

Always Trusting in the Lord

Nathan Rages | *From Evan & Charity's Wedding*

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Praise the Lord! All for Christ! What a theme!

Well, Evan and Charity, you're about to come over here and recite your wedding vows. The biggest, broadest, toughest promises that any people make to other people. And you do that with the knowledge that many, if not the majority of those who take such vows fail miserably to keep them.

So my question for you guys is how are you going to do this? What is your hope? What is your confidence of actually living out the gigantic things you're about to say with your mouths? What's your trust? Is your trust in yourself, Evan? Are you just going to try harder than all those other people to keep these things? Is your trust in that other person? Are you thinking, well, Charity's really nice and really pretty, and I love her a whole lot. She'll probably never make very many mistakes, and we'll have a pretty easy time of things. And you immediately see if your only confidence is in yourself and in this other person, oh, you need a lot more than that. And so that's what the exhortation is for you two today on your wedding day and for the entirety of your marriage.

Proverbs 3:5-6 It says, "Trust in the Lord." "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." That's how a Christian can make these massive wedding vows, right? It's because your trust is not in yourself. It is in the Lord. And I know that's true of you. And I know it's your desire for the rest of your lives together to be lives of trusting in the Lord. And so, that's what I want to talk about today. This life of trust. Trusting in Him. Five aspects of the life of trust we see in these very familiar verses I just read. The first is that this trust is in God Himself. Trust in the Lord, right? It's not trusting in your own feelings of faith.

It's trusting in Him.

It's trusting in the God Who created the universe.

It's trusting the God Who revealed Himself in the Bible.

It's trusting in the God Who took on human flesh and entered into our world.

Trusting in the God Who by the Holy Spirit lives in your heart if you are a Christian.

Trusting in God.

Trusting in God's character.

Trusting in God's Word.

Trusting in God's promises.

Trusting that God will do - not just do things for other people - but do great and mighty things for you as you trust in Him. It's a trust in God.

But, let's be specific, for the Christian, our trust is not just in God in a generic way. It centers specifically in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the redeeming work of our Savior, right? It all begins there with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That the Son of God took on our humanity. He entered into the human race. He lived in this

world a perfectly righteous life, and then at last, He laid down that life as a spotless sacrifice on Calvary's cross. That He died there to pay the sin debt of sinners like us, and then He arose on the third day in power and victory demonstrating that it was all effectual. Our faith is in God. Our faith is in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we must respond to that story, that message, that reality of the Gospel by a personal trust in Him. Turning from, repenting from our love of sin; our love of ourselves; our love of our self-righteousness - thinking we're good enough on our own - and putting our trust completely in the Lord Jesus Christ - His blood, His righteousness. My only hope and plea. And thereby our sins can be forgiven. We're made white, clean as snow. And we enter in to a personal relationship with the living God in this life and which continues on for all eternity.

Now, Evan and Charity, I know you trust in Jesus Christ. I know you've put your confidence in God. I know you love Him. I know you glory in Him. I know you wanted your wedding to be filled with praise to Him. I know you know these things, but I'm reminding you today, the whole rest of your life; the whole rest of the Christian life is called a life of faith. It's called a fight of faith actually. And there's what you enter in to. You must go right on trusting in the Lord. Go right on trusting that great is His faithfulness. Trusting that these exceeding great and precious promises are for you. Because He's a God Who cannot lie. He'll keep His Word. Trusting that He will never leave you or forsake you. Trusting that He will satisfy your years with good things. Isn't that a good verse? Trusting that He will actually work all things together for your good as believers. Trusting that if He didn't spare His own Son; if He gave His Son for you, how will He not also with Him freely give you all things? Trust is in the Lord. That's the first thing. Second thing is that this life of trust requires a whole-hearted commitment. A whole-hearted commitment. The verse says, trust in the Lord with all your heart.

There's lots of people with a sort-of trust in the Lord. Oh, they'll try Jesus for a little while. And then, they'll get tired of that. There's a lot of people that have kind of a halfway faith in Jesus that's all just in their heads. It's just kind of a mental game. They'll agree to certain facts about the Gospel. They'll say, well, I agree with those facts. But they've never trusted in the Lord. They've never entrusted themselves. They've never surrendered themselves. They've never given themselves to Him. The Bible's clear: a halfway sort of faith is worthless. God says trust in Me with your whole heart. God demands it. God deserves a whole-hearted, all the way, all out commitment of your whole person. All that you are; all that you have; all that you ever will be - He's worthy of that. You've got to go all in with God. There's no way to hedge this deal. There's no way to protect yourself from the riskiness of genuine faith. There's no way to avoid being in that vulnerable spot where you know that if God fails me now, if God's promises suddenly stop working now, I'm in gigantic trouble. I'm of all men most to be pitied, in fact. There's no way to avoid being in that spot. But I'll tell you this, that spot is also the place of greatest safety. And it's the place of greatest joy, isn't it? Because it's in that spot where you see the glory of God. Are you trusting the Lord with a whole heart? No caveats. No reservations. No shady, shadowy places. Then praise God.

On to number 3. This life of trust will kill your self-reliance. That's the third thing the verse teaches us. It will kill your self-reliance. It says do not lean on your own understanding. I mean, this is what makes the life of faith so difficult for our flesh, right? Because we think we know better than God most of the time. It's like, well, I agree with God about some stuff over here. I agree. That's ok over there. But I've got this thing over here, and I know how this ought to work. I want it to be this way. I want God to perform the way I want Him to perform over here on this thing. That's trusting in your own understanding. The verse says that's not going to work. Do

not lean on your own understanding. You see, a lifetime of trusting in God, what it does is it takes all your proud self-reliance and it crushes it down and then it grinds it into a million little pieces as you learn that you're just a child before your heavenly Father. You're just a sheep trying to follow the Shepherd from step to step. As you learn to patiently wait upon the Lord for His timing. God's almost never in as much a hurry as you are about stuff. You learn that. You learn to pray like Jesus did. Not my will, but Your will be done. And you learn again and again the truth of Jesus' words: "Apart from Me, you can do nothing." I say, this will kill your self-reliance and the pride that goes with it.

Now a fourth aspect of this life of trust is that it covers everything. It covers everything. It says in all your ways, acknowledge Him. In all your ways acknowledge Him. What does it mean to acknowledge Him? To acknowledge God? Well, it means bringing God into the picture whatever's going on. Whatever the decision, whatever the crisis that has erupted, whatever the opportunity that has presented itself, whatever the need, whatever the problem, whatever the burden, you say, what does God say about this? What does the Bible say? To bring in what's best for the kingdom here? What will bring God most glory in this thing? That's acknowledging Him. And of course, it includes the aspect of prayer too. We don't just think about the situation, but we take it to the Lord, right? We're called to cast every anxiety, every need upon Him. And not just to pray to Him about it, but to ask Him to intervene and change things, which He's willing to do. Evan and Charity, you guys can be doing this for each other. You can be helping each other, right? You can be reminding each other, hey, we need to acknowledge Him in this. Hey, have we prayed about this problem? Hey, what does the Bible say? Hey, maybe we should get some godly counsel on this deal that's come up. So how much of your life are you supposed to be acknowledging God in? How much? What does the verse say? In all your ways acknowledge Him. That covers quite a bit of territory, doesn't it? All your ways. It's anything you're doing. Anything you're involved in. Really any detail that you care about in your life, God says, "I want to be Lord of that. I want to be brought into the scene there. I care about that thing. I want you to pray about that. I want you to think about what I say in My Word about that matter." In all your ways acknowledge Him.

Listen, many of the hardest things and deepest trials you're going to face as a couple, I suspect are things you've not even imagined yet. Probably things you haven't even thought about or talked about together. We don't know what those things are, right? That song talks about the weary ways and golden days. We don't know what the mix will be. We don't know if it will be financial problems or job problems or children problems or church problems or ministry problems - what the problems will be. But really, the specifics don't matter, right? Because the same principle applies to every single one of them. I've just got to trust God with this. I can trust God with this thing. And you know, that's a really basic lesson but it seems like we have to learn it a hundred different times as a Christian. This simple thought that I can trust God about this new problem the same way I've been trusting Him with twenty old problems over here. I can trust God with that. This new thing that's blown up on me. How foolish to say that you're trusting God with your eternal soul, but now, you're not sure you can trust Him for a job, or for your kid's dental work, or for some crisis in the church, right? We can trust the Lord with everything. In all your ways acknowledge Him. And hasn't He proven Himself faithful over and over? I bet you guys in your own Christian lives, you've seen hundreds of answers to prayer from the Lord. Can't you trust Him for more hundreds, more thousands in the future? In all your ways acknowledge Him. And then fifth and the last thing to point out is that

this life of trust is rewarded. It will be rewarded. The verse says, He will make your paths straight. He'll make your paths straight. It's a specific promise for those who will trust the Lord with everything. Really let God lead in their lives. Commit it all to Him continually. The promise is He'll make your paths straight. In other words, God's not going to run you around in circles of futility. But God will lead you providentially in purposeful, wise ways that will be good for you and glorifying to Him. Straight paths for your life. Now, don't misunderstand here. A straight path is not necessarily an easy path. We just talked about that a minute ago. There might be hard things on the path, but in all these hard things, God is bringing about good results for you. There is a purpose. There's wisdom behind it.

Now think of this. Evan and Charity, think of this. On this date five years from now, ten years from now, twenty years from now, you guys are going to be together somewhere if the Lord preserves your life. You'll be together in some nice place holding hands and you'll be thinking back over however many years you've been married, and you'll be able to see this very thing. You'll be able to see how the Lord has made your paths straight. You'll be able to remind yourselves of how all these little details of providence have fitted together to bring you along step by step to the point that you're at now. Now, while the things are happening in real time, we usually don't see it. But we can look back and we can see the hand of God in our lives. He's making our paths straight. He's working these things out in His wise, wise providence.

The book of Hebrews reminds us that this has already been the experience of a great cloud of witnesses, right? All these saints that have gone on before us - they've found this to be true. They've found God to be faithful again and again and again. And they testify to us of these things. God has straightened my path as I've trusted in Him. I think of what Hebrews says in chapter 13:7 and I'll leave you with this thought. Hebrews 13:7 "Let's remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God." And so he's saying think of those older saints. Think of those more mature saints that had a big effect on your life. Think about them. And then it goes on, "consider the outcome of their way of life." Think about how did their life turn out? These spiritual leaders in my life. How did their life go? Was the Lord faithful to them? Did He keep His promises in their life? Did He lead them in faithful paths? And in the end of the verse, it says and imitate their faith. They trusted God. God was faithful. Now you trust God the same way. That's what the verse is saying. Evan, oh, that verse always makes me think of your dad. He was that leader in my life. What was the outcome of your dad's sojourn on earth? Couldn't we say that God led him in straight paths? A straight path of great fruitfulness. And then straight home to glory. Bob trusted God, didn't he? Again and again and again... He trusted God, and each time he found the Lord to be faithful. Faithful. Faithful to the end. But the verse, I remind you, tells us not to honor the memory of the man, but to imitate the faith of the man. It says imitate their faith. May God help us. Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Amen.