



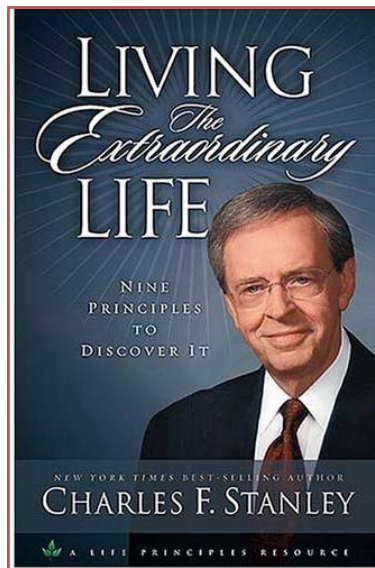
DEAN WELCH - TEACHER



WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON


SEPTEMBER 28, 2008

LESSON #4 FROM THE *MASTERWORK* SERIES STUDY OF:



TRUE OR FALSE: IN GOD WE STILL TRUST?

[TRUST THE LORD ... HE WILL MOVE HEAVEN & EARTH]

 This week I have thought a lot about what I actually put my trust in. Have you ever thought about what you put your trust in? It's clear that a lot of things we put our trust in will let us down. As I thought about it this week, I put my trust in the technology all around me just like each and every one of you do. We get up in the mornings and flip a switch and trust that the lights will come on. We expect the coffee maker to come on and have the coffee ready by the time we get to the kitchen. We get in our cars and trucks and turn a switch and trust that it will crank. Technology is all around us and we just expect or trust that it will work.

But just as happened this week with Beverly's car, one morning it didn't work as it should and instead of going to work at 7:30 we were in the repair shop. We fail to remember that this is all man-made and eventually it is going to fail us. Yet it never fails that we continue to place our trust in technology. We even trust that technology will keep us safe and protect us from harm today. Eventually we will be disappointed because it is man-made and it will fail. I trust people, family and friends. Don't we all? Yet they also at times fail us. At times the trust we place in family members is abused. There are times that even the best of families fight and argue. They say hurtful things that break our hearts. You feel like you can never forgive them. But eventually you do and you once more place your trust in them. We forget that all of us are human.

What about our nation's leaders? What about the two men running for President? What about our economy? Your local bank? Your job? Who do you trust these days? Although we can't completely trust technology, people, relationships, banks, leaders, or things, let me tell you who we can trust every single moment of every single day of our lives and that is Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. He will never fail you.

Look at the title on the board this morning. How would you answer my true/false question? If I were to ask you individually, most of you would very quickly say that you trust God but there are times when trust is not so simple. When things are going your way, trusting the LORD is easy. But when painful trials come into your life, leaving you frustrated, anxious or despairing, do you really trust Him? **Do your thoughts and actions display a deep and abiding trust that is supposed to be part of that faith?**

Trusting God means we believe in that which we cannot see and sometimes may not understand. Trusting God is literally against our human nature. Trusting God means that we have to admit that we are not in control of our lives. The words of **PROVERBS 3:5-6 (NKJV)** remind us what we already know. For those of you that mark in your Bible, I want you to have your pen ready, because I'm going to have you underline some words : ⁵*"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths".* In verse 5 underline the word "all." "With all your heart," the Proverb writer says we must trust the Lord. And in verse 6 underline the words "all your ways". "In all your ways" acknowledge Him and let Him lead you. The Proverb writer tells us if we do these things, He will clear the road for us to follow.

As we wrap up Week Four of our study from Dr. Stanley's *Living The Extraordinary Life*, this week we learned Principle #4 about how to discover and live an **EXTRAORDINARY LIFE**: **Trust the LORD and He will move heaven and earth to accomplish His purpose.** Let me ask you about our country's trust in God. **Is the slogan "In GOD We Trust" still true?** Why or why not? This morning I placed a handout in your chairs which contains the words to a song done a couple of years ago by Diamond Rio—a country band formed in 1989. Now whether you like country music or not, the words are important. Follow along as you listen to this song by Diamond Rio. **(PLAY "IN GOD WE STILL TRUST" BY DIAMOND RIO.)**

In the face of adversity, many people across our country wonder: “Does God really love ME?” and they conclude that a truly caring Father would not allow sorrow and difficulty to touch His children’s lives. So often, just as Dr. Stanley said in our study on Day One, people start to question whether He is willing to do anything about their circumstances. Do you remember the memory verse from several of our recent studies in **PSALM 50:15 (NLT)**: *“Trust me in your times of trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory.”* You need to memorize that verse and carry it with you, especially during these trying times. God assures us that we CAN rely on Him in our times of trouble even though we cannot understand why God allows certain situations to occur. We must never forget that we CAN DEPEND on Him simply because of His *character* and what happened on Calvary. **ROMANS 5:8 (NASB)** reminds us with indisputable evidence of His love for us: *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”*

As you did your Bible study this week and looked at the Scripture passages Dr. Stanley gave us, we were told over and over to put our trust in the LORD. But do we trust the Lord as we should? We certainly claim to have faith in God, but do our thoughts and actions display a deep and abiding trust that is supposed to be part of that faith? Let’s explore this in some other passages to help us with this idea of TRUST:

I. Trust Means Putting Your Welfare In The Hands Of Another. Trust implies risk. We trust someone or something when we are willing to put ourselves at risk, relying on them to deliver us from harm or loss. It is also obvious that when we will not allow ourselves to be put at risk by someone or something we do not really trust them. The Bible is filled with stories about people who were put into positions where they had to decide whether or not they would trust God—just like you and me. In each of these cases God asked men and women to put themselves and their welfare at risk. Let’s consider a couple of them:



Noah was asked to risk a lifetime of labor. Turn to **HEBREWS 11:7 (MSG)** and listen to the words about Noah and his trust: *By faith, Noah built a ship in the middle of dry land. He was warned about something he couldn't see, and acted on what he was told. . . . As a result, Noah became intimate with God.* Imagine this scene: One day God comes to Noah and says, "I'm disappointed in human beings. In the entire world, no one but you thinks about me. But Noah, when I look at you, I start smiling. I'm pleased with your life, so I'm going to flood the world and start over with you and your family. I want you to build a giant ship that will save you and the animals."

There were three problems that could have caused Noah to doubt:

- First, Noah had never seen rain because prior to the flood God irrigated the earth from the ground up. Did you know that? Listen to these words from **GENESIS 2:5-6 (NLT)**: *⁵neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the Lord God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. ⁶Instead, springs came up from the ground and watered all the land.*

Second, Noah lived hundreds of miles from the nearest ocean. Even if he could learn to build a ship, how would he get it to water? **Third**, there was the problem of rounding up all the animals and then caring for them. But Noah didn't complain or make excuses. He trusted God completely, and that made God smile. Trusting God completely means having faith that God knows what is best for your life. You expect him to keep his promises, help you with problems, and do the impossible when necessary.

It took Noah 120 years to build the ark. I imagine he faced many discouraging days. With no sign of rain year after year, he was probably criticized as a "crazy man who thinks God speaks to him." I imagine Noah's children were often embarrassed by the giant ship being built in their front yard. Yet Noah kept on trusting God.

In what areas of your life do you need to trust God completely? Trusting is an act of worship. Just as parents are



pleased when children trust them, your faith makes God happy. The Bible says, *"Without faith it is impossible to please God"* (**Hebrews 11:6 NIV**).

Gideon took a great chance to follow God's instructions and faced 120,000 Midianites with a band of 300. You will recall that initially Gideon had assembled more than 30,000 men. God said that was too many in **JUDGES 7** and told Gideon to tell any man who was afraid to leave and go back home. Twenty-two thousand men left—but the remaining 10,000 men were still too many for God to accomplish what He needed to so others would know it was God and not man. Turn to **JUDGES 7:4-8 (NIV)** and let's pick up the story: *⁴ But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go." ⁵ So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink." ⁶ Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. ⁷ The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place." ⁸ So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.*

Remember the outcome with only 300 men **and GOD**? The three hundred men were divided around the Midianite camp with trumpets. Look at verse 16 first: *"Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside."* Now, skip down to verse 22: *"When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the LORD caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords."*

David must have trusted God a great deal to go out to face Goliath with only a sling. Listen to David's words in **1 Samuel 17:37 (NIV)**: *"The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and*

the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

In the New Testament, we think of stories such as Jesus telling Peter to walk on water. Do you think Peter would have asked to go to Jesus if it had been a calm, peaceful, beautiful day on the Sea of Galilee? Probably not. But, since he was scared to death and knew Jesus had power over everything, he placed all of his trust in the Savior.

What is the common purpose of all these stories? Why did God ask these people to put themselves at risk? Could not God have accomplished His purpose easily and without any threat of harm to His servants? Yes and no. God can execute His plans in any number of ways, and He does not really need us at all to carry them out. But God's purpose is more than getting some things done, but as Dr. Stanley tells us God will move heaven and earth to accomplish His purpose—with or without us. In the process He wants to teach His children to trust Him, and we cannot learn trust without risk. It is in the threat of harm, and the reality of loss, that men are put to the test. Whom or what do YOU really trust?

II. Do You Trust In The Lord? God asks that question: Do you trust me? Disasters strike and tragedies happen in our lives. Life can indeed be hard. Life can be uncertain. Life is beyond our control. In times like this, life is beyond our understanding. We are left with raw emotions and tough questions. Answers are beyond us as we grapple with the question of why. God asks the question: Do you trust me?

When it comes to trusting God, you can rest assured that He gives you and me constant care. I love **Hebrews 13:5-6 (NIV)**, where, God has said, *'Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.'* *So we can say with confidence, the Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"* Amen? That's a great promise. Literally, in the original language it reads this way: "I will not, no, not leave thee, neither will I forsake thee." Five times God wants to assure us that He is never going to leave us.

*George Beverly Shea, the singer who partnered with Billy Graham for so many years, was sharing that he had many requests for songs to be sung at crusades. And he said the strangest request he ever got was when somebody handed him a slip of paper one time, and wanted him to sing a song entitled "God's grip don't slip." Now, I want tell you it's very poor grammar, but it's marvelous theology. **God's grip don't slip**. God constantly cares for us, and because of that Peter can tell us that we are to cast all of our anxiety, all of our worries upon Him. His care is constant. It's not occasional or sporadic; His care is total, not partial. His care is sovereign. Nothing can touch you or me without first touching God.*

Nothing and I mean nothing that we go through in life is beyond God. The truth is that we can and must rely on God in every situation in life. Times that just don't make any sense in human terms; we need to trust in God. The more senseless life becomes the greater our need to trust in God. The writer of Proverbs states it simply and clearly that God wants your full and complete trust. Trust God with all of your heart. We must hold nothing back and surrender to Him all that we are, all that we have, all that we may become because without the presence and guidance of God we will go nowhere.

God asks the question: Do you trust me? God wants you to trust even when you don't understand. When life just doesn't make sense. God wants us to follow Him when the future seems uncertain. It is only when we completely trust God that He to give us the power of His direction and the power of His presence. Listen to these words from **PSALM 9:9-10 (NIV)**: *The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.*

Most of you have heard or read the poem called Footprints. It's brought comfort to thousands and thousands. What's interesting is that the lady who wrote Footprints, Margaret Fishback Powers, went through amazing trials. The person that she loved left her,

she caught meningitis, and was literally bedridden for many months. She came to the lowest place of her life. During that time, another man fell in love with her and wanted to marry her. But she wouldn't marry him. She basically said, "I'm out of trust. I'm not sure I trust God. I know I don't trust men. I'm out of trust."

One night in her diary as she lay in bed, she began to write that beautiful piece, Footprints. And that night she saw the answer. I'll just take a moment to read it to you, if you've never heard it:

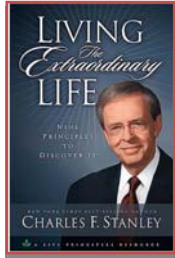
"One night a man had a dream, and he dreamed that he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes of his life, and for each scene he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand, one belonging to him and the other belonging to the Lord. After the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. And he also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and at the very saddest times of his life. This really bothered him, and he questioned the Lord about it. He said, 'Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I've noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there's only one set of footprints. I don't understand, Lord. Why, when I needed you the very most, you would leave me?' And the Lord replied, 'My precious, precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.'"

God has made a promise that He will never forsake those who seek Him. The promise that God made so long ago is still valid today because God has never broken a promise yet. He is true and faithful to His people. Our treasure is love from the God who created love. Our treasure is grace and peace from the God of all comfort. Our treasure is security from the God who never changes. Our treasure is protection and provision from the God who is all powerful. Our treasure is acceptance from the God who knows

everything. Our treasure is eternity from the God who sacrificed His own Son that we could gain it.

God is asking only one question this morning, do you trust me? What is your answer?

Let's Pray.



© 2008 R. DEAN WELCH
SEPTEMBER 28, 2008