

The Difference Between Trusting and Leaning (Part 2)

by Bayless Conley

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Hello, there, and welcome to today's program. My name is Bayless Conley, and I've got some answers for you. It's not because I'm super smart. It's not because I have a corner on wisdom, but it's because I know where the answers can be found. They can be found in the Bible. We call these broadcasts, "Answers with Bayless Conley." Again, it's not because Bayless Conley has all the answers. He just knows where to look.

I remember when I was a brand-new Christian. I came out of the whole hippie culture. There was this other hippie guy, he was a little older than me and he had his guitar case. I remember he had this big sticker on the side of his guitar case. It said, "Answers, they're in the Bible." I was so struck by that. I actually went out and got a sticker for my guitar case. It said the same thing, "Answers, they're in the Bible." I had been looking for answers my whole life and I finally found where they came from in the Scriptures.

If you were with us last time, I began talking to you about something that is so fundamental to our lives as followers of Jesus. It's found in Proverbs 3, and elsewhere, but it's really clear here. It's about trusting or leaning. That'll become clear in the next few moments. If you were not with us last time, this will be pretty complete in and of itself. We're going to pick up where we left off in Proverbs 3:5 NKJV. It says,

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.

All right. "Trust the Lord with all of your heart." The Bible says, it's with the heart that man believes. It's with our heart that we have faith. Trust the Lord with your heart and don't lean to your head. Don't lean on your own understanding. When your understanding, when your point of view, when human logic sits in stark contrast and opposition to God's wisdom and what God says, you need to trust God with all your heart and not lean to human logic. Not lean to your own understanding. It goes on in Proverbs 3:6 NKJV. It says,

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Whatever you're doing, if it's with your family, your business, for your future, with your health, whatever it is, in all of your ways acknowledge Him. The Hebrew word for acknowledge literally means "to look for and to listen for." You acknowledge Him. I'm looking for and I'm listening for God's wisdom. I'm getting quiet. I'm spending time in His Word. I'm listening for His voice. Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me." The sheep of the Lord know the Shepherd's voice. As we acknowledge Him, look for Him and listen for Him in all of our ways, He will direct our paths. The word direct there means "to show the way to go." It does have to do with direction. He directs us in the way to go.

If you read many Hebrew scholars and commentators, they say that the word carries with it the implied thought of empowerment as well. He not only shows us the way to go, but He empowers us to walk in that way. It literally means, it carries the thought of, "removing obstacles out of the

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way.” As we acknowledge Him and look for Him, He will give us His wisdom. And it may defy human logic. It may fly in the face of human wisdom.

I’m going to trust with all of my heart and I’m going to do what God says, and as I do, He empowers me and He also removes obstacles out of the way, making the way smooth, and making the way straight. You may have some great obstacles in your life right now. It may be an obstacle of lack. There may be some great obstacles in your family that may be because of your past, maybe it’s past abuse, or past hurts. Maybe you’ve gotten into a marriage where you’re unequally yoked, I don’t know what the situation is.

It may be because of poor financial decisions. You may have great struggles with your health. Whatever it is, whatever form those obstacles are taking, God has an answer for you. God has wisdom for you. If you’ll acknowledge Him and spend time in His Word, He will speak to you from His Word. He will speak to you by His Spirit in prayer. Then if you choose to trust Him with all of your heart and act upon what He says in simple obedience and simple faith and not lean to your understanding, you will reap results. Invisible hands will move the obstacles out of the way. There’s a grand illustration of this found in the Gospel of Luke 5. You probably know the story. I’m going to pick it up in verses 1–7 NKJV. It says,

¹ So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, ² and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. ³ Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. ⁴ When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” ⁵ But Simon answered and said to Him, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.” ⁶ And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. ⁷ So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.

What an amazing story. They’ve got an obstacle. No fish. No fish, no money. You can’t sell the fish. No money. You can’t pay the rent. You can’t buy food. You can’t take care of basic necessities. There’s a huge problem here. There’s a huge obstacle, and the Lord comes along and says, “Simon,” after He borrows his boat to preach from, He says, “Let down your nets for a catch.” Now, in verse 5, we’ve got Simon’s head and Simon’s heart both speaking. His head says, “Lord, we’ve toiled all night and caught nothing.” His heart said, “Nevertheless, Lord, at Your Word, we will let down the nets.” You think about the thoughts that would have gone through his mind. He would have thought, “Lord, we’ve been fishing all night. We’re tired. This is not the time of day to fish. We know You mean well. But rumor has it that You’re a carpenter.

And we’re fishermen. I come from generations of fishing families. We know that it’s best to fish at night. We put torches on the side of the boat. It attracts the fish and we put our nets down, but we fished all night. We fished in all of the best spots. We’ve gone everywhere on the lake that you can go. We’ve employed every method that we know, and we are the experts. Lord, we’re already washing the nets. We’ve already cleaned up. And You’re saying now launch out again and put the nets back in the water at the hottest part of the day? This makes no sense.”

Lean not to your own understanding, but trust the Lord with all of your heart. Peter, are you going to trust or are you going to lean? Well, He decides to trust. He says, “Nevertheless, at Your Word, we’ll let down the nets.” They caught two boatloads of fish. You see, that’s how it’s

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supposed to work. This is like Christianity 101. My mind says this, but God's Word says this. I'm going to trust God's Word and not lean to my human understanding. I'm not going to lean to logic. Sometimes God's Word goes absolutely cross grain of human logic. It absolutely does. Think about this for a moment. Just by way of another illustration, this is from 1 Peter 3:1–2 ERV. It says,

¹ In the same way, you wives should be willing to serve your husbands. Then, even those who have refused to accept God's teaching will be persuaded to believe because of the way you live. You will not need to say anything. ² Your husbands will see the pure lives that you live with respect for God.

That's from the ERV version. It says, wives serve your husbands. Love him and serve him, even those that have refused to accept God's teaching, even those that won't listen to God's Word. You can win them without preaching at them. They'll see your changed life. Your life will be a sermon. I know there are some ladies that it's like, "No, no, that ain't happening. That ain't happening." You're going to continue to preach to him.

"You need to be an example to these kids. You need to be in church. You drink too much beer. You're lazy. What about these kids? You need to take them to church and they need to see you with your Bible opened." You preach, preach, and preach to him. Ma'am, I got a word for you. Be quiet. Love your husband. Serve your husband. Let him see your meek and your quiet spirit, and he can be won without you even preaching to him. I know some ladies admit, "I don't receive none of that, preacher."

No, friend, you got to trust the Lord with all of your heart and lean not to your own understanding. You're preaching at him. You're nagging him to be in church, and going after him and telling him what a bad example he is all the time. It hasn't worked has it? No? Well, here's what the Scripture says, you can win your husband without even preaching at him as he observes the change that's happened in you, your meek and your quiet spirit and your servant's heart.

Now, going about things that way may fly in the face of what you think is going to work and may even fly in the face of your fleshly nature, because you are one who likes to speak your mind. You need to make the decision that you're going to trust the Lord with all of your heart and not lean to what your head is telling you. Certainly, when it comes to Scriptures like that and to God's Word and trusting His Word, we need to just go all in. The Holy Spirit will speak to us as well. He'll give us wisdom for our individual situations.

I have a friend. He used to work for Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke many years ago, when Bonnke was going full speed, doing the great crusades in Africa with sometimes, 400,000 - 500,000 plus people in a single meeting. This was a meeting where I think there was about 100,000 people in it. My friend is there. He's doing camera work and other things. He's also serving as a counselor for people that respond to the invitation. There are thousands and thousands of people in this meeting. In fact, I think this one had close to 100,000 people in the meeting.

Reinhard is up on the platform. He says, "All right, there's someone here named John. John, you need to give your life to Jesus." Now you think, "Okay, yes, we've got 100,000 people. There's only going to be 20,000 John's in the audience, like, come on." Reinhard later said, "I felt like the Holy Spirit was telling me that I needed to call out the name John." People would have thought, "Of course, everybody knows there's somebody named John out in the audience

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there, duh.” Reinhard said later, “I felt like the Holy Spirit was saying, ‘Do it.’ It didn’t make sense to me, but I did it.”

Anyway, my friend is back there. They’ve got the counselors and some of them have large groups of people. They’re talking to them and getting literature into their hands. They’ve got them in all these groups. My friend just felt led to talk to this one guy. He’s talking to this guy that came up. The guy is super emotional, super emotional. My friend says, “What’s your story? You’ve come forward and accepted Jesus?” He said, “Yes, I have.” I think the guy was crying. He says, “My mother insisted that I come here tonight.” He said, “I’m not going.” Says, “That stuff is so phony. I’m not going.”

She says, “Son, you need to come with me.” He said, “It’s phony.” She said, “It’s not phony. It’s real.” He said, “The only way that I will know that this is real and that God is real and all this salvation stuff you’re talking about, Mom, is if that preacher calls my name from the platform.” His name was John. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.”

When Jesus was at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, his mother came to Him and said, “Son, they don’t have any wine.” Then she turns to the servants of the feast and says, “Whatever He says to you, do it” Jesus—there’s these empty water pots. They’re actually 60 gallons worth of empty pots—He says, “Fill them with water,” so they do. He says, “Now draw it out and go take it to the governor of the feast.”

Now you think, “Jesus, did You not hear Your mother? They don’t have any wine. She didn’t say water. We have plenty of water, there’s no wine. If we go take water to the governor of the feast, we’re going to lose our job and we’re going to get a reputation. We’re not going to be hired at any other feast. We’re going to make a fool of ourselves. This makes no sense! They don’t have any wine!” There was something about those eyes and something about that voice that just compelled them.

They took the water, poured it out, and gave it to the governor of the feast. I happen to believe, it didn’t turn into wine until it hit his cup. He takes a sip and calls the bridegroom over and says, “Hey, usually people serve the best wine at the beginning when everybody’s well drunk, when they’re a little tipsy, then they serve the inferior wine, but you saved the best wine until now.” You think about those servants that had to draw out the water. They had to trust the Lord with all of their heart and lean not to their own understanding.

Listen, in your situation, whatever it is right now, whatever it is that you’re facing, whatever it is that you’re going through, you may be in a great crisis in your marriage, but God has wisdom for you. In fact, listen to me. Before the situation you’re in ever occurred, in eternity past, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit sat down and talked about you, talked about your situation, and They laid out a plan.

God has a pathway for you to walk, and He will show you if you will seek Him. Spend time in His Word. Spend time on your knees seeking Him. The great Shepherd will direct your path. My friend, He has wisdom for you. If you’ve just lost your job, God has wisdom for you. You may be a refugee that’s just come into a country and you don’t know what to do. You have nothing and there’s the threat of you being deported. There’s all sorts of things going on, and you just want to see your family taken care of. My heart goes out to you. Listen, your situation didn’t take God by surprise. He has wisdom for you. If you will seek Him, He will show you what to do.

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Get quiet. Spend time waiting on Him. God will speak to your heart. Spend time in His Word, and God will speak to you. We used to, at one of the old buildings that we were in as a church, have limited parking. So we had remote parking locations. I would give up my parking space at the church quite often and let people park in it. I would park over at a local school with everyone else, and then I would walk to church. It was maybe about a 7-8 minute walk, something like that. There was this guy, who'd be out in his yard all the time watering and stuff. Usually, you could tell he was inebriated. He'd been drinking. As the church people walked by on the sidewalk by his house, he would taunt them. He would harass them. He would yell at them and make fun of them. He was mean.

I'm walking by and he doesn't know I'm the pastor. I'm walking by the house. He says, "Oh, you're going to that blankety-blank church. If you were a real Christian, you'd take my garbage out." I just stopped and said, "Where's your garbage cans? Where's your rubbish bins?" He said, "They're in the back of the house." I said, "Do you mind if I come through the gate?" He said, "Go ahead." I go through the gate, and I get his rubbish bins, his garbage cans, and I bring them out and put them on the curb. I said, "There you go, man. Have a great day." He just cursed, and I went on my way. Anyway, one of our pastors would park over there all the time and walk by. God spoke to his heart. The Scripture says this in Romans 12:20–21 NKJV,

²⁰ Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

You've got an enemy? Feed him. If he's thirsty, give him a drink. You'll heap coals of fire on his head. Some commentators say that's like burning condemnation, if you would. It's burning guilt for them treating you so wrong. You overcome evil by doing good. Anyway, he just was impressed with this. He would always speak to this man kindly when he walked by. The guy would be out there watering, and again, most of the time, he'd been drinking early in the morning. The pastor would come and say, "Man, your garden is beautiful. You really have done well with your garden. Your roses are beautiful." The guy starts in, "Really?" Says, "I got a garden out in the back. You want to see that too?" He said, "Sure."

He takes him out and shows him. He just always complimented him and would be kind to him. Then he invited the guy to come to church. The guy came to church with him one day and I was preaching. At the end of service, the guy came up and gave his life to Jesus. He is sobbing. He remembered when he was taunting me and yelling at me. He said, "I didn't know you were the pastor. I'm so sorry." I said, "Hey, don't worry about it."

Here, he came to faith in Christ, because someone was doing what the Scripture said. Now, in your head, you just wanted to ignore the guy. That's sort of what human reason would say. "Okay, this guy's been drinking. He's off his rocker," or maybe saying something ugly back to him. That's sort of human nature, you fight fire with fire. God's wisdom said, "Be kind. Overcome evil with good." That's what he did.

I think it's important too, that we know the difference between presumption and faith when it comes to this. Presumption, you're just doing something because somebody else did it, or you're getting out on a limb. "I'm going to saw this off, and God, You better catch me." No, He's not obligated to catch you. When the Word of God has become real to your heart, or the Holy Spirit has genuinely spoken to you, well, friend, then you can act on that and there will be results.

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I remember a group of people from here, the US, went to a particular country to work with a missionary. I knew the missionary. He told them, "Look, don't drink the tap water here. We've got bottled water for you. There's bacteria in the tap water." There were a whole group of people that were young in their early 20s. They were just like, "We're Word of faith people, that water won't hurt us." He said, "Listen, there's bacteria in the water. There's bottled water here. It's one thing if we didn't have bottled water, but we do."

They said, "No, it won't hurt us. We're just trusting God that nothing deadly will hurt us." He said, "Look, can I take you down to the lagoon?" He says, "It's full of sharks. Will you swim in the lagoon with sharks?" They said, "No, we can see the sharks in the lagoon. We're not swimming in that." He said, "Well, you can't see the bacteria. You shouldn't be drinking the water." They said, "No, it won't hurt us." Every one of them drank the water and every one of them got sick. Again, it's one thing if you don't have bottled water. It's another thing if you do. One may be faith and the other quite a bit of presumption. Don't act foolishly, don't act presumptuously, but act in faith.

There is a most amazing story found in 1 Samuel 13 and 14. The Philistines have gathered with, I think, a couple thousand chariots, charioteers and an army like the sand by the seashore. Israel, under King Saul, when they saw this huge army, the Philistines gather, it says, they ran away. They were hiding in holes and in caves and everywhere they could to get away. They were terrified. To top it off, nobody had a spear. Nobody had a sword in the land of Israel. They were subject to the Philistines at those times.

The Philistines would make the Israelites come if they had to have their farming implement sharpened. The Philistines would do it for them. They would not allow the Israelites to have even a blacksmith to make weapons. There were only two swords in all of Israel. Saul had one, and his son, Jonathan, had one. Saul is there, and his whole army has fled. There's only 600 Israelites left in the army that have stayed with Saul. Jonathan, actually, sneaks off and the Philistines have this big garrison, and as I said, this enormous army. It says 1 Samuel 14:6-10 NKJV,

⁶ Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the Lord will work for us. For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few." ⁷ So his armorbearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart."

I think that's so important. The armor bearer realized that God had put something in the heart of Jonathan. Jonathan is not just acting presumptuously here. God has genuinely put something in his heart. So he said, "Do all that's in your heart. I'm with you according to your heart."

⁸ Then Jonathan said, "Very well, let us cross over to these men, and we will show ourselves to them. ⁹ If they say thus to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them. ¹⁰ But if they say thus, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up. For the Lord has delivered them into our hand, and this will be a sign to us."

It happened just that way. Jonathan and his armor bearer went up and killed a whole bunch of Philistines. Then God sent panic into the ranks of the Philistines. They began to kill each other and began to flee in panic. Then the Israelites realized what was happening. They began to attack the Philistines, and all those that had hidden in the rocks and the holes in the caves came

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out and chased the Philistines. It was a great victory that God brought to them. It was because Jonathan did according to what was in his heart.

It didn't make sense. You could say his obstacle was this garrison of the Philistines. God removed it when Jonathan trusted with all of his heart. It made no sense to the natural mind whatsoever. Through it, the Philistine stronghold was broken over Israel. Listen, it may seem like the devil has a huge, unbreakable stronghold in your life, over your body, your marriage, your finances, and your kids.

Friend, you have the sword of God's Word. Do what's in your heart and don't lean on your own understanding. Attack that stronghold God's way. Attack your lack with the sword of giving. Attack your enemies with the sword of kindness and with the sword of love. It may not make sense to your natural mind, and you may not figure out how it could ever work.

When you decide to trust God with all of your heart and lean not to your own understanding, when you toss away the toy sword of human logic and reason, and take up the two-edged sword of God's Word, it sends a trembling throughout the host of darkness because they know God is about to start removing some obstacles. Do what God has put in your heart. My friend, you'll not regret it. He will direct your path. He'll empower you. He'll move obstacles out of the way. He'll send you in the right direction.

I just want to close by saying thank you to those that support what we're doing. Hopefully, this word has encouraged you. Through your help, we're bringing the same encouragement to people around the world. I just say God bless you. If you've never considered joining us and being a partner, maybe consider it because we want to see other people blessed and encouraged the same way you've been blessed and encouraged by God's Word. I will see you next time.

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