

*Part 4*

*Faith Alive Through--*

**LIVING BY FAITH**

**CONTENTS**

A Religious BBQ  
Getting Our Teeth Into Trust  
A Little Boy In The Concrete  
Lessons From Bro. Andrew  
With All My HEART  
Three TESTS Of Faith  
A Telegram To Check On Faith  
Learning To Lean In A Blizzard  
The Poison Of Wrong Leaning  
God Gives Us Gas To Go  
The Antidote  
Faith In All Life's Ways  
"God And I Have A Deal Going"  
Directed Paths  
Eight Lessons On A Mountain Trail

While I had memorized 500 Bible verses as a youth through the Rural Bible Crusade of Kansas, graduated from Bible College, taken 30 hours of graduate study and preached 20 plus years; yet, I was not living by faith on a daily basis. I did what most other preachers and church members were doing as writer Elton Trueblood suggests--living by SIGHT and calling it FAITH.

My eyes were opened thru the reading of a book--"GOD'S SMUGGLER"--by Bro. Andrew. I read it during the after lunch rest period at a week of Christian Service Camp. Upon completion I prayed: "Lord, if Andrew doesn't have a copyright on TRUST or a patent on PRAYER, please enroll me in the school of faith!" Andrew didn't and GOD DID!

My walk started the next day with my weekly task of barbecuing chicken for all the campers at a lake outing. THIS I KNEW HOW TO DO. I'm not an expert at anything but BBQ was one thing I had learned by practice. I knew what was needed--number of chickens, 60# of charcoal, two and one-half cans of lighter fluid, matches, time to leave for the lake, when to light the fire, how long to cook the 120 quarters of chicken. An old ranch cook from Ashland, (Kansas) Virgil Bowman, had taught me to make mouth watering BBQ sauce. Little did I know that living by faith could possibly include barbecuing. I hitched onto the charcoal burner with the old Ford pick-up and headed towards Clark County Lake. Arriving on time I spread out the charcoal and poured on a can of lighter fluid. All went well on this 110 degree in the shade summer day until the two and one-half cans of lighter fluid were gone and nothing but flash fires that quickly died away. It was one of those rare Western Kansas days when some humidity was hanging around and had caused the charcoal to draw dampness. No fire and no white spots on the charcoal indicating a fire-in-waiting. Not enough time to travel 20 miles to town and 100 plus hungry campers coming in 90 minutes. I took off my straw hat and sat down in the shade of a picnic shelter. In moments of desperation FAITH is often born. So, it was in this crisis I decided to pray. I PRAYED--"Lord if you

want YOUR chickens cooked then YOU'LL need to do something."

A little hot breeze blew up out of the southwest. A few minutes later smoke was pouring out of the 20 ft. charcoal burner. I walked over in disbelief and there was a beautiful bed of white coals. The chickens were cooked. The hungry campers ate and later that night in my small closing prayer circle at Camp I shared with the campers the strange events of the afternoon. It had been a good first day in His School of Faith! Little did I know that this event was but a kindergarten lesson for the days ahead.

This chapter demonstrates what FAITH is and how to LIVE BY FAITH right where the tires of our lives meet the pavement of our living on the Road of Life.

H-O-W do we T-R-U-S-T God? Solomon gave us a perfect recipe which many of us have committed to memory. now let us commit it to life. We will follow this Divine recipe for FAITH just as it was given.

Solomon's Recipe for Faith--

## **PART I - "Trust"**

*"And lean not on your own understanding;  
In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He shall direct your paths."*

*Proverbs 3:5,6*

Trust in the Lord with all your heart.

This is almost the land of ho-hum since so much has been said and written that is only half true. One contemporary speaker said--"FAITH is TRUSTING in something you BELIEVE IN." This sounds important and informative until you study the matter and realize that it says nothing. Nothing because all three words--faith, trust, believe--come from the very same Greek word. When the Old Testament Hebrew was translated into Greek--called the Septuagint--the word chosen for translation is the Greek--"pistis." Simple authoritative definition of this word is:

"A conviction of a particular truth, co-joined with obedience to that truth."(1) Thayer's Greek Lexicon

"A firm conviction producing a full acknowledgement of God's revelation or truth."(2)Vine's Expository Dictionary

When did the great divorce in FAITH take place? The divorce I speak of, that is rampant today, is the concept expressed by W.E. Vine in his Dictionary:

"All this stands in contrast to belief in its purely natural exercise, which consists of an opinion held in good faith without necessary reference to obedience."

Was it some obscure year in ancient history? No! In the first century while the New Testament was being written this separation was starting. So, James addressed almost an entire chapter to the problem expressed best in his words--"*Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works is dead.*"(3) Some might counter that even without the works, obedient-application of the truth, one still has FAITH. Once in a discussion I suggested that if the life is gone out of my riding horse do I still have a horse? My friend countered with "Yes! For there is still the horse hide, ears, eyes, mane, legs, hoofs, etc." I still affirm that a DEAD HORSE is NO HORSE at all. And, the same truism applies to FAITH.

Now, these two parts of f-a-i-t-h are MOST important and interesting. For one is OBJECTIVE and the other is SUBJECTIVE. These two parts are well pointed out by this simple story. A small boy was in Sunday School class and the subject of study was love. The teacher made it a point to go around and put his hand on each student's head and personally tell them of Jesus love and his love too. The teacher lived across the street from one of his students. On Saturday following the Sunday lesson he was pouring a new concrete drive. He went inside for a cup of coffee while waiting for the truck to return. His Sunday School student came over and rode into the fresh concrete with his bicycle. The wheels sank down and a deep rut was left. Promptly the teacher came out and gave the lad a tongue lashing. The boy looked up at the man and said "Mister, I don't understand. Last Sunday you told me that you loved me, now it sounds like you don't even like me." The

man replied, "Well, boy, let me put it this way. I love you in the **ABSTRACT** but I don't like you in the **CONCRETE**."

This story illustrates the two parts of **FAITH**--First: Objective or concrete; Second: Subjective or abstract. Much has been written about "Objective-Subjective Faith" in recent years. This represents another attempt to divorce the **CONVICTION** from the **OBEDIENCE** of f-a-i-t-h.

Let me spell it out further. Some will say, "what is **OBJECTIVE-SUBJECTIVE FAITH**?" Here is a simple definition:

**OBJECTIVE FAITH:**

Is that truth produced completely apart from one's self. Such as Jesus dying on the Cross.

**SUBJECTIVE FAITH:**

Is one's response to truth. That which transpires inside a person. Such as a person accepting Jesus as Saviour.

Fred P. Thompson, Jr. in "The Christian Standard" quotes Geoffrey J. Paxton on this subject as follows:

Paxton is critical of the typical evangelical appeal, "Let Jesus come into your heart." It is not a Biblical way of preaching, and it does not indicate a proper response to the gospel. Man is saved not by the coming of Jesus into his heart but by Jesus' coming to the manger in Bethlehem.(4)

Now, I ask you as a thinking person: **WHICH** of the above two is correct? The **ANSWER** is that it is **NOT** either/or but both/and. Bible **FAITH** is b-o-t-h **OBJECTIVE** and **SUBJECTIVE**. It consists of a **CONVICTION** based on **TRUTH** (that's objective) c-o-u-p-l-e-d with an **OBEDIENT RESPONSE** to the truth (that's subjective).

In conclusion of this part of our thinking, let us be mindful of two factors about **FAITH**:

- #1. Faith i-s a conviction about Truth coupled with obedience to that Truth.
- #2. The tendency of man is to separate the conviction side of faith from obedience.

Have I belabored the discussion of the first word "Trust?" If you nod your head yes, then we must conclude the same thing about Solomon. For he said it all with the first word-"TRUST"-but used many more words to tell us HOW TO TRUST.

We press on with Solomon's Divine recipe which tells us HOW TO TRUST in a fashion like the old nursery rhyme: *"This is the way we tie our shoes, tie our shoes, tie our shoes so early in the morning."* Even so, this is the w-a-y we are to walk by faith, live by faith, conquer by faith in all of our ways through all of life's days!

## II - Trust in the Lord!

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding;  
In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He shall direct your paths."

Proverbs 3:5,6

It would seem that I-F we could arrive at the place of living out FAITH through following our convictions about Truth, that all danger would be past. Not so! There is a hidden **danger** of agreeing with the Bible that FAITH consists of a conviction of truth co-joined with obedience t-h-a-n going off the deep end on the obedience-works side so that one's walk becomes that of a natural man in the flesh. This is what I referred to earlier as WALKING BY SIGHT AND CALLING IT FAITH. The American church is an example of this kind of folly--always talking about faith but so very few ACTS OF FAITH.

This second part of Solomon's recipe--"TRUST IN THE LORD" gives clear emphasis on this very point. The f-o-c-a-l point of our f-a-i-t-h is of the utmost importance!

David said--"*The Lord is my Shepherd...*" Everything else in the 23rd Psalm rests on that first assertion--

*When the Lord is my Shepherd--*

*I do not want  
I lie down in green pastures.  
He leads beside still waters.*

*He restores my soul.  
He leads me in paths of righteousness.  
I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.  
I fear no evil.  
His rod and staff comfort me.  
I eat in the presence of my enemies.  
My cup runs over because He anoints my head with oil.  
Goodness and mercy follow me all my life.  
I dwell in His House forever.*

Andrew, the Dutch boy from Holland that became God's man for taking Bibles behind the Iron Curtain, had a focal point: THE LORD. This is the young man that I spoke of earlier whose book God's Smuggler opened my eyes to the reality of living by faith. He grew up in a typical small Dutch town, the son of a not-too-prosperous blacksmith. While still a teenager he went off to fight for his country. Shot in the leg, he returned home walking with a limp and a crutch. At home he found a job in a sewing factory and the Spirit of God continued to prick his conscience. Here is the way he wrote of his learning to live by FAITH.

"What is it, Lord? What am I holding back? What am I using as an excuse for not serving You in whatever You want me to?"

And then, there by the canal, I finally had my answer. My "yes" to God had always been a "yes, but." Yes, but I'm not educated. Yes, but I'm lame.

With the next breath, I did say "Yes." I said it in a brand-new way, without qualification. "I'll go, Lord," I said,... "Whenever, wherever, however You want me, I'll go. And I'll begin this very minute, Lord, as I stand up from this place, and as I take my first step forward, will You consider that this is a step toward complete obedience to You? I call it a Step of Yes."

I stood up. I took a stride forward. And at that moment there was a sharp wrench in the lame leg. I thought with horror I had turned my crippled ankle. Gingerly I put the foot on the ground. I could stand on it all right. What on earth had happened? Slowly and very cautiously I began walking home, and as I walked, one verse of Scripture kept popping into my mind: "Going, they were healed."

Could it be? Could it possibly be that I too had been healed?(5)

PRAISE GOD! He had been made whole! Leaving the crutch on the bank of the canal he ran home rejoicing. He was moving forward with and for God. He was learning to **TRUST THE LORD.**

The Lord still calls all His Children to **WALK BY FAITH** on varying planes to various places in serving and living. Jesus was walking on the water and Peter wanted to do the same, Jesus said, **"Come."**(6) Will he climb out of the boat **TRUSTING JESUS** and knowing that the water beneath his feet will be like pavement? **He did and it was!** As long as he **TRUSTED**, all was well. When he quit **TRUSTING in THE LORD**, it was then that he began to sink and say "Lord, save me!"(7) It is important that we note Solomon's words again--**"Trust in the Lord."** In Peter's experience, the record says "But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid;"(8) Too, often in our desire to **LIVE BY FAITH**, we end up attempting to **TRUST THE LORD p-l-u-s something else.** We need to look to the Lord exclusively for directions.

I know of a church that decided to build a building. They planned to determine the Lord's Will by receiving a Victory Day Offering. The offering was low and did not provide nearly enough. **THE LORD WAS SAYING "NO!"** Next, they said we will determine the Lord's Will by borrowing from the people on a special note plan. The amount promised was only half of what was needed. Once again The Lord said **"NO!"** Next, they said, in essence, very well we will **TRUST THE WORLD** for the funds we need. The banker said "Yes! at 14% we will loan you the money." The lessons we learn from this example is: **KEEP OUR EYES ON JESUS - TRUST IN THE LORD and HIM ONLY!**

Preacher Joe Wright blessed my faith-walk when he said:

Most Christians never experience the power of God because they never put themselves in a position where they will need it.(9)

Seeking to learn the lessons of **LIVING BY FAITH**, we press on with Solomon's recipe in Proverbs.

## TRUST IN THE LORD--

### III - With all your heart!

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart." Proverbs 3:5*

WHY add this? Can't Solomon take for granted that everyone knows that TRUSTING must be WHOLE-HEARTED?

We should all know that the Bible *heart* does NOT in most places mean the pump organ that moves the blood around in our body. It is the part of man that thinks, feels and wills with a conscience that functions through the three of these. The terms we use to describe these actions are--Intellect, emotions and will. So, the Scriptures speak of us doing these three things with the **heart**. Examples are:

H-E-A-R-T as our INTELLECT:

"I have given you a wise and understanding heart."

(I Kings 3:12)

"With the heart one believes to righteousness."

(Romans 10:10)

H-E-A-R-T as our EMOTIONS:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart."

(Deuteronomy 6:5)

"Let not your heart be troubled."

(John 14:1)

H-E-A-R-T as our WILL:

"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things." (Matthew 12:35)

"But God be thanked that though you were slaves to sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered." (Romans 6:17)

Solomon makes his statement--"*Trust in the Lord WITH ALL YOUR HEART,*" exclusive. That little word "ALL" is a word that means 100%. We are to T-R-U-S-T in the Lord with ALL our intellect, all our emotions, and all our will. I see all around me folk who have fallen into the pit of attempting to TRUST with an-intellectual faith; or a faith of emotion or a faith of the will, that is all social action with no anchor in Truth. Please understand there really is NO such thing as "intellectual faith" or "faith of emotion" or "faith of the will"; but, people fall into these traps making them appear to be real.

Here is a little mental test that I want you to consider. This quiz has 12 items preceded by one question. Here they are:

How many of the following 12 great themes of the Bible  
DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT?-\*

- \*God?
- \*Jesus?
- \*Holy Spirit?
- \*Salvation?
- \*Church?
- \*Life?
- \*Faith?
- \*Love?
- \*Prayer?
- \*Sin?
- \*Devil?
- \*Providence of God?

I trust you said "Yes, I know something about all twelve of these great themes."

If you did, I extend to you an "E" for effort for you are on a level with the devil. You see, on a purely INTELLECTUAL level, the Devil knows these twelve subjects, some of them better than any one of us. The writer James says, *"You believe that there is one God. You do well. The demons also believe--and tremble!"* (James 2:19)

- \*If anyone knows about GOD the Devil does for he previously lived in Heaven as one of the Archangels.
- \*He certainly knows about his arch-enemy, JESUS.
- \*He hates the HOLY SPIRIT for He is God's present power.
- \*Finally he comprehends SALVATION after Jesus emptied the halls of Hades through the Cross.
- \*He understands the CHURCH and works overtime in it.
- \*He knows all about LIFE and how to tempt the Pilgrims on the Road to the House not made with hands.
- \*He counterfeits TRUST with unbelief.
- \*He feigns LOVE.
- \*Understands PRAYER power and seeks to defeat it.
- \*SIN is his great tool; and "DEVIL" is his own name.
- \*He knows about the strange PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

So, if we are on a level with the Devil with INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE, then to follow Solomon's TRUST RECIPE--"*Trust in the Lord WITH ALL YOUR HEART,*" (Proverbs 3:5) we must step up to higher ground. A step higher on the TRUST ladder includes EMOTIONS and WILL. Applied to the twelve great Bible themes of our quiz, our emotions plus our will, these nouns now become verbal-active.

\*GOD reveals Himself that we might worship Him!

\*JESUS comes into my heart to become the Lord of my life!

\*The HOLY SPIRIT is a present active power!

\*SALVATION means to be saved from my sins!

\*The blessed CHURCH is a living Body.

\*TRUST makes it possible for me to rest on God's Promises!

\*PRAYER means I can talk with God!

\*SIN and the DEVIL are subjects that we overcome as Believers.

\*The PROVIDENCE OF GOD means God is at work in our behalf!

So, we PRAISE HIM!

"**With ALL YOUR HEART**" Solomon says--intellect, emotion and will. Here is a beautiful story that causes all of these to come alive in LIVING BY FAITH.

The young man called "God's Smuggler--Andrew," responds to God's Call with a "Yes God, if you will open the doors, I will walk through them." The next week, after his call by the canal and healing of his leg, he makes formal application to the WMS (World Mission School) in Glasgow. He was accepted depending on space opening up in the men's dormitory.

Now, when we resolve to trust in the LORD, with all our heart, there must of necessity be opportunity to w-a-l-k in that resolution of f-a-i-t-h. Such was the case with young Andrew. He continues his story.

I had enrolled in a school sponsored by no church, supported by no organization, lacking all the recognized, dignified, time-honored accompaniments that were a part of education--and indeed of religion itself. Ahead of me now was the task I dreaded above all others: breaking the news to Thile, my girlfriend.

.....

Meanwhile, I set about raising money for my trip. I sold the few things I owned--my bicycle and my precious shelf of books--and

purchased a one-way ticket to London, where I was to meet the directors of the School, before heading for Glasgow...

I was to leave for London on the 20th of April. But just before that date three things happened in such rapid succession that they left me reeling.

The first was a letter from Thile. She had written to the board of missions of her church asking their opinion of the school in Glasgow. They had replied that it was a nonaccredited, unaffiliated enterprise that had no standing in any mission circle with which they were involved.

This being the case, Thile went on, she would prefer neither to see nor to hear from me as long as I was associated with this group. She signed the short letter, Thile. Not: Love, Thile. Just, Thile.

As I stood in the doorway holding the letter trying to take in what it meant in my life, Miss Meekle crossed the little bridge to our house.

"Andrew," she said, "there's something on my mind. Something I've wanted to tell you for a long time ever since I started teaching you English. Only I didn't quite know how to do it." She took a deep breath and plunged in. "You see, Andrew, I've never actually *heard* any English. But I've read a lot of it," she added hastily...She paused miserably. "I just thought I'd tell you." And she fled.

I was still digesting these two pieces of information when, two days later, a telegram arrived from the school I was enrolled in London: **"Regret to inform you expected vacancy has not materialized. Request for admission denied."**

Three blows in a row. There was no room for me in the school. I probably could not speak the language in which the courses were taught. And if I went I would lose my girl.(10)

**WHAT** will we do when the Lord bids us **WALK BY FAITH**; yet, obstacles spring up? Learn we must, that **FAITH** must be **TESTED**! Andrew closes this chapter in his life with his answer.

Every reasonable sign seemed to point away from the school in Glasgow. And, yet unmistakable inside me, sublimely indifferent to every human and logical objection, was a little voice that said "Go." It was the Voice that had called to me in the wind by the canal, the Voice that had told me to speak out in the factory, the Voice that never made sense at a logical level.

The next day I kissed Martje and Getje good-bye, shook hands with Papa and Cornelius, and ran down the road to a bus that would take me on the first leg of a journey that is still going on.(11)

There is a missing piece to Andrew's living out Solomon's words--"*Trust in the Lord with ALL YOUR HEART*". You will remember that his Bible College in Glascow had sent a telegram telling him NOT to come; yet, by the canal and through the Scripture of the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19 God called Andrew saying "Go"!

Andrew, TRUSTING THE LORD and His Word caught a bus and headed for the School.

What happened?

When he arrived at the School and walked up the dirt road carrying all his earthly possessions in two large trunks, he saw a little man peering thru the bars of the large iron gate in the rock wall around the campus. The man was the Headmaster of the School. When he came within shouting distance, Andrew said "Sir, I am Andrew from Holland." The Headmaster responded--"Oh, Andrew! Is it really you? I'm so glad that you have come! You see we had to send the telegram to check on your FAITH."

I heard Professor Seth Wilson express the need for a whole-hearted faith with these words:

"FAITH is not accepting truth because of the evidence: but accepting Christ regardless of the consequence."(12)

So LIVING BY FAITH--*Trusting in the Lord with all our heart*, is meant to be the norm for every Christian. We are to look to the Lord for job and salary, places of service, and in ALL THINGS--health, weather, equipment, courage and daily strength, transportation, housing needs, healing and hope and may the list be as long as life itself--make these needs known to God in PRAYER according to His Promises and be willing to wait upon His providing.

We conclude this part by stating that AN ACT OF FAITH IS--

Any matter can be an act of faith when we

1. Willfully commit it to God and
2. lean not on our own understanding to make it happen;  
but,
3. look to and wait on God for the answer.

#### **IV - "Lean not on your own understanding".**

Proverbs 3:5

One of life's most difficult tasks is learning NOT TO LEAN ON OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING after you have spent years learning to do just that. This unlearning for me was born out of many desperate situations.

One of the many crisis out of which The Lord taught me to TRUST ONLY HIM by N-O-T leaning on my own understanding occurred in January of 1979. My schedule called for a Faith Alive Revival to begin at Holly, Colorado on Sunday morning, January 14th.

On Saturday morning a car spinning its wheels awoke me with a start. A snow storm was beginning outside and already there was some four inches on the ground. What I did not know at that moment was that a quarter inch of ice lay beneath the snow. I hastened around and after a family prayer circle headed northwest by 9 o'clock. Ground Blizzard conditions existed between home and Wichita where the snow was hubcap deep. Our daughter, Rebecca, accompanied me as far as Wichita to catch a ride back to Manhattan Christian College. Leaving her with her grandparents, Raymon and Ina Barrick, I headed west down Highway 54. My courage decreased as the howling wind increased and the blowing snow began to produce whiteouts. At the west edge of Kingman, Kansas, I met with a barricade and a Patrolman that advised me the highway was closed, all travel discouraged. My spirit sank within me and I returned downtown to check on motels. Every motel had the same sad sign--SORRY FOLKS. NO VACANCY. I called preacher, Terry Neidens, and told him "Terry, it will be impossible for me to arrive in Holly to begin the meeting Sunday morning. I am in the middle of a

raging blizzard. Possibly I can get there by Sunday evening but it may be Monday afternoon." Terry said, "I never did think YOU could make it and now you won't for sure!" I hung up and drank a cup of coffee standing up as the cafe was wall-to-wall people. The dilemma was clear: I couldn't stay there. I was not inclined to go back. The westward road was the only way. My OWN UNDERSTANDING died as I prayed "Lord, it's your Revival 275 miles to the West. It's your storm and it's your road and I'm yours, too. Take charge!" I drove back out to the barricade and said to the Patrol, "Is travel on this road forbidden?" I know not why he said, "Do you have a Kansas driver's license and pay taxes in this State?" I responded, "Yes, Sir, I do." He shouted through the blowing snow, "I can't forbid you to go around this barricade but all travel is discouraged." I thanked him and drove around not only the barricade but MY OWN UNDERSTANDING onto an ice-snow packed highway into the face of a ground blizzard. The barricade proved to be a blessing as it had the effect of providing me with a PRIVATE HIGHWAY with no traffic, which was a necessity as most of the highway to Pratt was a one-way path through the snow. The snow ploughs had left 20 foot high banks on each side and the high wind made drifts out of that. My job was simple: go slow, pray and sing to the Lord. So, I PRAISED the miles away arriving in Dodge City by 6 pm. I called preacher Terry with a progress report. His only response was, "Y-O-U will not make it." The storm let up some and I drove through Garden City at 8:30 and into Syracuse by 9:30 and the lights of Holly shined dimly through the storm as my vehicle passed the City limit sign at 10:30. I pulled over to the curb for a few moments to give my broken spirit, my shattered OWN UNDERSTANDING, a little sympathy and THE LORD a lot more PRAISE!

Now consider this, in all those 350 miles from home not once did my car slip, spin, skid or slide, for beneath and all around had to be the unseen audience of the Lord's Angels.

Yes, we started the meeting in 16 below 0 temperature and it was a VICTORY MEETING clear through Friday night!

Hallelujah for JESUS who works when our own UNDERSTANDING dies!

Solomon gave us God's high wisdom when he said--

*"And lean not on your own understanding."*

Proverbs 3:5

Solomon knew the heart of man, that's for sure. With the wisdom that God gave him, he tells us five things to do in trusting God and ONE THING NOT TO DO. It's this "N-O-T" that we now consider--*Do NOT lean on your own understanding*. WHY? Because the greatest P-O-I-S-O-N to the faith life is leaning on our own understanding.

The Hebrew word in the text is "binah" translated intelligence or understanding.

There are four good reasons W-H-Y we should NOT lean on our own understanding:

1. "Lean not on your own understanding;" because: It makes man his own god.

In America, humanism makes man a god unto himself. Satan has cleverly woven this philosophy of TRUSTING IN SELF into the fiber of our lives so that some consider it near insanity to think otherwise. The Christian's enemy is deadlier than a hungry lion stalking its prey. What's worse there is **no natural defense** against him. Some animals enjoy protective coloration, others have quills and the skunk is usually left alone. We are helpless in terms of natural defense. Our enemy uses the natural means against us. Here is a simple ten statement quiz. Mark them TRUE or FALSE according to what is proper for a Christian.

- T F 1. It's natural to want to get ahead in this world?
- T F 2. It's natural to stick up for your rights?
- T F 3. It's natural to take advantage of all opportunities?
- T F 4. It's natural to protect yourself first?
- T F 5. It's natural to want the best at any cost?
- T F 6. It's natural to put yourself first?
- T F 7. It's natural to clutch what's yours?
- T F 8. It's natural to want a good time?
- T F 9. It's natural to cater to appetites and passions?

T F 10. It's natural to place self and family first?

For the Christian the answers are all FALSE. For the person of the flesh, of this world, the answers are all TRUE. Yet, many followers of Jesus would agree with all or part of this list as being TRUE. WHY would church members assert that any of this list is right? Because Satan has blinded their eyes, even the eyes of their understanding. See Revelation 3:14-19 with attention to Vss. 17,18.

2. *"lean not on your own understanding;"* Proverbs 3:5, because: man's understanding is faulty.

Many have said to me--"God gave us brains and he expects us to use them." Be very careful when asserting the above for man used his brains (mind) in the Garden of Eden. Man's absolute knowledge of today may well change tomorrow. It wasn't all that many years ago that--\*

\*"Bleeding" was a knowledgeable health treatment procedure in the day of George Washington. The Bible had been saying for near 6,000 years *"The life of the flesh is in the blood"* (Leviticus 17:11). Now man has changed his mind and bleeding is no longer an accepted procedure in the 20th century.

\*"The earth is flat" intelligent men taught during the Dark Ages. The Bible recorded millenniums before *"It is He who sits above the circle of the earth"* (Isaiah 40:22). Now men know that the earth is round.

3. *"And lean not on your own understanding;"* (Proverbs 3:5), because it ties the Hands of God.

Leaning on our own understanding ties the hands of God to act in our behalf. It is the greatest poison there is to the faith-life. No Bible miracle would have ever occurred if men had leaned on their own understanding. As valuable as modern man supposes that the products of the mind--knowledge and intelligence--is, yet, God acts when men, through the simple TRUST of all their heart, look to Him!

Suppose at Jesus' first miracle in Cana of Galilee when the Bridegroom ran out of wine and the Lord said to the servants "fill the waterpots with water,"(13) they had said "NO, we k-n-o-w how to make wine. Plant a vineyard. Prune the vines each year. The third year will bring a bountiful crop. Pick the

grapes and put them in a rock vat. Take off your shoes and walk around on the grapes to get the juice out. Let the juice set and soon you'll have wine. What else is new?" There would have been NO miracle if they had chosen to LEAN ON THEIR OWN UNDERSTANDING. They didn't! The record says in response to Jesus' request, **"And they filled them to the brim."**(14) And, you'll remember the results, the water turned to wine was declared by the Master of the feast to be the BEST!

4. - **"And lean not on your own understanding;"** because: The entire Bible says NO!

Many are the admonitions in the Bible, both in direct statements and stories to teach us NOT to LEAN ON OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING.

Consider the words of Jeremiah:

*Thus says the Lord:*

*"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,  
Let not the mighty man glory in his might,  
Nor let the rich man glory in his riches;  
But let him who glories glory in this,  
That he understands and knows Me,  
That I am the Lord, exercising loving  
kindness, judgment, and righteousness  
in the earth.*

*For in these things I delight,"* says the Lord.(15)

Isn't the entire Bible given to man to teach him NOT to trust in his OWN UNDERSTANDING? The Promises of God for the most part are neither logical or reasonable from man's point of view. What is there in blood that will take away our sins? See Hebrews 9:22. The answer is NOTHING, except God willed it so out of our need and His Love! So, God announces through Isaiah--**"Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool."**(16) And, Jesus becomes the GOOD NEWS in flesh and blood. So, John announces--**"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."**(17)

The list of beautiful things God does in my life gets longer and longer as the years go by and they are ALL a result of simply LEARNING TO LEAN on Jesus moment by moment.

Here is one of those beautiful moments. Many times we had traveled the highways from Minneola (Kansas) to Topeka taking our little daughter, Lisa, to the Kansas Neurological Institute. I knew those roads like the palm of my hand. Upon professional advise we had placed her there at the age of six for treatment of a severe emotional problem. Many times on these 300 mile trips we were out on the highways at midnight or later. My understanding had taught me where the all-night gas stations were. However, in the days of the "Gas crunch" the all-night stations started closing at 8 or 9 pm. On this particular night we came into Pratt, Kansas with an empty gas tank. The signs along Highway 54 were not encouraging--"OUT OF GAS", "CLOSED FOR THE NIGHT." However, I k-n-e-w my Chrysler would go 40 miles after the gauge said empty. So, we motored on down to Greensburg where there was ALWAYS an all-night station. My heart fell and my "OWN UNDERSTANDING" shook when we rounded the last bend in the highway and the station was dark. Now, I knew the desperation procedure of getting the local Law out of bed. He would have a key to a station and we could get gas. However, I was tired. It was 2 o'clock in the morning and the Lord called to my mind these words of Solomon:

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding;  
In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He shall direct your paths."*

Proverbs 3:5,6

So, I prayed:

"Lord, we have been on a mission of mercy. Our hearts are heavy and our bodies are tired and we need gas. I want to claim Your Promise through Solomon in Proverbs. We're trusting in you with all our hearts and not leaning on our own understanding. We're acknowledging you in all our ways including the need for gas. We're heading on home on an empty tank, twice over, and we believe that you will direct our paths as You said."

I spent the next 40 miles just saying over and over--*Thank you Jesus for the millimeters and the miles and most of all that YOU are the Master of everything! Thank You for what you have promised! For what you have done and are doing right now! Hallelujah, A-men!*

When we pulled upon our driveway at home forty miles later, I reached to turn the key off but the engine died. The next day the Coop Service Station brought gas. It took twenty-four gallons for the twenty-four gallon tank and they had to remove the air-cleaner to prime the carburetor before the engine would start.

Somebody may say: How did it happen? I don't know. For many years while leaning on my OWN UNDERSTANDING, I always required a rational explanation. If I couldn't explain it, it couldn't happen and few things did! Did God put gas in my tank? He could have; however, I did not see the hand on the gauge move. Did God send a tail-wind to move us down the highway? He could have but I was not aware of it. Did God send Angels to bear us along as His Word promises in certain places? He may have. I only know what happened on this occasion and several others when I was in a corner and chose to LEAN ON THE LORD.

Someone may say: Why don't you drive without gas all the time? Here is the difference between TRUSTING GOD and TEMPTING GOD. God invites us to TRUST HIM but warns us not to TEMPT HIM. To start out without gas is to tempt God. To seek Him on the Road of Life in the midst of need is to TRUST HIM. And when we will LEAN ON HIM and N-O-T OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING, He directs our paths!

### **The antidote**

For this poison of leaning on our own understanding is:

1. Determine with the intellect (mind) to Trust in the Lord alone,
2. Coupled with a strong emotion of love; with all our heart;
3. Resolve to cast aside our OWN UNDERSTANDING.  
"Lean not on your own understanding."

4. Now, stand on the Lord and His Promises.

## **V - In all your ways acknowledge him.**

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart;  
And lean not on your own understanding;  
In all your ways acknowledge Him."*

Proverbs 3:5,6

What do these interesting words--"In all my ways **acknowledge Him**," mean? Notice that when man tends to TRUST in the Lord plus something else, this leads to leaning on our OWN UNDERSTANDING and we begin to live this out in life. Our self-centeredness begins to show up in our talk and walk of life. We hear ourselves and others saying--\*

\*Sunday is Sacred while the other six days of a week are secular.

\*The tithe is the Lord's but the rest is mine.

\*Lady luck sure shined on me to provide good health.

\*I earned this money by the sweat of MY brow and It's MINE.

\*These things happen because that's the way the ball bounces.

\*This is a good day--Thanks to my lucky stars.

\*Fortune has given me good health.

Solomon encourages us to **ACKNOWLEDGE** the Lord in **ALL OUR WAYS**. What are the w-a-y-s of a person?

**The WAYS of a person include--\*** \*The PLACES I go... \*The PEOPLE I meet... \*The WORK I do... \*The GAMES I play... \*The BUSINESS I transact... \*The GIRL/BOY I date... \*The TRIPS I take... \*The MONEY I spend... \*The MONEY I keep... \*The HOUSE I build... \*The FRIENDS I choose... \*The BALLOT I cast... \*The BOOKS I read... \*The MOVIES I see... \*The THOUGHTS I think... \*The MAN/WOMAN I marry... \*The STRENGTH of my life and WEAKNESSES, too... \*The SMILE I can give and the LOVE I can share... \*The MELODY I sing... \*The HEALTH that I have and the DEATH that I die.--All of these, everything I think and am and do, are "M-Y W-A-Y-S".

So, Solomon says--"**In all your ways acknowledge Him;**" Make God your partner! PRAY!

When I was learning this beautiful truth of faith-living in my own life, our second son, Galen, began to apply Solomon's faith-living recipe to his life in seeking God's Will about atten-

ding College after his graduation.

On a lovely Spring day of 1974, Galen and I were walking home after the Sunday morning assembly.

I asked him where he would be attending college in the fall?

He said, "God and I have a deal going. I'm doing what you preached--Just trusting in the Lord with all my heart, not leaning on my own understanding, acknowledging Him in all my ways and knowing he will direct my paths like Solomon said."

My interest thermometer shot up high for this principle of faith-living was new to me and I did not know very much about applying this truth.

I inquired. "Galen, just how is God going to do this?"

He responded by saying, "My agreement with the Lord is that the first college coach that asks me to play basketball will be the school I am to attend."

My heart sank for I wanted my son to go to a Bible College for at least a couple of years. Galen had a lot of basketball and track trophies and medals at home and I felt sure some Juco Coach would be there first.

Coach Comeaux of Midwest Christian College in Oklahoma City drove 300 miles up to Minneola. He found Galen out in a pasture loading limbs on a wagon. The Coach said to him, "Galen, come play basketball for me and MCC this Fall."

Instantly Galen recognized this invitation as being an answer from the Lord in directing his path. He responded "Yes sir Coach, I'll be there this Fall! You can count on me."

Upon hearing the news, I breathed a sign of relief, which was short lived, for Galen's next answer put me back on the road of wondering and expectation. I had worked my way through Bible College and had a philosophy that part of a college education was working ones way through.

He answered with a smile of confidence, "The Lord and I have this deal going according to Proverbs 3:4,5. I trust Him

with all my ways, He directs my path. If the Lord wants me to go to Bible College He will provide the money."

My heart sank, for these were kindergarten days for me in trying to live everyday life by faith. I thought to myself--how can God produce money? Church money in offering plates, yes, but hard cold cash out in the everyday world?

The rest is HIStory, that is HIS-STORY--The Lord's.

First came a three-week wheat harvest job in June with Frank and Geraldine Ramsey. This brought in some good wages but not nearly enough for a year at college.

Next, a widow-Irene Grimmett, called up. "Galen, are you busy?" "No I'm not," he said. "Will you come and paint my house?" "Sure will!" he said. This brought in some more good wages.

After that came another job and August was drawing close. Soon it would be time to leave for the big City and yet he lacked \$250.

He had an opportunity to apply for a scholastic scholarship back in July but the application came on July 6th and was due back in the Dean's office on July 3rd. I said, "Galen, Dean Warren Woodrome, is a busy man. The application coming late was the Dean's problem. Send it in anyway." Galen answered with a rule of sports--"Nope Dad, if I play the game, I play by the rules."

Galen went down to the College the first week in August to check out the dorms, etc. The Dean met him in the hall. "Good to see you Galen. By the way the Scholarship Committee is meeting today. I sent you an application but never heard anything." Galen explained about the late arrival date. The Dean acknowledged it was his problem and if Galen would fill out a quick application, he would put it on the bottom of the pile. Galen did and the Dean did and the School awarded him a \$1,000 scholarship to be used over four years!

Divine 'fingerprints' showed up again. Just like Solomon had said--

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding;  
In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He shall direct your paths."*

Proverbs 3:5,6

Galen went to Bible College two years, then on to Oklahoma State University at Stillwater to become a Forest Ranger. In the midst of his schooling, using the same Proverbs 3:4,5 principle, the Lord provided him with a lovely Christian wife, Kim. The Lord provided for all his schooling but each time with a different set of circumstances. Always and always the "deal" was the same--TRUST by not leaning on self. Acknowledge the Lord in ALL WAYS and the bottom line was, a path DIRECTED BY GOD!

## **VI - "And He shall direct your paths."**

Proverbs 5:6

So Solomon has given us five steps to faith-living.

1. Trust.
2. Trust in the Lord.
3. Trust in the Lord with all your heart.
4. Do not lean on your own understanding.
5. In all your ways acknowledge Him.

Now comes what the commercial world calls THE BOTTOM LINE. At the end of Solomon's Divine faith-living recipe the bottom line is--"And HE SHALL DIRECT YOUR PATHS."

This is what we all want. The recipe is not done until the icing is on the cake. Just so, there's no disappointment in Jesus. Even a cursory reading of Hebrews 11, the great Faith-Living Chapter, clearly points out the fruits of faith. NOAH built the ark in a dry land and in a rainy day was not disappointed. ENOCH trusted God and at the end of his walk he got to see God. ABRAHAM looked for a City and was given a Country. ABRAHAM and SARA longed for a son and were given innumerable children. And the blessings of God are greater by far than the fondest hopes and dreams of His Children.

**DIRECTED PATHS** always come at the end of the trail of **TRUSTING THE LORD**. In between, the Providence of the Lord leads His dear Children along.

In chronological order, in my learning to live by faith, after the BBQ camp lesson shared in Part One of this chapter, the next event the Lord used to teach me **HOW TO LIVE BY FAITH** was the journey to a youth conference.

Two thousand five hundred high school and college youth, including 30 from Minneola, Kansas, responded to the invitation of the "Christ in Youth Conference" in the Kiamichi Mountains of Southeast Oklahoma. Leading the youth was Jon Durre, our Youth Minister, plus Carol Epley, Julie McCune, Mark Houser, Terry Morrow, Susan Sibley, Kay Lee Bush, Doug Wilson, Steve Council. Other Youth Leaders and youth included Clyde and Nancy Goff; Benny, Sharon, Mike and Marci Kennedy; Roy, Joyce, Jimmy and Kenny Sturdy; Duane, Joan, Kelley, Toni and Joel Marshall; and part of our family--Imalee, Galen, Rebecca, Lisa and myself.

The group left for our first stopping point, Oklahoma City, at different times on that hot Western Kansas Sunday afternoon of August 6, 1972. It was 2 o'clock when our family joined hands together for a circle of prayer: "Lord, we look to You on this journey of faith. Lead, teach and use us on this trip. In Jesus Name. A-men."

I take this opportunity to share an over-view of the trip and the **FAITH-LESSONS** learned.

## **LESSON #1**

As we motored into Woodward, Oklahoma, two fan belts broke on our vehicle. Please know that in 1972 both north and south of Woodward was desert land--huge Ranches with few houses not visible from the highway. Had the belts broken out on the highway, we could have been delayed an hour or two. The interesting point was that they broke at an intersection with a service station on each corner. I had only to decide which station would replace the belts. The **LORD** had **DIRECTED OUR PATH** by supplying an important need.

## **LESSON #2**

Having been delayed only twenty minutes, we were back on the highway when Imalee snapped her fingers and said "Oh no, I left the music at home." I inquired, "What music?" "All the music that our 'Liquid Love Singers' are to use tonight in presenting their concert in Oklahoma City," she announced. She made one phone call, and when we arrived at the church building in Oklahoma City with fifteen minutes to spare, all the music was waiting. **THE LORD HAD DIRECTED OUR PATH** by making special arrangements.

## **LESSON #3**

We left the City early Monday morning pulling our home-made camping trailer. The Kiamichi Mountain Christ's 40 Acres Campground was about five hours ahead. It was 2 pm when we pulled onto the Campground. A man came running up and said--"My goodness preacher, your trailer door is open and looks like some stuff may have fallen out." He was right for both my tool box and suitcase had fallen out. A group of people gathered around and asked, "Shall we go and look for it?" "I don't think so," I said, "Let's just trust the Lord some more and see what happens?" About ten minutes later a native lady of the Mountains drove up in an old pickup, hopped out and said, "Anyone lose a tool box and suitcase? I found them back down the road several miles near Nashoba." I said, "Thank You Lady for being the Lord's freight agent!" **THE LORD HAD DIRECTED OUR PATH** again.

There were eight most unusual things that happened on this trip. With each one it became more clear that the Lord's hand was involved in the solutions. **HE WAS DIRECTING OUR PATH** in a special FAITH-WALK.

## **LESSON #4**

Lisa our youngest daughter was thirteen years of age at this time. I mentioned previously that she has some special emotional problems. Sometimes in a strange place surrounded by strangers she would become very upset, screaming, biting herself and pulling her hair. She had spent six years from age 6 to 12 in a State Institution, thus had never been

camping before. Imalee had prayed as we left home that the Lord would **DIRECT LISA'S PATH** by surrounding her with a mantle of peace. The reality that **THE LORD WAS DIRECTING HER PATH** became evident as the week wore on and she had perfect peace. Angels were on duty!

### **LESSON #5**

The 2,500 youth were gathered under the Big Tent for the evening assembly when in the midst of a violent thunderstorm, lightning struck a tent. Little signs of panic began to sweep through the audience. Leader, Don DeWalt stood to his feet, asked the kids to stand and led them in singing, "Be not dismayed whate'er betide, God will take care of you...". Fear disappeared! No one was in the tent. God was **DIRECTING OUR PATH** keeping watch by day and by night!

### **LESSON #6**

Near sundown the next evening, CIY Director-Bob Stacy had a time called LUG (Look Unto God). The hundreds of youth were out on the grounds reading their Bible and praying. In the midst of this solemn moment an old coon dog began to howl. The longer the dog howled, the more disturbing it became. I was just learning to **WALK BY FAITH** in dealing with the Devil and didn't know whether the Devil could cause dogs to howl or not. But, I took the venture and came against the Devil in that dog with a verse of Scripture and Jesus' Name. Like turning out a light, the howling ceased and the dog slipped away. I could see the hand of God **DIRECTING MY PATH!**

### **LESSON #7**

Seeing God at work was now becoming commonplace. So, when we were ready to leave and the battery on the car was dead, I was not surprised. Nothing--lights, ignition, doors--had been left on. We were many miles from the civilization of service stations. There wasn't even one, much less one on each corner, like the Sunday before back in Woodward when the fan belts broke. I asked Clyde Goff what I should do. He said, "Have you noticed that parked right against the front bumper of your car is a Power Vehicle from a Service Station

in Dodge City, Kansas?" I hadn't and it was a humbling experience to see once again THE LORD DIRECTING OUR PATH by taking care of every need. For those that may wonder, the dead battery of that morning lasted three more years with no problems.

### LESSON #8

We were going home by Emporia, Kansas where our oldest daughter was taking a special Summer Science Seminar. So, we headed North out of Oklahoma City that afternoon. Just North of the City, for no apparent reason, the heat gauge hand went into the red as the radiator boiled over. We pulled onto the shoulder of Interstate 35 and waited for the radiator to cool. It was very low on water. Where could we find water on a hot Summer afternoon? There was a little farm pond just over the fence; but, we had no means of carrying the water to the car. Walking down to the pond I saw a beautiful sight--on the far side in a deep ravine was what looked like 10,000 white empty plastic Borden milk jugs. Thank You Lord, we only need two. But, our PATHS WERE DIRECTED by the HAND OF THE LORD! For those who may wonder, we drove that vehicle three more years and not once did it ever overheat again.

Some may say just bad luck - good luck. I say NO WAY. Not eight incidents on one trip and solutions far out of the ordinary. We TRUST - HE DIRECTS OUR PATHS! PRAISE TO THE LORD!

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding;  
In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He shall direct your paths."*

Proverbs 3:5,6

**FAITH ALIVE IN HEART, HOME and CHURCH**  
**NOTES - Chapter 4**

1. Thayer's Greek Lexicon
2. Vine's Expository Dictionary, "Faith", Pg. 71
3. James 2:17
4. Article by Fred P. Thompson, Jr. quoting Geoffrey J. Paxton in "Reflecting on the News." From Christian Standard - March 16, 1975 - The Standard Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio. Division of Standex International Corporation. Used by permission.
5. Brother Andrew in "God's Smuggler", Pg. 55  
GOD'S SMUGGLER by Brother Andrew with John and Elizabeth Sherrill. Chosen Books. Chappaqua, N.Y. Used by permission.
6. Matthew 14:29
7. Matthew 14:30
8. Ibid.
9. Joe Wright ministers to the Central Christian Church of Wichita, Kansas.
10. Brother Andrew, Pg. 56
11. Ibid. Pg. 57
12. Seth Wilson is a retired Dean and Professor of Ozark Christian College, Joplin, Missouri.
13. John 2:7
14. Ibid.
15. Jeremiah 9:23,24
16. Isaiah 1:18
17. John 3:16