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## **TRUST IN THE LORD**

Do you want to go deeper with God in this new year? I believe the secret lies in trusting Him. In his book, Ruthless Trust, Brennan Manning says, “Unwavering trust is a rare and precious thing because it often demands a degree of courage that borders on the heroic. When the shadow of Jesus’ cross falls across our lives in the form of failure, rejection, sickness, unemployment, loneliness, depression, the loss of a loved one; when we are deaf to everything but the shriek of our own pain; when the world around us suddenly seems a hostile, menacing place – at those times we may cry out in anguish, ‘How could a loving God permit this to happen?’ At such moments it requires heroic courage to trust in the love of God no matter what happens to us.”

John 14 relates that time when Jesus met with His disciples in the Upper Room. In a few hours Jesus would be taken captive by Roman soldiers and the next day He would be crucified. In that deeply significant and tender moment, Jesus said to His followers: *Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in Me.* (John 14:1, NLT) These words were not framed as a suggestion but as a commandment. But Jesus’ commandments are never cold and harsh, they are warm and encouraging. He was saying, in effect: “My dear friends, you are not going to understand what will soon happen to me. But I want you to hold onto trust in the loving God I came to reveal, and hold onto trust in me. With God’s help, you can do it!” He was encouraging them, and the word “encourage” means “to be given courage.”

Some years ago, one of Brennan’s friends traveled to Calcutta to spend time observing the work of Mother Teresa. The day came when he got to spend some personal time with her, and she asked how she could pray for him. He asked her to pray that he would have clarity. She said firmly, “No, I will not do that.” He said, “But you always seem to have clarity.” She laughed and said, “I have never had clarity, what I have always had is trust. So I will pray that you trust God.”

When I read that, I was stabbed with awareness. It seems to me that I have said, “I don’t understand!” a thousand times. “I don’t understand why this is happening to me, to my family, to my ministry.” That is, I was asking God for clarity. I was asking, “Why? Why? Why?” But God does not answer our why questions. Let me repeat that so you will remember it: God does not answer our why questions. And I have claimed many times that one of my favorite scriptures is Proverbs 3:5: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.* I said it, I quoted it, but apparently I didn’t really believe it. I didn’t have enough faith, trust, courage, to put myself fully and unconditionally in God’s hands.

So what does God’s wisdom, through Solomon, tell us in Proverbs 3 about trusting God? God says: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Don’t be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil* (in other words, repent of your sins); *Honor the Lord with your giving* (a selfish, greedy Christian is an oxymoron according to John Wimber); *Don’t despise God’s correction and chastening; Don’t envy* (James Bond or Beyonce or all those beautiful people you see on the celebrity news); *Pay attention to my words, and watch over your heart and the path of your feet.* God is saying, If you really trust Me, these are the practical things you will consistently do.

In line with this advice in Proverbs, Jonathan Cahn teaches that the placement of the Gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) and the book of Acts is a revelation, because the Gospel must *always* lead to Acts. It’s not enough to hear the Gospel message. It must produce change. You must act on it. The good news leads to action. The Gospel of love must produce acts of love. Every time you hear the good news, every time it enters your heart, you must let it turn into acts. Otherwise it’s not complete.

So if we trust God, there won’t be any more confusion or chaos or darkness in our lives. Right? No! That is not the message. That will never be true on this earth. Jesus said, *In the world you will have tribulation.* He said to His followers: *If they have rejected me, they will reject you.* And the Bible says that, *Those who desire to live godly lives will suffer persecution.*

Many of you who receive this message believe in healing and you regularly pray for the sick. Good for you! I certainly believe in healing: physical, emotional and spiritual. Over the past 60 years since I first accepted Christ I have seen many people healed, and I have seen a few things that I would classify as miracles. But most of the people I pray for have not been healed, at least not in any way that we could identify. And for the people who are healed, it is only temporary. They are going to grow old, their bodies are going to wear out, and they are going to die. (And a Happy New Year to you!)

About ten years ago I got to know a man here in our church named Dave. He was a cantankerous guy and very irritating. (We had a lot in common.) He used to come to my seminars, sit near the front, and occasionally he would interrupt my teaching and correct my theology. I appreciated that very much. Dave didn't show up for a number of months, and then he called to tell me he had developed lung cancer and asked me to come see him. He smoked like a chimney, so I wasn't surprised about the lung cancer. I visited him at his rented room north of Clifton and prayed for his healing. He didn't have any relatives in this area and very few friends, and I felt sorry for him. I made a commitment in my heart that I would visit him every week.

During the months when I visited him at his home, the cancer spread into both lungs and into his bones. Over the course of time, the tibia in one of his legs was completely dissolved. He had a desk by his couch where he spent much time studying Bible prophecy and posting it on his web-site. At times when I visited him, he was in such agony that he would not talk, he would just lay his head down on the desk while I quietly talked to him and prayed with him.

I visited Dave every Monday afternoon for just over a year. The cancer spread, and he finally went to the VA hospital, and then to an area in the hospital comparable to a hospice. I would visit him and wheel him outside to an area where he could smoke. (I am certainly not judging him for smoking since I have had lots of struggles with my own addictions. And I know people who died of lung cancer who never smoked one time in all their lives.) Dave finally went into a coma for two weeks before he died.

During all that awful year, I never heard Dave complain or ask why this was happening to him. I wondered again and again if I would have the fortitude and courage and faith he displayed in a similar situation. To be honest, I seriously doubt it. I have visited suffering people, dying people, a lot over the course of my ministry, and if you think that your faith shields you and your loved ones from such awful experiences I think you are mistaken.

Read again the book of Job and note that over 70 times Job complained that God had abandoned him and was unfair, but in the midst of all his suffering he declared, *Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him!* Read Hebrews chapter 11, and note that all of the people listed are held up as shining examples of victorious faith, but while some of them *received what God had promised them, stopped the mouth of lions, and defeated armies*, others of God's *people were tortured, chained in prisons, and died by stoning or by the sword, etc.* Read 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians and note the number of times that Paul (St. Paul, the Apostle) admitted that he had been depressed, fearful, and defeated. But he declares his trust in God no matter what. These folks in the Bible are normal people who did great things because of their faith in a great God. They are examples for us, and the question is whether you and I will hang onto God with trust and courage no matter what.

One other story from Brennan Manning: Several years ago, an Episcopal priest named Tom Minifie spotted a high-profile couple sitting in the last pew of his church with their one-year-old Down's syndrome child. It was clear from the parents' demeanor that the little one embarrassed them. On their way out the door, Tom intercepted them and said, 'Come into my office.' Once seated, Tom took the Down's baby in his arms and rocked him gently. Looking into the baby's face, he began to sob. 'Do you have any idea of the gift that God has given you in this child?' he asked.

Sensing confusion in the parents, he explained: 'Two years ago my three-year-old daughter Sylvia, died with Down's syndrome. We have four other children, so we know the blessing that kids can be. Yet the most precious gift we've ever received in our entire lives has been Sylvia. In her uninhibited expression of affection, she revealed to us the face of God as no other human being ever has. Did you know that several Native American tribes attribute divinity to Down's children because in their utter simplicity they're a transparent window into the Great Spirit? Treasure this child, for he will lead you into the heart of God.'

From that day forward the parents began to brag about their little one.

Robert Frost told about a lady who was diagnosed with breast cancer and who eventually went through the terrible surgical process of having a mastectomy. The lady said that when she awoke in the recovery room she felt the presence and love of God in a deeper way than she had ever experienced before, and she heard God speak to her inside: "My daughter, you went through all of that frightening, painful experience without doubting my love for you even one time, and I want you to know how your trust in Me ministered to my heart. I love you."

We need to be reminded that this earth is not paradise and that the promises of an existence without pain and tears pertain to heaven, not this earth. Yes, it is “Pie in the sky by and by.” There are many good reasons for believing that the Bible is the trustworthy record of God’s actions on earth, and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and came to die for our sins and give us eternal life. But there are also good reasons for disbelieving all of that. Faith is never certainty and is always a choice and a risk. Sophisticated people are sure that it takes gullibility and ignorance to believe in the God of the Bible. I believe it takes humility and courage.

1 John 4:16 says, *We are trusting in the love that God has for us.* Because of prophecies that God has given to me and to many others, and because of the worldwide increase in natural and man-made disasters, I believe we are living in a time of judgment. It is possible that ahead of us lies a time of severe testing and suffering. Are you standing on the solid rock of faith in Christ, no matter what? Are you trusting in His love?

## **LEGALISM**

Jose’ Quiroz, my evangelist friend who lives not far from Mexico City, told us about an example of *legalismo* that he experienced when he was a young man. He was invited to have an evangelistic service in a large church, but he was told that preachers were supposed to set a good example for the flock, and there were some standards that he must agree to. If he was to preach in their church, he must:

1. Wear a three-piece suit, color black or dark blue.
2. Wear a white shirt and matching black or blue tie.
3. His hair must be cut at least two inches above his collar.
4. He must wear boxer shorts and not briefs.

I thought I would pass this list on to you so you will know what it takes to be a good Christian.

## **OUR FATHER/MOTHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN**

Since the beginning of history, mankind has always been fascinated with the subject of God. Men have tried to figure out if God exists and what He (He, She or It) is like, and how mankind fits into His purposes. Man’s search for God is portrayed in the many religions and philosophies of the world.

The Bible declares itself not as man’s search for God but as God’s search for man.... and claims that it is a revelation of the one, true God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

God is revealed in the Bible as personal. A person with consciousness and will is infinitely higher in the order of existence than an impersonal power or force. The earliest Hebrew word for God is *elohim*, and *im* is the plural form. So God is revealed as Persons rather than Person, with the verb in the singular. God is rather than God are. (*God is love* is stated in the New Testament. Love only makes sense when there is someone else to love.) And God is presented in the Bible as masculine with the pronouns He, Him and His. *And God rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.* (Gen. 2:2)

But when God created mankind (Adam means man), God is revealed as both masculine and feminine. *So God created man (human beings) in His own image; in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them* (Gen. 1:27). Obviously, therefore, God’s nature is shown to include both male and female characteristics.

God reveals Himself in the Bible as being a Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit demonstrates the Mother Spirit of God: kindness, gentleness and mercy. Mercy (*hesed* in Hebrew) is one of the richest words in the Bible that reveal the character of God and His attitude toward us. God revealed Himself to Moses as: *Yahweh! The Lord! The God of compassion and mercy.* (Exod. 34:6) I read that the root of the word mercy in Hebrew is the word womb. A mother’s self-sacrificing love is the clearest expression of God’s love that we have on earth. God’s mercy is shown most clearly in His amazing grace in sending His Son to die on a cross for our sins.

The Catholic Church has recognized the Mother Spirit of God in an unscriptural way by venerating Mary, the mother of Jesus. This is understandable because it is difficult to conceive of or to venerate a “Holy Ghost” or a “Holy Spirit.” Then, too, the God revealed in the Old Testament is often seen as a holy terror, a God of wrath and blood, and not someone that it

is safe to cuddle up to. Additionally, the earthly fathers that many people have sometimes paint a picture of fatherhood that predisposes people to think of God the Father as a cold, scary Person. It is much easier to draw near to Mary or to her Son.

Our minds need to be transformed by the Word, and our hearts need to be healed by the Holy Spirit, so we can see and honor the God who is our Father/Mother in heaven.

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## **GOD LOVES NUMBERS**

There seems to be a hidden code in the Bible connected to numbers. Since the Bible was composed by at least forty human authors over a period of about 1,500 years, this is another clue pointing to the supernatural Author of the Bible:

### **1 – God/Unity**

Deut. 6:4 – *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!* Eph. 4:4-6 - *There is one Lord, one faith...one God and Father of all.*

### **2 - Witness**

John 8:17 – The testimony of two men is required. There are two Testaments, Old and New. Jesus is the second person of the trinity and is called *the faithful witness*. There were two angels at the tomb, two angels at the ascension, two witnesses in Rev. 12:31, and Jesus sent them out two by two to witness.

### **3 – Divine**

*God is (1) and was (2) and is to come. (3)* (Rev. 1:8) Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Mt. 28:19) *Holy, Holy, Holy.* (Is. 6:3) *Jesus rose on the third day.* Time/space/matter. Water is liquid/solid/gas.

### **4 – Earth**

*Four corners of the earth* (north, south, east, west) – (Is. 11:12) Four seasons, four empires, four winds, four living creatures around the throne (representing all creation).

### **40 – Testing on the Earth (10 x 4)**

Israel – 40 years in the wilderness. Jesus – 40 days in the wilderness.

### **5 & 10 – Completion**

Fingers, toes, senses. Ten Commandments, ten horns, ten plagues. Tribulation for ten days (Rev. 1:10)

### **6 – Man**

Created on the 6<sup>th</sup> day. The beast – 666 ( Man pretending to be God, therefore the number 6 three times)

### **7 – Perfection**

The key number in Revelation. God – 3, plus earth – 4 equals 7. Seven days in a week, 7 notes in the musical scale. March 7 times around Jericho. 7 parables in Matt. 13. 70 disciples sent out. 70 weeks in Daniel. 70 years given to man. 7 divided speaks of danger – 3 ½ weeks. 7 lamp stands. 7 churches.

### **8 – New beginnings, New birth**

Boys circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day. 8 people in the ark. Jesus appeared on the 8<sup>th</sup> day (Jn. 20:26) 8<sup>th</sup> day is the first day of the week.

### **12 - God's governmental number**

12 apostles, patriarchs, tribes, thrones, gates.

## **SIT, WALK, STAND** (From my Ancient Files.)

I just reread Watchman Nee's little booklet, Sit, Walk, Stand, a brief study of Ephesians, and found it a blessing. **Sit** has to do with our position in Christ (1:1 – 3:21) and concerns our relation with God. **Walk** has to do with our life in the world (4:1 – 6:9) and concerns our relation with people; **Stand** has to do with our attitude and relation to the enemy (6:10 – 24).

- *God...raised (our Lord Jesus Christ) from the dead and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places...and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.*
- Walking implies effort, whereas God says that we are saved not by works but by grace; which means to repose, to rest in the Lord Jesus. When we sit upon a chair, we rest all our weight in trust on the chair. Spiritually, we rest our weight, our load, ourselves, everything, upon the Lord. This was God's principle from the beginning. God worked for 6 days and rested on the 7<sup>th</sup>. But Adam was created on the 6<sup>th</sup> day, so that Adam's first day was a day of rest. In the Gospel God has completed the work of redemption and we can do nothing to merit it, so we enter by faith directly into a life of resting in the finished work of Christ.
- But how can I be sure that I am "in Christ?" Because the Bible affirms again and again that it is so and that it was God who put me there. God has put us in Christ. What happened to Him happened to us all. *Our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away.* That is not an exhortation to struggle but to rest. Righteousness (being right with God) is a gift from God. It is not an accomplishment of our own, it is all of him by faith.
- Walking is the practical outworking of that heavenly position on earth. *Walk worthily of the calling wherewith you were called; No longer walk as the Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind; Walk in love, even as Christ also loved you; Walk as children of light.*
- Paul learned first to sit. He came to a place of rest in God. As a result, his walking was not based on his efforts but on God's inward working.
- *Finally, be strong in the Lord...put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand, and having done all, to stand.* Our task is one of holding, not of attacking. It is not a matter of advancing but of holding the sphere of Christ. God has already conquered in and through Jesus Christ. In Christ, *we are more than conquerors.* In him, therefore, we stand. We do not fight for victory, we fight from victory.
- Only those who sit can stand. Our power for standing, as for walking, lies in our having first been made to sit together with Christ. Our walk and warfare alike derive their strength from our position there with Him.

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## **PATHWAY TO FREEDOM**

I'm going to start my next Pathway to Freedom seminar on February 7<sup>th</sup> – for 8 weeks:

Date: Wednesday, February 7 to March 28

Time: 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Place: Chapel

Baby-sitting provided.

Tell your friends. You had better come while you can. My plan is to stop having these seminars in 15 or 20 years and do some traveling. (Time travel.)

God Bless

Glenn

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