

THE FIRST 15

Thursday, October 10, 2024

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Today is Thursday, October 10, and as we continue to explore the reality of Christ as our cornerstone and firm foundation, I want to explore five pillars of life with Christ this week: Trust, Growth, Refuge, Alignment, and Unity. Today, we will talk about Alignment.

OPENING PRAYER

Father, as I meditate on these verses, help me to release control and lean into Your divine wisdom. Show me how to trust You wholeheartedly and surrender my ways to Your perfect plan. Align my heart with Your will, that I may walk the path You've prepared for me. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6

REFLECTION

In my senior year of high school, I was a member of the TX-932 AFJROTC program. I loved ROTC. It was well-run by Chief Master Sergeant Jesse C. Battle, and we had a lot of fun. But I also really loved the structure and collaboration of a unit. I'd been in marching band and on some step teams that made me appreciate precision, unity, and the strength of a well-aligned team.

When we were preparing for inspections, Chief would project a two-part command to us—"Dress right. Dress." It meant that everyone that was in line on the same row would dress or properly align themselves to the person to their right. The person furthest to the right then was the anchor or reference point that guided the whole row. In order for us to complete the command, we had to trust, ultimately, in that person that where they stood was the appropriate place to be. Alignment to that person aligned the whole unit. If any of us looked to ourselves rather than to our right, our row and the rest of the unit would not be straight and true. Alignment for all was achieved by alignment to one.

In a similar way, this well-known proverb is saying to us, "Dress right. Dress." It speaks to the essence of faith—trusting in God's wisdom over our own. The Hebrew word for "trust" implies a deep reliance on and confidence in God, much like placing one's full weight on a solid surface. The contrast here is between trusting in the Lord and "leaning on our own understanding" which refers to relying on our limited human perspective.

But here's the key. The text admonishes us to submit to him. In the translation I most frequently hear, it says "... in all your ways acknowledge Him." To acknowledge doesn't simply mean to be aware and give recognition to something. It's "a combination of close, warm, and even

passionate intimacy, combined with head knowledge that produces an edge in a person's life that enables him to trust God and at the same time perceive what He is doing.”¹

To submit to God in all our ways means to acknowledge Him in every aspect of life, inviting His guidance in all decisions. The promise is that God will "make our paths straight", meaning He will guide us clearly and prevent us from straying off course. Align yourself to the Lord. Don't look to yourself as the reference point. Trust that alignment to Him means alignment for the whole of your life. When that happens, He will direct our paths.

Ask: Self-alignment feels like such a natural habit, but it's ultimately placing our full weight and confidence on a capricious, unstable and finite reference point—ourselves. Where can I more fully align or “dress” to the words and example of Jesus. Am I living into the command “in all your ways acknowledge/submit to Him,” and if not, in what areas? What can I do today to move more fully into that direction?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, I surrender my plans, my understanding, and my desires to You. Guide me in the way I should go and make my path clear as I trust in Your wisdom. Help me to lean not on my own perspective but to fully rely on You in every area of my life. Amen.

¹ <https://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Topical.show/RTD/cgg/ID/11198/Yada.htm>