

I. PRINCIPLES

These principles explore what God says in His Word about Leaning on Him instead of on our own understanding:

A. GOADS

- Our texts today shed more light on Saul and his conversion. They hold several key principles that will help us as we are Learning to Lean!
- Acts 26:14--And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? *It is hard for you to kick against the goads.*'
- Gal 1:1-24 NASB--Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),² and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,⁴ who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,⁵ to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.⁶ I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;⁷ which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!⁹ As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!¹⁰ For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.¹¹ For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.¹² For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.¹³ For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it;¹⁴ and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.¹⁵ But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased¹⁶ to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,¹⁷ nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.¹⁸ Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.¹⁹ But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.²⁰ (Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.)²¹ Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.²² I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ;²³ but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy."²⁴ And they were glorifying God because of me.
- What is a goad? Think of it as an ancient version of today's cattle prod. It was an instrument used to guide an animal the way his master desired him to go.
- Though Saul viewed Jesus and His people as enemies, the Lord was lovingly prodding Saul to bring him into salvation and fellowship.
- Instead of pointing out his sin, Jesus puts Saul's welfare before His own and appeals to his difficulty and pain: "*It is hard for you to kick against the goads.*"
- Paul later testified that it's God's kindness that leads us to repentance. (Romans 2:4)

- In response, Saul surrendered. He quit fighting Jesus to become united with Him: 1 Tim 6:12-- Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called
- LISTENING EXERCISE:
Lord would you help me to see any place in my life where I am at opposing or resisting Your work in my life?

Jesus, please ready my heart to pray this prayer with integrity:

"I don't want to resist You any longer. I want to surrender to You so that I might lean on Your great love and wisdom. I choose You and Your way instead of my own."

- Now that he was reconciled with Jesus, Paul began fighting enemies of the Cross.
- False teachers had infiltrated the Galatians churches and lured them away from the Gospel of grace. They were deceived into believing they must perform for God.
- Paul defends the true Gospel message. He deploys his passionate zeal and his conversion story to demonstrate that our hope is in Christ alone.
- Insights:

B. GOOD NEWS

- Paul is writing to a group of churches that desperately need to be reminded about the true nature of their relationship with God: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (v.10)
- "Since it offered no grace and provided no peace, the law system being taught by the lying Judaizers is attacked even in this simple greeting. If being right with God and possessing salvation is by works, as those false teachers maintained, then it is not of grace and can bring no peace, since one never knows if he has enough good works to be eternally secure." (MacArthur New Testament Commentary)
- This is the essence of the good news of the Gospel: The Father gave the Son, and the Son gave Himself to make atonement for us. He rescued us from our sin: Rom 3:21-24 JBP--But now we are seeing the righteousness of God declared quite apart from the Law (though amply testified to by both Law and Prophets)—it is a righteousness imparted to, and operating in, all who have faith in Jesus Christ. (For there is no distinction to be made anywhere: everyone has sinned, everyone falls short of the beauty of God's plan.) Under this divine system a man who has faith is now freely acquitted in the eyes of God by his generous dealing in the redemptive act of Jesus Christ. God has appointed him as the means of propitiation, a propitiation accomplished by the shedding of his blood, to be received and made effective in ourselves by faith.

- Jesus also rescued us from “this evil age.” Paul is saying we’ve been delivered from the world’s corruption and from religious systems relying on ceremonies and rituals.
- Look at a few contrasts between the law and grace:

LAW

Wages of sin is death
 Exposes sin
 Condemns
 Obedience demanded
 Sin and you die
 Bondage

GRACE

Paid in full
 Covers a multitude
 Redeems
 Gives ability to obey
 Receive the gift of eternal life
 Sets us free

- Paul speaks with authority about the danger of deserting and distorting the truth about God’s amazing grace. This week, let’s examine our lives before the Lord:

Father, please make me observant whenever I doubt or forget that it is only by grace that I am made right with you.

Spirit, bless my eyes to see more clearly how big Your grace is and to receive it more fully.

Please expose any mindsets or behaviors where I’m unknowingly attempting to add to Jesus’ sacrifice.

- There is nothing we can add to Jesus finished work on our behalf. We are simply called to believe this Good News and to lean on it.
- Insights:

C. GOD PLEASER

- Paul had to let go of past allegiances in order to fully trust in God: Matt 6:24 AMP--No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [money, possessions, fame, status, or whatever is valued more than the Lord].
- In contrast to those who brought false teaching aimed at pleasing both Jews and Gentiles, Paul chooses to please God, making Him his primary audience.
- When we seek to please God, we can remain stable even when others criticize or reject us. Pleasing people gives them power to sway or intimidate us: Prov 29:25--The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.
- Paul had been trapped by the fear of man. He indicates that his ambition to impress and advance among the Jews led him far from God’s true call. (vv. 13-14)
- However, after meeting Jesus on the Damascus Road, his desire was to sit at His feet. For 3 years he devoted himself fully to developing his relationship with Christ.

- “Whom we seek to please shows who pleases us. The more Christ pleases, the more earnestly shall we seek to please Him in all we say and do and think.”(Bartlett)
- LISTENING EXERCISE:
Lord, remind me of times when I’ve felt trapped, frustrated or angry because I have said “yes” to a person without consulting You first:

Holy Spirit, I invite you to uncover underlying causes and/or motives for my people pleasing:

Father, help me see the people and environments where am I most susceptible to pleasing others instead of pleasing You?

- As we have seen previously, leaning on God can require tough choices that may be momentarily painful – to our old nature and also wherever we are vulnerable to fear: 2 Tim 2:3-4--You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴ No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.
- “Love with all your might. But in your love don’t allow evil to reign. Remember your own needs and responsibilities, and let God, not others, choose your path.”(H. Cloud)
- When we trust God with all our hearts and acknowledge Him in all our ways, He is pleased to guide and support us: 2 Chronicles 16:9a NASB--For the eyes of the Lord roam throughout the earth, so that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.
- Insights:

II. PERSONAL APPLICATION

A. ONE THING

The One Thing that I’d like to take away from today’s class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

B. PONDER THE TRUTH

- Review this outline. Which of the scriptures jumped out at you? Write out the verse below and review this week to take the truth more deeply into your heart.

- As you meditate on the verse and your One Thing, try leaning into listening. Continue to practice to be still and tune your spiritual ears. Use the handout “Listening to God” to help you understand this process more thoroughly. Be sure to write down anything that comes to mind, both distractions and insights!

C. PRAY IT IN

Take your One Thing and the verse you have chosen to the Lord in prayer:

“Is there a particular attitude or issue that you want to bring into the light of this truth?” Write down anything that comes to mind to keep for further exploration:

“Lord, what would it look like for me to apply this truth?”

D. SING IT

- Listen to the master Learning to Lean playlist or the one for this week’s lesson. (See the DDD YouTube channel.) Record anything that you received from your personal worship time:

E. PERSONALIZE IT

Read through these questions early in the week. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see your personal reality and His pathway for growth. Write down any insights you might have during the week and come back ready to share!

Goads:

- *Think about where you feel frustrated or blocked. Seek the Lord about this, prayerfully considering if this might be a goad from God meant to direct your path:*

- *Lord, please reveal any area where I am at opposing or resisting Your work in my life:*

- *Jesus, please ready my heart to pray this prayer with integrity:
“I don’t want to resist You any longer. I want to surrender to You so that I might lean on Your great love and wisdom. I choose You and Your way instead of my own.”*
- *If you are not there yet, ask the Holy Spirit to identify the “why” underneath it.*

Good News:

- It’s been said that covenantal, unconditional love allows us to live without shame. The Accuser will attempt to convince you of his guilt, condemnation and shame messages. Use the handout “Liberation” to get shored up on God’s covenant with you! Record any insights:

- *Jesus, alert me when I doubt or forget that it’s only by grace that I’m made right with you.*
- *Bless my eyes to see the enormity of Your grace and to receive it more fully!*
- *Please expose any mindsets or behaviors where I’m unknowingly attempting to add to Jesus’ sacrifice:*

God Pleaser

- *Lord, remind me of past and current situations where I’ve felt trapped, frustrated or angry because I have said “yes” to a person without consulting You first (or ignored Your prod):*
- *Holy Spirit, I invite you to uncover underlying causes and/or motives for my people pleasing:*
- *Father, help me see the people and environments where am I most susceptible to pleasing others instead of pleasing You?*

NO CLASS ON OCTOBER 11, 2022. ENJOY YOUR FALL BREAK!