

Proverbs 3:5-6
Week #6 in the Series "Whose Verse is it Anyway?" 10:15 AM

Dominic Tuttle

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding in all your ways. Submit to Him and he will make your paths straight".

Join me in prayer.

Our good and gracious God. We thank you so much for your word. Lord, your word fills my heart. And I am overwhelmed with your grace and your goodness. I am honored and privileged and delighted to have an opportunity to share what I see in your word with my friends and family here. I pray that you would open our hearts and our minds and our ears that we may see, understand and hear what you would tell us. Lord, in your name. Amen.

Okay. This is my Bible. This one, right here, is my personal Bible. My parents gave this to me on Easter Sunday when I was 12 years old. This Bible has traveled with me to Mexico. It's traveled with me across a huge chunk of Europe. It's beat up. It's scratched. It's starting to fall apart inside. And it's stuffed full of little things that remind me. Though I don't remember why, someone gave me a verse. Oh, I do remember; we were praying for someone, and they wanted people to pray certain scriptures out loud. This is almost a journal for me, of my faith. So, I was raised going to church. I always just believed because that's what you did, right? My parents did, so I do. But when I got to about 12 years old, that's about when I really started to make my faith my own. I didn't just believe it because my parents did. I decided I believed it. And so, this is full of sometimes badly spelled, hard to read little notes and occasional things underlined with like a single word that makes no sense to me now. But it did at the time. I love this particular copy of God's Word because it has been with me for a long time. Right here I have lined the edge in black ink, on this page. And there's a tiny little line that just says, "My Favorite." Proverbs 3:5-6. This is literally my favorite verse, or couple of verses in the Bible.

The first time I got to go to Mexico was with our youth group. I was in high school. I did a mission trip to Mexico. Every Sunday afternoon we would all get together and we would prepare. We'd go over materials, whatever we were planning; we would organize and sort out our supplies. We had different things to work with for a month leading up to the mission trip. Every Sunday, they asked one of the teenagers going to give a short five-minute devotional. I volunteered. And I chose my favorite verse. Proverbs 3:5-6. My short five-minute devotional ended after about 15 minutes because I wasn't done yet, and so we didn't have as much time to then get on with all of the actual stuff we needed

to do that day. I love this verse. This is one of the first Bible verses that I memorized after John 3:16, because, for me, at least as a kid, that's where you started. But then I

found this verse. It was in a list of memory verses that we'd been challenged to remember, and I was struck by a certain rhythm to it, and it just stuck in my brain. I'm not even sure which translation, I'd have to do a Google search specifically, but the version that I learned when I was about six years old was "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him and He will make your path straight." Pretty similar, actually. I have been praying that verse constantly ever since.

So, when I was about probably ten or 11, some friends of ours are missionaries in Europe. They had originally been in Yugoslavia in the Early nineties. And they ended up being missionaries in Slovenia. They were reassigned to a slightly safer, more stable environment. They obviously then had to go about learning the Slovene language, which is not easy. It's a difficult challenge. They've been there for over 20 years living, working and ministering in Slovenia. Their children were raised there. And now two of them have gone into the mission field. Two of their daughters, we actually support one of them who's working, and she's just out of college. I love these people. Well, they came back to New Mexico, where Mr. Bell was originally from, and they were old family friends of my parents from apparently back when they used to go to school together. So, we went and had a picnic and hung out with them and that was fun. And then we went with them to the church they were going to be speaking at, talking about their ministry. And I sat in the back, kind of bored, I'll be honest. Studying the pew in front of me. And they started a slideshow. Pictures from the city where they were ministering. That was way more interesting than the pew in front of me that I was studying. So, I was looking at these pictures and I was struck by how beautiful this city looked. It looked just amazing. And so, I thought to myself, and I remember clearly thinking, that looks like a cool place to go. Then the only way I can describe what I felt next, was it felt like my heart had always been encased by a bowling ball and I didn't know it. And as soon as I thought, that looks like a cool place to go, the bowling ball cracked and fell away and suddenly my heart could beat freely for the first time in my life. It took me months before I could even put this into words. But I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt, I needed to go to Slovenia. I was about 11 years old. Not exactly an easy course to follow. No idea what I was going to do. I talked to my mom about it, and she said, well, maybe when you graduate? So, I thought about it, and I thought about it and I prayed about it, and it seemed like there was no hope, no way forward. I was never going to get there. I thought, I'm a home-schooled kid in Aztec. Aztec is a small town. It's like 6000 people in New Mexico. Not exactly the most populous or exciting place to be. How on earth was I going to make it to Slovenia? I don't know. A lot of time I just kind of had to set that on a shelf and was like, I should, I need to go there someday, somehow. Fast forward to the end of high school. I'm getting ready to go on a mission trip to Mexico. We go down and we are surrounded by abject poverty. One of the most valuable building resources in this environment was old tires, because you could set those into the ground and pack them with dirt and they would keep your foundations from washing away when it rains. And

they were so excited that we were there, overjoyed to have us. This one little old lady served us scrambled eggs and cactus paddle, which is not bad. It kind of tastes like the stems of broccoli. Not terrible, with corn tortillas for breakfast. And she was so beside herself with glee that she got to serve us breakfast. This woman had next to nothing. She couldn't even afford salt and pepper to season it. All she could do was cook it and give it, but she had something to give, and she was delighted. All of us teenagers are overwhelmed with guilt because of where we live. Each our families have our own houses. We've got running water. We've got electricity. We get to go to school. Some of us have cars. What do we do with that? As we're traveling home, heading back to tiny little towns in New Mexico, I prayed and said God, I don't know... what do you want me to do? Do you want me to just give away everything? How do I handle this? And God said, no. What I want you to do is not spend any money on yourself for a year. If you need something, buy it. Gas. If you need a new pair of jeans. If you need food. But if you don't need to buy something, don't spend money. So, I did that for a whole year. I spent no money, put everything into my checking account. And at the end of that year, as I was getting ready to graduate, I had about \$2,000.00 that I had saved up. I was not earning a lot of money. And my mom says, hey, you're about to graduate. Have you thought about doing something like a senior trip? And by this point, I hadn't. And she said What about Slovenia? I had accrued a chunk of money in my bank account. So, I sent an email to the bells, explaining my heart and everything that I had, that God had spoken to me and what I wanted to do in my budget. They emailed back a couple hours later saying, hey, this is amazing! We have a German lady who's been working with us doing our children's ministry. We don't have that many kids at the moment, but she needs to go back to Germany for about three months. Would you like to come out and take care of our children's ministry for a few months? And I said Yes. I had no idea how I was going to get there. But God did.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding in all your ways. Submit to Him and he will make your path straight. What I love about these verses is they capture three integral parts of our existence. Trust in the Lord with all your heart. That's the emotional side of things. That's the part that we really struggle to believe with. That's where the doubt kicks in. And we worry, and we fear. Our hearts really do a number on us when we are trying to figure out the way forward. I don't know if any of you have faced a difficult decision where you're like, well, what do we do? Do we do this? Do we do this? Here's a job offer. Do I take the job offer? Do I not take the job offer? We're looking at a house. Do I take this house? Do I not take this house? I need a new car. Do I need a new car? Will this one last long enough for me to get a new car? Should I get it now? There are so many decisions that we have to make in life. It's just a part of navigating our world. And our heart comes in and voices plenty of opinions. What if this? What if that? I'm worried about this or about that. Or I really, really want this thing. We really, really want this thing no matter what. But is it right? I don't know. Our hearts are difficult to handle at times. And yet we need to trust in the Lord with all our heart. For anyone who's experienced anxiety, that's easier said than done. It's easy to just say, oh, just trust in the Lord with all of your heart. And that's when someone wants

to throw a chair. Yes. But it's something to work towards. It's something that we can set as a target to trust in the Lord with all our heart. Sometimes you just have to start with a piece, a little bit of your heart. I'm going to trust God with all of my heart on this thing. Eventually I'll get to everything with all of my heart. But we have to start somewhere. Lean not on your own understanding. That's your intelligence. That's your thinking, rational grasp on the world. Don't lean on it. And so, we just talked about not letting your heart run away but trusting God with all of your heart. Also, don't lean on your reasoning. And that's tricky because God gave us brains. God gave us minds to think and understand. He gave us minds to see patterns and recognize how the world around us works. And that's not bad. But we're also called to not lean on that. Okay. I'm going to lean on this stool here. Without this stool, I would fall over. If this is my understanding, this actually isn't a good example because this is a pretty stable stool. Let's see, what's something I shouldn't lean on? This. I can't use that same force; I can't lean on this. It's serving a purpose. It's here for a reason. But it will not support my weight. It's not supposed to. Our understanding is not designed to support and figure every single thing out. That's not what it's for. Our logic and our reason, our minds are to navigate, to recognize, to associate, to give us guidance, but not solve every single problem we face. Some of them are just too big. Some of them we don't have enough information for yet. Thankfully God does. So, we don't have to lean on our own understanding. We use it. But we do not depend on what we understand. Thank the Lord for that, at least for me personally. In all your ways, submit to Him. In all your ways. That's action. That's your strength. That's what you do. Submit to God in everything you do. My old translation says "In all your ways, acknowledge Him." This from my personal Bible here. It's seek His will in all you do. Seek His will. Acknowledge Him. Submit to Him in all your ways. Everything you do. Acknowledge God.

Okay, so in a little bit, you guys are going to stand up - but before you do that, say, God I'm going to stand up. You're going to shake someone's hand, say, God, I'm going to shake that guy's hand. You're going to head out and head downstairs to have lunch. Lord, I'm heading down for lunch. I'm not sure that's quite what we're going for here, because that would really slow us all down. In everything you do when you're making a decision, when you are going to invest your time, your energy, your resources in something. Acknowledge God. Seek His will. Submit to Him.

I'm going to jump over to John 16:4. Jesus says I'm the vine, you are the branches. In verse four, he says, Abide in me and I in you. This word abide. Some translations say remain in me. I love abide. Abide means to live, to dwell. It means to be in Jesus. To be there, to exist. And that's covering heart, that's covering understanding, that's covering action. The ways that we move, our emotion, our intelligence, our physical being, in all of those, abide in me and I in you. Dwell in Jesus. Be there. Exist in Christ. Because then you don't have to wrestle with your heart to do the difficult thing or keep your heart from wanting something it shouldn't or make yourself do something you really don't want to do. You don't have to depend on solving every single problem and figuring it out and worrying away like a dog, chewing on a bone, trying to figure out the problem with your

intelligence. That also means that no matter what you do, however you use your strength, in all your ways acknowledging Him. You're in Him and you're working through Him, and nothing that you do is apart from Him. Then He will make your paths straight. You don't know where to go. You're not sure what to do next. That's okay. Because we've got some promises here. Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Don't lean on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to Him, acknowledge Him, and He will make your path straight.

I've got to refer to James again. I love the book of James. It's so practical. I feel like I can really get to terms with James. James Chapter One says, if you want wisdom, if you want to know what God wants you to do, ask him. He will not resent you asking. But if you do ask, be certain you will receive an answer for an uncertain mind is like a wave tossed by the winds. If you don't know what to do, we have instruction in Scripture to ask. I keep seeing these frames up here. Ask, seek, knock. I feel like we're building towards something there. In all your ways, submit to Him and He will make your paths straight. If you're not sure which path to take, ask God Which path to take. And then I'm going to take a step to the side on James here. To trust in the Lord. To lean not on your own understanding. To acknowledge Him in all your ways, really fits with James Chapter Four and yes - I've got my book marker here. James 4:13-15. Now, listen, you who say "Today or tomorrow, we will go do this; go to this or that city. Spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why do you not? Why do you not even know what will happen tomorrow? What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, if it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that. Okay. I know this might feel like a bit of a left turn but stick with me on this. James 4:13 is actually a pretty normal business plan. Here's what we're going to do. We're going to pick a day today or tomorrow. We've got a date. We're going to go somewhere. We now have a location. We're going to go to this city. We're going to spend a year. We now have a timeframe. And we're going to do business. We have a business plan of what we're going to do with the time frame in a location in order to make a profit. That's a pretty normal business plan. Sure, it's pared down, but James is telling us, no, don't do that. Stop. Because that depends on our understanding. You we don't know what tomorrow is going to bring. We don't know what lies around the corner. Instead, you ought to say, if it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that. That is not depending on your own understanding. That is submitting in everything you do. Because you're not saying, God, here's my plans. If you heard the old saying, if you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans. Yeah, I feel like that's on a lot of kitchen walls type of thing. If you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans. God has such so much better plans for us, so much bigger and better plans. Amazing things.

In my life. I've had the opportunity to do phenomenal things that I would have never expected. I've been incredible places and I had no idea I was going to get to go there. And I didn't plan for any of them. So much of my life, I've just been praying. All right, God, I'm going to trust you with all my heart. I'm not going to lean on what I understand. Acknowledging you in all my ways. I need you to make my path straight because I can't

do it. I can't do it. We have these three simple directions here. We don't have to do it on our own. Trust. Lean not. And submit. Can you do that? Can you trust in God with all your heart? And if you can't trust in God with all your heart, can you start with a little bit? How? What do you have to do this week that you need to trust God on? Maybe it's a conversation that you need to have that's uncomfortable. Maybe it's a decision that you have to make that you've been putting off. Trust in God with all your heart means you just step in there not knowing how it's going to work out. You don't know what's going to happen. It's hard, but it's going to be okay. Do not lean on your own understanding. You don't have to have it all figured out. It's nice to have it all figured out, but every single time we make a plan, something doesn't work.

I love my wife, the love of my life. She's amazing. I'm a big fan. I will talk about her all day long if you don't stop me. Has anyone seen the show Friends? Yes? My wife is a bit like Monica. She likes to organize. Everything has a place. She has a plan. It's detailed. It's probably written out. And here's a copy for you. Which is wonderful because I tend to wing it. It's not always best to just wing it. Sometimes it's good to have something of a plan. She and I balance each other out because she does plan. She does think things through way faster than I do. She solves a problem like that. I'm like, okay, hang on. Not if we go here and we do this. She's already got it figured out and is 12 steps past that. Because she has a plan, we've got something to work with. And she doesn't always like it when things don't go according to plan, but God provides. And when things don't go according to plan, I wing it.

I love this sermon series, by the way. Anyways. God will provide what you need. It's not wrong to plan. It's not wrong to understand. It's not wrong to feel. It's not wrong to try your best and give it all you've got. But we can't do that expecting that to be enough because we will never be enough. We need God. We have a God shaped hole inside of us and we cannot accomplish everything that we dream of doing without God. We need Him. And that's wonderful. What a weight off of our shoulders that it doesn't all depend on us. This church does not all depend on Pastor David. This church does not all depend on Jen, though she does a lot. If anyone would like to assist her, please get in touch. Yeah. We're a family. We're a body together. And through the body, God works together and keeps us together. And because of that, as a people, as a family, we can do so much more than any one of us could ever do on our own. And we've got some amazing people here. We're going to do some amazing things. As long as we trust in the Lord with all our hearts. And we don't lean on our own understandings. That in all our ways, we submit to God. And then He'll make our path straight. Even if we don't realize it until 30 years down the road. That is a pretty good promise. And that is why this is my favorite verse in the Bible.