

**The Pinnacle Promise of Proverbs  
Proverbs 3:5-6**

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**Introduction to the Text:** Proverbs is a fascinating book and favorite book of so many. Proverbs is much different from every other book of the Bible in the “proverbial” style of the book. Almost every verse contains a sermon or a lesson. The book is packed with practical “timeless wisdom for today’s worries.” You have heard it said many times that the book of Proverbs is the most practical book in the Bible. Every line is flowing with God’s wisdom. Indeed the book of Proverbs is categorized as a book of wisdom. I invite you to consider with me perhaps the best known Proverb of all.

Let’s say it together using the translation you see on the screens.

**Text:** Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
and do not rely on your own understanding;  
<sup>6</sup>in all your ways know him,  
and he will make your paths straight.

**Introduction:** Author and theologian Henri Nouwen became fascinated, in the last years of his life, with a group of trapeze artists called the Flying Rodleighs. There was something about their courage, soaring, trusting, and their dependence on one another that inspired him—like a parable of our relationship to God.

He got to know some of them, including the leader. He wrote about what he learned from them. He learned from them that the flyers must completely trust the catchers. The leader said to him on one occasion, “As a flyer, I must have complete trust in my catcher. The public might think that I am the great star of the trapeze, but the real star is Joe, my catcher. He has to be there for me with split-second precision and grab me out of the air as I come to him in the long jump. The secret is that the flyer does nothing and the catcher does everything. When I fly to Joe, I have simply to stretch out my arms and hands and wait for him to catch me and pull me safely over the apron behind the catchbar.”

Nouwen remembers saying, “Nothing?”

“Nothing,” Rodleigh would repeat. “The worst thing the flyer can do is to try to catch the catcher. I am not supposed to catch Joe. It’s Joe’s task to catch me. If I grabbed Joe’s wrists, I might break them, or he might break mine, and that would be the end for both of us. A flyer must fly, and a catcher must catch, and the flyer must trust, with outstretched arms, that his catcher will be there for him.”

What if your eight year old came to you one night in tears and said, “I’m so worried—I haven’t started saving for retirement? Or in comes your five year old crying after the first day of kindergarten, “I don’t think I will pass College Chemistry.” What if your ten year old worries that he will make an awful parent one day? Hopefully, you will respond in some way to reassure them that they are way too young to worry about such stuff.

Can't you see that in the heart of God that's exactly how we seem when we worry about all the "what ifs" and "how wills" of life?

"Don't worry about anything," said Paul. Jesus said, "So, do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." The biblical word for "worry" is the putting together of two Greek words: one meaning "divide" and the other meaning "the mind." So, literally, worrying is a division in the mind. Spiritually speaking worry is a division between faith and doubt. Replacing worry with trust is one of the most difficult spiritual accomplishments that we will ever make, but the Bible offers hope. How do we replace worry with trust?

### **The Point of Proverbs 3:5-6 and the Point of this Sermon:**

It is always a good exercise for me to try to state the point of every sermon in a single sentence. Here is the point of this passage and thus the point of this sermon.

### **Trusting God is the key principle in every matter of our relationship with God.**

That trust, of course, starts with our relationship with God. We are saved not as the result of our initiative, but God's initiative. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot be good enough in order to be made right with God. Salvation is God's gracious gift to us. That is a matter of trust. When we understand that our basic need in life—to be saved—is a matter of trust, we ought also to acknowledge that every other issue of our relationship with God is also a matter of trust. So, whatever your list of worries looks like, all things are matters that ultimately rely on trust. Our health, our children, our future, our relationships, our addictions—all things—are a matter of trust. Trusting God is the key principle in every matter of our relationship with God. So, let's develop that this morning with a couple of basic questions.

### **Who are we to trust? The LORD!**

This is important! Our trust is not in some stranger who has walked up to us and asked us to trust him. We are being asked to trust the LORD.

### **How do you describe God?**

This is not an easy question, but I like the help that the Psalmist gives us in Psalm 139.

(1) He knows all things. (Psalm 139:1-6)

LORD, you have searched me and known me.

<sup>2</sup>You know when I sit down and when I stand up;  
you understand my thoughts from far away.

<sup>3</sup>You observe my travels and my rest;  
you are aware of all my ways.

<sup>4</sup>Before a word is on my tongue,  
you know all about it, LORD.

<sup>5</sup>You have encircled me;  
you have placed your hand on me.

<sup>6</sup>This wondrous knowledge is beyond me.  
It is lofty; I am unable to reach it.

(2) He is everywhere. (Psalm 139:7-10)

<sup>7</sup>Where can I go to escape your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?  
<sup>8</sup>If I go up to heaven, you are there;  
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.  
<sup>9</sup>If I live at the eastern horizon  
or settle at the western limits,  
<sup>10</sup>even there your hand will lead me;  
your right hand will hold on to me.

(3) He can do anything. (Psalm. 139:11-12)

<sup>11</sup>If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me,  
and the light around me will be night"—  
<sup>12</sup>even the darkness is not dark to you.  
The night shines like the day;  
darkness and light are alike to you.

(4) He personally knows me. (Psalm. 139:13-16)

<sup>13</sup>For it was you who created my inward parts;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.  
<sup>14</sup>I will praise you  
because I have been remarkably and wondrously made.  
Your works are wondrous,  
and I know this very well.  
<sup>15</sup>My bones were not hidden from you  
when I was made in secret,  
when I was formed in the depths of the earth.  
<sup>16</sup>Your eyes saw me when I was formless;  
all my days were written in your book and planned  
before a single one of them began.

Trusting seems like a difficult thing to do because our human nature is so self-reliant. However, when we can get our minds wrapped around Who God is and how much He loves us, trusting God is such a comforting idea. Relationship is actually central to trust. The more we walk with the LORD, the more the relationship is developed, the easier trust becomes.

### **What does trusting God mean?**

So, what does trust mean? Trust is kind of an abstract idea. A close look at this text helps us to define trust. We see trust from a negative statement and a positive statement.

**The Negative Answer: Do not lean on your own understanding**

We are not to lean on our intellect, our own abilities, or even our own moral standards. In all things, we must refuse to lean on our own understanding. "Do not lean" forces us to think that we must trust God completely. We can't even trust ourselves a little.

**The Positive Answer: Acknowledge or Know Him in everything**

Stated positively, we must acknowledge God in everything. Literally speaking, this phrase means that we "recognize God's presence" in all things. There is nothing in our lives that should be outside the reach of God's perspective or even stronger, His Lordship.

**How much are we to trust God? With all our hearts!**

Completely! Our trust cannot be a partial trust. Remember the instruction of James? In reference to asking God, James said, "But let him ask in faith without doubting." In the Bible, most often the heart is not the organ of the physical body, but instead the heart is the seat of the emotion. Our hearts are the centers of our lives. Our heart is the complete surrender of our lives. That's why when we use a term like "Ask Jesus into our heart" we are not talking about the organ that pumps blood throughout our body, but instead we are talking about the center of our will.

**When are we to trust God? Always**

There is never a time to not trust God. Whenever we face a crisis, we have two choices. We either trust God or we trust ourselves—there really are no other options. When we trust ourselves, in essence, we are saying that we trust the crisis is bigger than God. Sometimes we are tempted to pray for understanding, but instead God sends us Himself, who is bigger than our understanding.

**Why should we trust God? Because He gives us a promise!**

I will be the first to admit that there are times when things look crooked, but God has way of writing straight with a crooked stick.

That's why we must keep running to the cross. Sometimes, it looks like Friday. There He is—bloody, bruised, broken, and finally buried. But, then there's Sunday.

Church, let's renew our commitment today to totally trust God.

These are the words that haunted Henri Nouwen. "The flyer does nothing, the catcher does everything, and the flyer must trust, with outstretched arms, that his catcher will be there for him.

"When Rodeigh said this with so much conviction, the words of Jesus on the Cross flashed through my mind: 'Father into your hands I commend my Spirit.' For us it means trusting in the catcher. Don't be afraid. Remember that you are the beloved child of God. He will be there when you make your long jump. Don't try to grab him; he will grab you. Just stretch out your arms and hands and trust, trust, trust."

Now I want to give you the chance to take make this decision. If you have never done this before, I want to invite you to make the decision—to turn your life, and turn your will, over to the care of God through Jesus Christ.