Trusting God

"Our joy in God is insatiably greedy. The more you have, the more you want. The more you see, the more you want to see. The more you feel, the more you want to feel." – John Piper

We've now looked at what it means to honor God by stewarding money well. Rather than partitioning what is ours to spend and what is His to give back, we know that we can use every dollar for the glory of God, whether that is in our spending, our giving, or our saving.

We also know that by God's grace, where we once were children of wrath, enslaved to the passions of the flesh, we are now children of God and heirs with Christ. We have been equipped with a new heart that longs to love God because He first loved us.

However, as we seek to walk faithfully with the Lord, we are constantly faced with decisions, uncertainties, and circumstances we would not have chosen. In those moments, we will be tempted to think like the world, rely on our own understanding, and question what God is doing.

Living life faithfully requires trust.

Fortunately, God has generously provided us with all that we need for life and godliness.[1] He has not called us to blindly follow, but to walk confidently because He has revealed Himself to us.

Knowing God

Psalm 9:10 – "And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you."

We know that we can trust God in times of adversity because He has made himself known to us. As we seek Him, we will find that Scripture reveals three critical truths about God that give us the confidence that we can fully trust Him.

1. **God is sovereign.**

   Job 42:2 - "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."

   God is always orchestrating the events of this world to fulfill His plans. There is nothing outside of His control. That includes the hearts and actions of men. This was never more evident than when He used the evil intentions of Herod, Pilate, the Jews and the Gentiles to fulfill His plan of salvation,[2] displaying the truth of Joseph's words to his brothers in Genesis 50:20, "you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good."

   God is always in control and His plans are never frustrated. Because God is all-powerful and sovereign over His creation, we can be sure "that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion".[3]

Since God is fully in control, we can trust that nothing in our lives is happening by mere chance. However, God being in control is not enough for us to trust Him; we also need to understand how He is using that control.

2. **God is infinitely wise.**

   *Isaiah 46:9-10 - "I am God, and there is none like me, **10** declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'"*

   We find decision-making difficult because we always lack knowledge. Even when we have enough information to make a confident decision, there is still uncertainty around how everything will play out in real time. We simply don't know what we don't know.

   Fortunately, God exists outside of these limitations. He not only knows everything, but He also understands the future outcome of each possible situation which enables Him to fulfill His plans perfectly. This is why He can say, "I will accomplish all my purpose".[4]

   While we may not always understand how God is working, we can trust that He is orchestrating all the events of the universe in the best possible way for the best possible outcome. Yet even perfect power and perfect wisdom are not enough to give us comfort unless they are paired with something else.

3. **God is perfect in love.**

   Romans 8:28 - "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose."

   A ruler could be a thing to fear if he used his powers and his knowledge for selfish or evil purposes. Fortunately, God is good. He has consistently proven His love through the fulfillment of His promises to those that love and fear Him. He could have left us to die or struck us out of existence after the fall and in His perfect justice, He would have been right to do so. Instead, God defined love for us on the cross. He emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, in the likeness of men, to die so that those who have faith in Him could have eternal life.[5]

God has the sovereign power to accomplish whatever He wills, the wisdom to accomplish it perfectly, and the love to always do what is best for us. This is why we can trust Him, which will greatly change how we perceive all the events of life.

Understanding Our Circumstances

"In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other..." -Ecclesiastes 7:14

Trusting God will drastically shape how we interpret our circumstances. As finite human beings, it's easy for us to question the sovereignty or the goodness of God because we don't

understand what He is doing and why. When He doesn't act as we think He should, we can be tempted to jump to the conclusion that either He isn't in control or He isn't good. In reality, God's ways are higher than our ways, His thoughts are higher than our thoughts,[6] and we're simply unable to fully comprehend how He's working and what He is accomplishing. This is where our trust in God is tested, not in theory, but in real life.

While God is working all things for the good of His people, that doesn't mean that our lives will be free of adversity. Hardships will come, but our comfort is in knowing that no circumstance of our life is an accident or outside of God's sovereignty, wisdom, and love. "You will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."[7]

Financial trials are hard to accept since we tend to assume money is the result of our personal abilities and hard work. We like to think "My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth".[8] This is why the poor are often looked down upon as second-class citizens in our society or as those that need counsel inside our churches. When we jump to such conclusions, we're failing to remember that "The rich and the poor have a common bond, the Lord is the Maker of them all".[9]

Whether we're going through prosperous or challenging financial times, God has us exactly where we need to be at that moment to mold us more into the image of Christ.[10] If we can trust God to bring His good work in us to completion,[11] we're also going to need to surrender the path He takes to get us there.

Means of Grace

The lives we live ought to reflect our faith in God to work all things for our good. However, trusting in the Lord's sovereignty does not warrant passivity nor does it relieve us from personal responsibility. We should rely on God to equip us as we strive to improve our situations through the application of biblical wisdom, all while trusting him to accomplish all that He purposes. Thankfully, He has provided us with three means of grace that prepare us to be faithful workers.

1) Scripture

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work".

Through His Word, God has sufficiently provided us with everything we need to accomplish the work He has prepared for us to do. The more we know God and His Word, the more we will desire Him over the things of the world, understand His will for our lives, and reflect His image for all the world to see.

2) Prayer

Jeremiah 29:11-13 - "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ***12*** *Then you will call upon me and come*

*and pray to me, and I will hear you. **13** You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart."*

Those who humbly realize their complete dependence on God will be more dedicated to prayer and an understanding of God's sovereignty makes it possible to pray with confidence. Nehemiah and the Israelites were under constant threat as they rebuilt the walls around Jerusalem, but he said, "we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night." They not only took prudent action by setting guards but also prayed because they knew it was God who would fight for them.[12] We should be as diligent in our prayers as we are in our other efforts because it is God who will bring the results.[13]

Scripture informs our way and prayer is the expression of our dependence on God, but we were never meant to walk this path alone.

3) Community

Proverbs 12:15 - "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice".

God has also blessed us with wise biblical counsel primarily within the local church. As our society continues to move toward self-reliance and independence, we need to avoid the mistake of trusting too much in our own abilities and ignoring the wisdom of others. Counsel from other believers is one of the means God sovereignly uses to impart His wisdom and share His love.

Our desire is to be surrounded by those who can help us understand and apply biblical truth to our lives, so knowledge of Scripture is essential. When times are tough, these individuals can remind us of our trust in God and point us back to His Word when we may not be seeking it out ourselves.

While Scripture and community provide essential wisdom, there could be times when we need the experience and training that only a skilled professional can provide (tax, legal, etc.). After all, we are living within a worldly system. In those times, we seek knowledge where it can be found, but never divorce it from the wisdom of Scripture as we lean on our wise counsel to help evaluate that advice from a biblical perspective. If the advice we received is not consistent with God's Word, we should seek out another professional opinion.

Through the wisdom of scripture, access to God in prayer, and the wise counsel of other believers, God has provided us with everything we need to walk faithfully through this life. Any wisdom you gained from this course was nothing more than the application of Scripture to the topic of finance. To offer a twist on a quote I once heard[14], it's better to receive financial advice from a poor man with an open Bible than from a financial expert offering nothing more than his own wisdom. While the world will try to sell us their secrets to happiness, we can rest in God's sovereignty and the completeness of His gifts.

Conclusion

Our financial lives will be an area of constant tension as we seek to honor God in the decisions we make. While we may wish to avoid the struggle, it is what makes this discipline so valuable for the Christian. The tension is a constant reminder of our need to deny the flesh and depend on God. The faithful steward can honestly pray "Give me neither poverty nor riches"[15] because they desire something else more than money and realize much or little can both be stumbling blocks.

As we walk forward in faith, let the truths of God light our path. When Satan whispers temptations in our ears, we can recognize the lie and remember that God is not withholding good from us. Financial freedom is not found in the ability to do anything we want. Rather, true financial freedom is found in the joy of living within the guardrails of God's commands that He has given us for our own protection. We me may not understand the path of life, but we confidently walk with God because we trust the One we are following and know where the path leads.

*1 John 5:3-4 - "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. **4** For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world."*

Endnotes: Scripture References

1) 2 Peter 1:3-4 - His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

2) Acts 4:27-28 - for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

3) Philippians 1:6 - And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

4) Isaiah 46:10 - declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'

5) Philippians 2:5-8 - Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, **6** who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. **8** And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

6) Isaiah 55:9 - For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

7) John 16:33 - I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

8) Deuteronomy 8:17-18 - Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' 18 You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

9) Proverbs 22:2 - The rich and the poor meet together; the LORD is the Maker of them all.

10) Romans 8:29 - For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

11) Philippians 1:6 - And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

12) Nehemiah 4:9, 20 - And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night. ... 20 In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us."

13) 1 John 5:14-15 – And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. **15** And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

14) It's a joy to attend a marriage seminar led by a man who speaks with wisdom earned by long experience. But it's even better to speak to a man who has great confidence in his Bible. It's far better to hear a sermon on marriage by an unmarried man with an open Bible than an experienced husband who brings nothing more than his own wisdom. – Tim Challies, *Give Me a Man with an Open Bible!*

15) Proverbs 30:7-9 - Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die: **8** Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, **9** lest I be full and deny you and say, "Who is the Lord?" or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.