

Trust in the Lord and Lean Not

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We can center our lives on the Savior by coming to know Him, and He will direct our paths.

While I was traveling in Asia, a dear sister approached me. She wrapped her arms around me and asked, "Do you really believe that this gospel is true?" Dear sister, I know it is true. I trust in the Lord.

In Proverbs 3:5–6, we read this counsel:

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

This scripture comes with two admonitions, a warning, and a glorious promise. The two admonitions: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart" and "in all thy ways acknowledge him." The warning: "Lean not unto thine own understanding." And the glorious promise: "He shall direct thy paths."

Let's first discuss the warning. The visual image gives us much to ponder. The warning comes in the words "lean not"—"lean not unto thine own understanding." In English the word *lean* has a connotation of physically listing or moving to one side. When we *physically* lean toward one side or another, we move off center, we are out of balance, and we tip. When we *spiritually* lean to our own understanding, we lean away from our Savior. If we lean, we are not centered; we are not balanced; we are not focused on Christ.

Sisters, remember, in our premortal life we stood with the Savior. We trusted Him. We voiced our support, enthusiasm, and joy for the plan of happiness set forth by our Heavenly Father. We leaned not. We fought with our testimonies and "aligned ourselves with the forces of God, and those forces were victorious."¹ This battle between good and evil has moved to earth. Once again we have the sacred responsibility to stand as a witness and put our trust in the Lord.

We must each ask: How do I keep centered and *lean not* unto my own understanding? How do I recognize and follow the Savior's voice when the voices of the world are so compelling? How do I cultivate trust in the Savior?

May I suggest three ways to increase our knowledge of and trust in the Savior. You will find that these principles are not new, but they are foundational. They are sung in every Primary, echoed in Young Women lessons, and are responses to many Relief Society questions. They are centering—and not leaning—principles.

First, we can come to know the Lord and trust Him as we “feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.”²

Several months ago we were having family scripture study. My two-year-old grandson was sitting on my lap as we read. I was in full-blown grandma mode, relishing the visit of my son’s family.

With our scripture study complete, I closed my book. My grandson knew that it would soon be bedtime. He looked up with his eager blue eyes and spoke an eternal truth: “More scriptures, Nana.”

My son, a good and consistent parent, warned me, “Mom, don’t be a weak link. He is just trying to get out of going to bed.”

But when my grandson asks for more scriptures, we read more scriptures! More scriptures enlighten our minds, nourish our spirits, answer our questions, increase our trust in the Lord, and help us center our lives on Him. “Remember to search them diligently, that ye may profit thereby.”³

Second, we can come to know the Lord and trust Him through prayer. What a blessing to be able to pray to our God! “Pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart.”⁴

I have a sweet memory of a prayer that I treasure. For one of my summer breaks from college, I accepted a job in Texas. I had to drive hundreds of miles from Idaho to Texas in my old car, a car I had affectionately named Vern. Vern was packed to the roof, and I was ready for the new adventure.

On my way out the door, I gave my dear mother a hug and she said, “Let’s say a prayer before you leave.”

We knelt and my mother began to pray. She pleaded with Heavenly Father for my safety. She prayed for my non-air-conditioned car, asking that the car would function as I needed. She asked for angels to be with me throughout the summer. She prayed and prayed and prayed.

The peace that came from that prayer gave me the courage to trust in the Lord and lean not to my own understanding. The Lord directed my path in the many decisions I made that summer.

As we make a habit of approaching Heavenly Father in prayer, we will come to know the Savior. We will come to trust Him. Our desires will become more like His. We will

be able to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that Heavenly Father is ready to give if we will but ask in faith.⁵

Third, we can come to know the Lord and trust Him as we serve others. I share the following story with permission from Amy Wright, who came to understand the principle of serving even amid a terrifying and life-threatening illness. Amy wrote:

“On October 29, 2015, I found out I had cancer. My cancer has a 17 percent survival rate. The odds weren’t good. I knew that I would be in for the fight of my life. I was determined to give it everything I had not just for myself but, more important, for my family. In December, I began chemo. I was familiar with many of the side effects of cancer-fighting drugs, but I did not know that it was possible for someone to be so sick and still be alive.

“At one point, I declared chemotherapy a human rights violation. I told my husband that I was done. I quit! I was not going back to the hospital. In his wisdom, my sweetheart patiently listened and then responded, ‘Well, then we need to find someone to serve.’”

What? Did he miss the fact that his wife had cancer and couldn’t take one more bout of nausea or one more moment of excruciating pain?

Amy goes on to explain: “My symptoms gradually worsened to where I generally had one or two ‘OK’ days a month [when] I could somewhat function as a living, breathing human being. It was those days when our family would find ways to serve.”

On one of those days, Amy’s family distributed chemo comfort kits to other patients, kits filled with items to cheer and to help relieve symptoms. When Amy couldn’t sleep, she would think of ways to brighten someone else’s day. Some ways were big, but many were just small notes or text messages of encouragement and love. On those nights when her pain was too great to sleep, she would lie in bed with her iPad and search for ordinances that needed to be completed on behalf of her deceased ancestors. Miraculously the pain would subside, and she was able to endure.

“Service,” Amy testifies, “saved my life. Where I ultimately found my strength to keep moving forward was the happiness I discovered in trying to relieve the suffering of those around me. I looked forward to our service projects with great joy and anticipation. Still to this day it seems like such a strange paradox. You would think that someone who was bald, poisoned, and fighting for [her] life was justified in thinking that ‘right now it is all about me.’ However, when I thought about myself, my situation, my suffering and pain, the world became very dark and depressing. When my focus turned to others, there was light, hope, strength, courage, and joy. I know that this is possible because of the sustaining, healing, and enabling power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.”

Amy came to trust in the Lord as she came to know Him. If she had leaned even a little to her own understanding, she might have rejected the idea that she serve. Service

enabled her to withstand her pain and afflictions and to live this scripture: "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God."⁶

Jesus Christ has overcome the world. And because of Him, because of His infinite Atonement, we all have great cause to trust, knowing that ultimately all will be well.

Sisters, each of us can trust in the Lord and lean *not*. We can center our lives on the Savior by coming to know Him, and He will direct our paths.

We are on earth to demonstrate the same trust in *Him* that allowed us to stand with Jesus Christ when He declared, "Here am I, send me."⁷

My dear sisters, President Thomas S. Monson testified that "our promised blessings are beyond measure. Though the storm clouds may gather, though the rains may pour down upon us, our knowledge of the gospel and our love of our Heavenly Father and of our Savior will comfort and sustain us ... as we walk uprightly. ... There will be nothing in this world that can defeat us."⁸

I add my testimony to that of our beloved prophet. If we trust in our Heavenly Father and in our Savior and lean not to our own understanding, They will direct our paths and will extend the arm of mercy toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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