

TRUST GOD

There is a proverb that says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding." (Proverbs 3:5, ESV.) Have you ever leaned up against something only to learn that it cannot hold you up? Have you ever leaned on a stick that was broken? Have you swung from a vine hanging from a tree only to have it break halfway into your swing? The proverb says "Do not lean on your own understanding."

Hello I'm Larry Murdock.

The proverb says that instead of leaning on our own understanding, we should "trust in the Lord with all your heart." What is a person doing when he "leans on his own understanding"? When you see what is happening to you and you draw your own conclusions without God's viewpoint, you are leaning on **your** understanding of the events. Of course, that is the natural thing to do. This is the way in which atheists view events. They interpret world happenings without an understanding of what God says or does. The atheist does not acknowledge that the devil exists, or that God exists. They lean upon their own worldly viewpoint.

When Paul and Barnabas came to the city of Lystra "there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he sprang up and began walking. And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds." ([Acts 14:8-13 ESV](#)) Here is a case of people relying upon their own understanding to interpret a miracle. These people did not know the only true and living God. Even though Paul was trying to inform them about Jesus Christ, they did not understand the gospel. They only knew of idolatry, the mythological gods of the Greeks. And so they interpreted this miracle in the light of their idolatry. They decided that Paul and Barnabas were gods.

A similar example of misunderstanding happened earlier. Paul and Barnabas spoke to the Jews and Greeks in the city of Iconium. Many of them believed what the preachers were saying about Jesus Christ. “But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the [preachers].” Nevertheless Paul and Barnabas were able to stay there “for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord,” they preached “the word of his grace,” and Christ granted them power to work “signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat” the preachers “and to stone them, they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe...and there they continued to preach the gospel.” ([Acts 14:2-7 ESV](#))

Many of the Iconiums believed the apostles and began to trust in the Lord. But many more in the city couldn't see it! They clung to their old viewpoints; they leaned on their own understanding of events. Did they not see the signs and the wonders? Yes, but they interpreted those miracles in another way. They still refused to believe the gospel of grace.

This is what happened when the religious leaders saw Jesus' miracles. Instead of thinking that Jesus must be from God, they attributed Jesus' good deeds to the work of Satan! That's right! They deliberately refused to consider any other viewpoint than their own. They leaned upon their own understanding. There is a proverb that says, “Don't be ... like horses and mules that must be led with ropes to make them obey.” ([Psa 32:9 CEV](#)) There are people today like those old Pharisees and Sadducees, who must be led with ropes to get them to obey. Well, God does not lead with ropes. If you are not willing to hear, examine and trust God's viewpoint, then you will continue to lean upon your own understanding. We should be like the psalmist who wrote, “How sweet are your words [O Lord] to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” ([Psalm 119:103-105 ESV](#))

The Psalmist trusted in the Lord for his understanding of the world and the world's events. David wrote, “The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple. I open my mouth and pant, because I long for your commandments.” ([Psalm 119:130-131 ESV](#)) Do you beg God for understanding, like a dog that begs for a biscuit? If we expect our hunger for understanding to be

satisfied, then we must trust God and His Word. “Oh [Lord] how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts.” (Psalm 119:97-100 ESV) Do you love the law of God? Sometimes we must know more than our teachers, especially when our teachers do not know God’s testimonies. Our teachers may not have read God’s Word. On the other hand, how blessed you have been if your teachers knew the word of the Lord. They had a worldview, a viewpoint, an understanding that few people in our world possess. I am telling you friends, “Trust in the Lord and lean not on your own understanding.”

Even amidst the trouble and anguish of this world, we can find understanding in the will of God. Again the Psalmist wrote, “Trouble and anguish have found me out, but your commandments are my delight. Your testimonies are righteous forever; give me understanding that I may live.” (Psalm 119:143-144 ESV) People of the world need to learn how to trust God’s viewpoint. “Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; **his** understanding is beyond measure.” (Psalm 147:5 ESV) There is no misunderstanding with God! If we know what He knows then we will be blessed in our daily living. “Trust in the Lord; lean not on your own understanding.”

You may be at a crossroads, neighbor. What do you want to believe? When you hear the gospel of Grace preached, what interpretation do you have? If you hear many preachers you will hear different versions of the plan of salvation. All the versions cannot be true because many of them are contradictory. Trusting God means to rely upon God’s Word to direct us. God’s Word is found in the Bible. But you may ask, “Do not all these preachers preach from the Bible? Why then do they teach different doctrines?” That is a great question! Jesus discovered that the religious teachers of His day were doing the same thing as teachers today. Everyone had the same book, but they leaned upon their own understandings. There are many examples of this during the events of Jesus’ life on the earth. One example is found in Matthew 15.

The “Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.” He answered them, “**And why do you break the commandment of God**

for the sake of your tradition?" (Matthew 15:1-3 ESV) Those religious teachers were substituting human tradition for God's commandments. They had so mixed up the traditions of men with God's Word that treated the traditions as authoritative as God's commandments. In fact, they treated their traditions as even more important than God's commandments.

Jesus gave them an example of it. God commanded, "Honor your father and mother," and in another place God said, "Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die." However, the religious teachers were teaching that children did not have to honor father and mother, if they gave their money to the temple. In other words, the children could choose what they did with their money. They could support their father and mother, or they could give that money to the temple. If the people gave money to the temple then they would not have to give financial support to their father and mother. This was human teaching that had become so ingrained in the population that it was considered "traditional." The result was disastrous. Jesus said, "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:8-9 ESV) The teaching and practice of those religious teachers were causing people to worship God in VAIN. Their worship was no benefit to them. Their worship was in vain. Why? Because they were following the teaching of men who were leaning on their own understanding.

Are you sure your understandings have come from God? How can you be sure? By diligent study of the Word of God. You need to be like the Bereans who, after hearing Paul preach, studied for themselves to see if what they had heard was indeed in God's Word. (Acts 17:11.) It is said that those Bereans had an "eager" mind. Are you eager to hear God's Word? Are you hungering and thirsting for the word of God? God bless you in your search for the truth than can set you free; free from your own viewpoint, and allow you to see God's viewpoint! Trust God, friends. Take God at His word! Visit a church of Christ near you. You will find a people intent on searching for God's understanding.