

Effortless Struggle

Prov. 3:5-6

Intro. **What is Effortless Struggle?** Appearance of ease outwardly but turmoil inwardly. Today, I want to talk about the effortless struggle of Trusting God: TRUSTING GOD IN THE MIDST OF TRAGEDY.

(Proverbs 3:5-6 READ). TRUSTING GOD appears easy for us, outwardly.

III. One dad who lost his 11-year-old son said after being hit by a truck, "When I go through a wave of grief, my thoughts can get dark. There are things I would never think about God and life during good times, that I begin to think in my despair. These are thoughts I do not feel comfortable sharing with people...Later, he said, "Our place is not to know all of God's purposes but to trust him, even if we don't understand. It is tempting to think that if we had all our questions answered it would comfort us. But explanations never comfort, it is trusting in the Father of mercies and God of all comfort that does."

In Proverbs 3:5-6 we have two commands and a promise. Let's take a deeper dive into this familiar verse:

#1 Command: Trust in the Lord Completely (v. 5)

A. Definition – **Trust**. Hebrew it means "to lie helplessly face downwards...like a runner who is absolutely exhausted... Jer. 12:5 "If you have raced with runners and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses?" (Classic Definition: Trust - "to rely on the truthfulness or accuracy of, to believe; to place confidence in, rely on; to hope or expect confidently.")

B. Direction – "**Trust in the Lord**" – Why? Because we don't have the full picture!

C. Depth – "**with all your heart**" – In Scripture, the Heart deals with our WHOLE Self – Mind, Will and Emotions. To Trust in the Lord with All our heart is to make a CHOICE to trust and lean on God.

"Why is trusting God with all our hearts so difficult?" Chuck Swindoll, former pastor and president at Dallas Theological Seminary, suggests:

- (1) One Reason we struggle to trust God is that we are too self-sufficient
- (2) We're too reliant on others
- (3) We're too distant from God
- (4) We're better at worrying than we are at trusting.

"**Lean NOT**" – means to support yourself. We are not to support our life merely on how WE view or understand the world; Our limited human understanding is not to be trusted, ultimately! "There is a way that seems right to a person but it leads to destruction." Eph. 4:22 tells us that our human nature apart from Christ is corrupted with deceitful desires." Jer. 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick, who can understand it?"

#2 Command: Acknowledge God Practically (v. 6) "**In all your ways**"

- A. "**In ALL your ways**" – the totality of your life, or even better; to give God total access to every part of your life!
1. When you're afraid. Ps. 56:3 "When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"

2. When you're exhausted and can't go on. **Is. 40:30-31** "Youths may become faint and weary, and young men stumble and fall, but those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not become weary, they will walk and not faint."
3. When you have no idea what to do. **2 Chr. 20:12** (King Jehosaphat, surrounded by three armies, calls Judah to fast and pray!) "We are powerless before this vast number that comes to fight against us. We do not know what to do, but we trust in you." How was this king able to do this? He **KNEW**...

B. Acknowledge - "to know" You are only able to trust God to the level of your understanding of His character, faithfulness and love! If you never spend time with God, then it should come as no surprise that you struggle to trust Him!!

#3 – The Promise: He Will Make Your Paths Straight (v. 6)

Exp. "he will make your paths straight." – **To make a way plain** (Is. 49:11 "I will make all my mountains into a road, and my highways will be raised up.")

- A. He will **REMOVE** the Obstacles! – Fear, Doubt, Shame, Regret, Pride, Self-Reliance
- B. He will **REVEAL** His Instructions! (**Is. 30:21** "And whenever you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear His command behind you: 'This is the way. Walk in it.'" Listen to what the Lord says when you walk in His ways... **v. 22** "Then you will defile your silver-plated idols and your gold-plated images. You will throw them away like menstrual cloths, and call them filth." **What an image! What do you need to throw away for your heart to trust God completely?**
- C. He will **RENEW** your perspective when life is hard! **Hab. 3:17-18** "Though the fig tree does not bud, and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior."

What are your next steps toward Trusting God?

1. **Acknowledge the struggle** – God, this is hard right now!
2. **Remove any idols** – self-sufficiency, pride, fear, or shame
3. **Move toward His heart** – come to God humbly; "I need you, Lord! Help me trust you!!"
4. **Saturate your soul** (by Living in God's Word – **Rom. 10:17**; Looking to Jesus – **Heb. 12:2**; Leaning on the Holy Spirit – **Gal. 5:25** "Since we live by the Spirit, let us lean on the Holy Spirit".)