




Pastor Jeff 7-24-16

Message Based Questions to help your personal Study & LifeGroup Discussions

 **CONNECTING:** *Connecting to one another with a warm up question or through worship.*

This past week a daredevil Dove out of plane from 25,000 feet with no parachute—What's the craziest thing you have ever done?

 **EXPLORING IT:** *Review the sermon outline and explore the message by using the following Q's which will help you dig in a little deeper and make sure you get the message.*

*The mission of the church is to transform the world through the life-changing message of Jesus for the glory of God.  
By loving God, loving God's people and then loving the world.*

To Listen to Message (CTRL + Click the Link)

<http://www.northlakeonline.org/messages/index.html>

If someone asked you—what does God want from us—what would you say? Why?

What keeps you awake at night?

As you read Proverbs 3:5-6—Who does it say we are to trust?


What are we to steer clear from? What does it mean to lean not on your own understanding?

When are the times you find it easiest to trust God? What about the hardest?

What does it look like to trust God with all your heart and a no turning back attitude?

What are some ways that we can “acknowledge” God?

How can we pray for you?

 **PRAY IT:** *Now that you have connected, explored and applied it—it is now time to tap into the power of prayer individually throughout the week as well as corporately praying for one another. Perhaps by sharing the real life challenges and blessings with one another this will help people see what God can do in their lives and will lead them into a plan of action.*

# More Food for thought



*"There is no conflict between trusting God and accepting our responsibility. Our duty is found in the revealed will of God in the Scriptures. Our trust must be in the sovereign will of God, as He works in the ordinary circumstances of our daily lives for our good and His Glory."*

*"Knowledge of His sovereignty is meant to be an encouragement to pray, not an excuse to lapse into a sort of pious fatalism. Prayer assumes the sovereignty of God. If God is not sovereign, we have no assurance that He is able to answer our prayers. God's sovereignty, along with His wisdom and love, is the foundation of our trust in Him; prayer is the expression of that trust. God's sovereignty does not negate our responsibility to pray, but rather makes it possible to pray with confidence." By Jerry Bridges*

Nineteenth-century theologian J.L. Dagg said, *"God is infinitely wise, because He selects the best possible end of action...{and} because He adopts the best possible means for the accomplishment of the end which He has in view."*

Follow these 7 daily steps to make sure you're leaning on the Lord:

## **1. Don't Depend on You**

We live in a world where trust must be earned and seems to be in short supply. But Solomon, the famous king who wrote Proverbs, knew that trust is exactly where we must start:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5)

Most of us have faced disappointments, which have taught us that we can only depend upon ourselves. But living the life God has called us to means unlearning that lesson. Instead, we're meant to rest in God's understanding.

We may know in our minds that He possesses all wisdom:

"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!" Romans 11:33

But sometimes trusting Him completely like that can be tough. So, each day we must consciously lay aside our own plans and expectations—and surrender to His plans.

What if we don't feel like we can trust Him like that? That's where step 2 comes in...

## **2. Cry out to God**

Surrendering to God begins with our lips and our thoughts. We need more than a commitment to depend on Him; we need to cry out to Him to show that dependence.

"in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:6)

When we pray, we admit that His ways are higher than ours. We show that we're leaving our troubles and burdens and dreams in His capable hands. In fact, the Bible promises that when we reach out to Him in prayer, He hears us:

“Evening, morning, and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice.” (Psalm 55:17)

We handed the keys of our lives to Him, and we know that He’s able to lead us. But in order for that to work, we have to...

### **3. *Run from Evil***

So much in this world can clutter up our relationship with God. John, the writer of the fourth gospel, describes them as the desires of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride in our lives (1 John 2:16). In other words, our blessings can easily become our stumbling blocks when we think of them as what we deserve or what we need to be happy.

Instead, life works best when we remember the true source of our blessings—God—and focus on the things that please Him:

“Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.” (Proverbs 3:7)

Sometimes, the only way to live the life God wants us to live is by separating ourselves from the bad influences that keep dragging us down. That works the best when we start pursuing something else in their place:

“Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (2 Timothy 2:22)

Is that easy? Not at all. Fleeing from the evil desires that pull at us means spending a lot of time crying out to God and leaning on Him. But our Creator promises to honor our commitment to Him when we shun evil:

“This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.” (Proverbs 3:8)

When we pursue Him, we find life—abundant life. Running from evil and pursuing God doesn’t come naturally to most of us.

Instead, it means we have to make a serious change:

### **4. *Put God First in Your Life***

It’s easiest to put ourselves first. When something good happens, we want to congratulate ourselves with a reward. When something bad happens, we want to console ourselves or find someone to blame. In other words, we often have a “me-centric” starting place.

And when it comes to money, the struggle is even harder. But Solomon, who had quite a bit of wealth himself, knew that his money didn’t belong to him:

“Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.” (Proverbs 3:9–10)

If we can trust God with the first of our wealth, we’re truly showing how much we depend on Him. Handing over the first part of our paycheck takes a huge amount of faith, after all. But doing so means being God-centric.

To get there, though, make sure you...

### **5. *Check Yourself by God’s Word***

Let’s be honest. We aren’t so good at evaluating ourselves. We will go to great lengths to excuse our behavior, our actions, and our sins. Who needs a defense attorney when we can pretty much find a reason for any bad thing we do? The prophet Jeremiah captures this very well:

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)

If we’re ever going to truly trust in God and flee evil, we have to know exactly where we stand. We have to find an objective measure that tells us the truth. And that truth comes from God and His Word.

Of course, that doesn't mean we'll always like what we see or how we see it:

"My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke" (Proverbs 3:11)

That's right. Sometimes it takes something bad happening or seeing ourselves in a bad light before we finally admit that we need to change. And the more we're in the Bible, the more likely this is to happen.

"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." (Psalm 119:11)

When we have Scripture planted firmly in our hearts, God will often use that to deal with us.

## ***6. Listen to the Holy Spirit***

When Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to the church, He told His disciples that this Counselor would be their spiritual compass or GPS:

"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." (John 14:26)

As we go through our day, this same Holy Spirit guides us, too. That means we don't have to go it alone or hope we're getting it right. No, the Holy Spirit leads us into all truth and protects us:

"Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us." (2 Timothy 1:14)

After all, the gift of the Holy Spirit to us believers reminds us that we can truly...

## ***7. Rest in God's Love***

When we face a difficult world each day, we can sometimes wonder if God even cares. Why do bad things happen? Where is God when I need Him? Solomon reminds us that God never takes a break or leaves us to fend for ourselves:

"because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in." (Proverbs 3:12)

Even in the midst of turmoil, God sticks with us and uses those challenges to shape us. When we understand that, our perspective completely flips. No longer do we see our setbacks as failures; we see them as moments when God, as our loving Father, works on us.

And that's exactly why we can trust in the Lord with all our hearts. He cares for us each and every day. He gives us what we need to thrive. He pours blessing after blessing upon us.

Of course, following each of these daily steps isn't easy. That's why Jesus said we have to deny ourselves and follow Him (Matthew 16:24). Trusting God takes a whole-hearted commitment from dawn till dusk. But we're never alone in it:

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20b)

***Keep Pressing On!***

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