

Proverbs 22:17 instructs, "Pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise." The book of Proverbs is a collection of those "sayings" meant to lead us towards righteousness and away from what the book frequently describes as "foolish living." In our text today, we are instructed to treasure these teachings, to hold fast to love and faithfulness and to trust the Lord with our whole hearts.

Some might say that when we find ourselves in doubt, it is best to trust our own intuition. What does verse 5 say about the connection between trusting God and trusting our gut? Has your trust of God ever conflicted with your understanding of a particular situation?

A growing trust in God leads to a more full submission of our lives. With this connection in mind, how would you describe your level of trust in God?

.....
.....
.....

The Israelites' journey out of captivity in Egypt into the land of God's promise was one that took more than a generation. The mantle of leadership carried by Moses had been passed to Joshua, and in the first few verses of chapter 4, the Lord instructs Joshua on how to prepare for this long-awaited moment of crossing into the promised land.

Joshua instructs 12 men to "take up 12 stone from the middle of the Jordan." What is the purpose behind this instruction? What does Joseph say these stones will represent?

How does our remembrance of God's faithfulness help us to trust God with our present and our future? Looking back over your own journey of faith, what moments are most important for you to remember as experiences of God's faithfulness? Today, take time to thank God for his faithfulness in each of these moments.

.....
.....
.....

Only a few hours away from his arrest and trial, Jesus goes to the Garden of Gethsemane. The prayer that he prays there is one of the most vivid pictures in all of scripture of a life fully devoted and wholly submitted to God. In his insight on this famous prayer, Thomas Smail writes, "The father that Jesus addresses in the garden is the one the he has known all his life and found to be bountiful in his provision, reliable in his promises and utterly faithful in his love."

In your experience, would you describe God as bountiful, reliable and faithful? Why or why not?

How does Jesus describe his sorrow in verse 38? Have you experienced a similar moment of grief? What does Jesus' prayer in this circumstance teach you about trusting God in the most challenging experiences of your life?

.....
.....
.....

The cup that Jesus asked to be "taken" from him represented the suffering and pain that he was about to endure. Within the span of the next 24 hours, Jesus was to be arrested, convicted, tortured and marched to the hill of Calvary where he would be crucified before the crowds of Jerusalem. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asks, "God, is there another way?"

James Bryan Smith writes, "A cup is anything that we struggle with accepting as our lot in life. And our cup is usually the thing that makes it difficult to believe God is good." Is there an aspect of your "lot in life" that makes it difficult for you to trust God? What "cup" have you struggled with accepting? How have you dealt with it?

What does Jesus' prayer teach us about what it means to trust God?

.....
.....
.....