of our lives. And this proverb’s wisdom is to call us to trust in the LORD with **ALL** our heart—holding nothing back. Sound good?

There is only one problem with this plan. ... It doesn’t always seem like the right thing to do! As you and I eyeball a situation, it seems like trusting the LORD in this situation might be the pious, righteous thing to do, but not the thing that would (v.6) make our paths straight! That means “even or flat” in other words – easy. If we do this, it will be anything but easy! So, we begin to come up with reasons to do it our way in spite of the warning *“...lean not on your own understanding...”*

There was a time when I wanted to become a pilot. I even started classes. Do you know what an “artificial horizon” is? An artificial horizon is the giddy gapper in an airplane that tells the pilot when their wings are level with the ground. Because of a law called inertia, a pilot has difficulty “feeling” where the wings are on a plane relative to the earth.

When flying through clouds or fog, which prevent a visual of the horizon, pilots cannot feel the plane's wings beginning to bank to the left or right. In fact, in the early days of flight, pilots **believed** they could feel the turn by instinct. When their planes went in fog or clouds, many banked unknowingly into a spiral dive that ended in a crash. Pilots quickly came up with a saying: **“Instinct is worse than useless in the clouds.”**

To fly through clouds, pilots must use the “Artificial Horizon.” The artificial horizon is an instrument with a gyroscopically steadied line that stays level with the earth's surface and unerringly indicates when the wings are banking left or right. When operating properly it is always correct regarding the position of the wings of the plane relative to earth. The artificial horizon revolutionized flying, but when it was first invented, pilots resisted using it. The biggest problem flyers had was self-trust. **They trusted their feelings more than their instruments.**

VFR and I would have done fine....IFR was the primary reason I'm not a pilot...I had difficulty trusting. **We all have that problem.** We all want to judge our own path, to be self-reliant, self-trusting. But Solomon says, in order to have a straight path, you must learn to trust the LORD Himself. ***“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding...”***

Everyone trusts in something. Whether it is in ourselves, or our families, or our government, or our bank-accounts, or our education, or our wits, or our charm—everyone trusts in something. But God says, in Prov 3:5 that if you want a straight path to God's best destination for you—it will require faith in **HIM**. That's faith in a personal God. This is not just a generic faith in faith itself. Or faith in some idea of God the creator.

There must be trust in order to believe that baptism washes away sin because it seems unreasonable that water could possibly do that! But Jesus says it does and Jesus is imminently trustworthy. His death, burial and resurrection make Him the way to God for all who obey Him. On the night Jesus died, He told His followers: ***“let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God believe also in me.”*** That speaks of trust.

# OBEY.

“Trust and obey, for there’s no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.”

The Bible is God’s Word to all of us, and it applies to all of us. So, I want to suggest some areas where obedience may be a new path for us. When I was studying before I became a Christian I “reasoned” myself out of believing the simple plan of salvation. For three years I fought God. Then I finally realized God did make it that simple. God did love me that much. So, it come down to my obedience. What should I do to please God? I now trusted His word but that was not enough. I now had to OBEY!

**1. Get Baptized.** Man, out of ignorance will suggest that baptism is not something one MUST do to be saved – it is a matter of personal conviction. I can’t read that anywhere in my Bible. However, I can read in EVERY instance of conversion that each obeyed the command to be baptized to wash away their sins. That is what made people Christians in the New Testament – it is what makes people Christians today.

**2. Get into the Bible.** 2 Tim. 2:15 says, *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”* How will you ever rightly handle the word of God if you don’t get into the word of God?? God calls us to read and study His word.

Remember Jeremiah 15:16? *“Your words came, and I ate them. They were my joy and my heart’s delight. For I bear your name O Lord God Almighty!”* It’s a matter of obedience to get into studying the word.

**3. Get to Church.** Worship assemblies are not optional for Christians. This alone doesn’t save you but neither do baptism or Bible reading! But worship is mandatory.

Hebrews 10:25 says, *“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”* As I studied to obey God it became clear that attendance was a matter that God was serious about.

As a child I learned by the example of adults that going to church was an optional event. Sporadic attendance was OK with God because I was saved. Once I was saved there was not much for me to do. But as I studied, I learned that worship, learning, having fellowship were all matters of obedience to God's word. So, Joyce and I as new Christians agreed that we would never miss a service by choice. Sickness might keep us from an assembly, but we believed the least we could do is show up where God and His people were for worship.

**4. Get into Giving.** Here at West Side we have a group of Christians that are highly sacrificial with their giving. So much so, you don't need to hear a sermon on giving. But I can't assume that everyone here has come to know the blessings of giving or has been encouraged to give as a matter of obedience to the Lord's command.

2 Cor. 9:6-11 says, *“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God can make all grace abound to you, so that in all things always, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”*

The amount is not near as important as the action from the heart in freeing your grip around the gift. Paul tells us that the Philippians gave from their deep poverty. Oh, how they could have justified not giving! What is the proper amount? Under OT law they gave a tenth of their worth each year. One could argue “in 10 years they would be broke”. But if they obeyed God, their increase each year more than made up for their tithe. We don't tithe today. Is 10% enough? I've always considered it this way. Since under the OT law they gave a 10<sup>th</sup> and all they had were bulls and goats as a sacrifice – we under the NT have God as our sacrifice – should not our giving reflect that sacrifice??

**5. Get to Serving.** Some of us love to give of our funds, but not of our time. Problem is, - our congregation and our Community need both. 1 Pet. 4:10-11 says, *“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as*

*one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”*

Using your gifts in service to God is not optional. It's a matter of obedience. What are you going to do in service to our congregation and our community in 2020? The very least any of us should do is give as we've been prospered and share Jesus with others.

## **PRAY.**

God calls us to prayer. Pray about everything. Pray about the lost. Pray about our concerns. Pray about our responsibilities. Pray in thanksgiving.

James 5:13-18 says *“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.”* In other words, Pray about everything!

In the middle of the night, the two-story house of a young family caught fire. Quickly, everyone made it to the front yard - except a five-year-old boy. The Father looked up to the boy's room and saw his son crying at the window, rubbing his eyes. The father knew not to reenter the house, so he yelled, “Son, jump! I'll catch you.” Between sobs, the boy responded to his Dad's voice. “But I can't see you.” The father answered with great assurance. “No, you can't, but I can see you!” The boy jumped and was safe in his father's arms. *“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.”*