



NON-PROFIT



TAX-EXEMPT

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” MARK 16:15

MID-WINTER 2016

FROM US TO YOU

As we begin this new issue, the weather is beautiful here on Long Island. We thank God for it, especially when we hear about the horrible weather conditions elsewhere in this country. In the sixties and seventies, when we were growing up, such awful weather in the United States was rare. Other things were different too. Nobody we knew had to buy bottled water. All we all had to do was turn on the faucet! There were flies and ants of course, but the population of bad insects was far less prevalent. Animal attacks were also rare. There were occasional dog bites and cat scratches. But serious animal attacks occurred with far less frequency. And you seldom heard of attacks from wild dogs, bears, and wolves against humans. Back then, schools were relatively safe too. Students would get in trouble for chewing gum in class. But no one ever brought a gun to school! These days all that has changed.

There has been a school shooting in the United States every week since the one at Sandy Hook, according to [Senator Chris Murphy on the Senate floor on June 24, 2015](#)*! So what is influencing society to decay so quickly? For one thing, most churches these days run the gamut from lukewarm (Revelation 3:16) to nothing more than religious social clubs (Matthew 15:7-9 and John 5:44)! Children are influenced by television, movies, and the Internet. Public schools used to teach Christianity. Now they teach [Secular Humanism](#),** an atheistic philosophy also promoted on television and in movies!

Thank God we have faith in Jesus Christ and trust Him to protect us! That is not to say that we don't suffer through difficult times. For God doesn't want any fair weather Christians (see Revelation 3:16). That is the trouble with churches these days. They feed the congregation on a candy coated Gospel, which makes it almost impossible for people to survive the trials and tests of faith (James 1:2-4) that ultimately come to everyone who loves Christ (Acts 5:40-42). Everything has to be tested. For in the days to come, God is going to shake this world up (Hebrews 12:25-28)! And everything that is not securely anchored on the solid Rock of Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:24-27, 16:13-18, 1 Corinthians 10:3-4) will not survive the testing. “For our ‘God is a consuming fire’” (Hebrews 12:29 NIV). Fire destroys that which can be destroyed, but purifies that which can survive the flame!

The weeds and chaff are currently growing together in churches throughout this world (see Matthew 13:24-30). But when Christ returns, He will have “His winnowing fork... in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor, gathering His wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matthew 3:12 NIV). So tests of faith will come but they can make us stronger in our Christian walk. They separate the “wheat from the chaff” (Luke 3:17). See Peter’s message to the church in 1 Peter 1:3-7 as well as that of James in James 1:2-4. The false gospel is so prevalent these days (see 2 Timothy 4:3-4 and 1 Timothy 4:1-2) that it has weakened our society. It makes it easier for Satan to come against us with terrorist attacks, especially directed toward

Christians and Jews!

In the United States a new presidential election is going to take place in less than a year. We live in a dangerous world today (see 1 Peter 5:8, Revelation 12:12)! Therefore, it is important that we have strong, smart leadership in the White House. We’re not going to tell you who to vote for. But for those seeking spiritual guidance, we will offer some thoughts and opinions. The president should be at least a nominal Christian. But we agree with the late David Wilkerson, who said that a true man of God could not get elected President of the United States.

That’s because he would not compromise on his faith to please all the special interest groups in order to raise money. In a presidential election, a great deal of money is needed to get heard among the fray! As Abraham Lincoln stated in his Gettysburg Address, the founders of our Constitution intended that the government should be “...of the people, by the people, and for the people...” He said nothing about special interest groups! However, sadly, that has become the way politics work today. The more money you have, the more you influence the politicians. That’s why a true man or woman of God could not get elected President. For Jesus said, “...My kingdom is not of this world. ...My kingdom is from another place” (John 18:36 NIV). That’s why we need to “...live by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7 NIV).

That means letting go of the steering wheel and allowing Christ to steer the course of our lives. Those who live in the darkness of sin (John 3:19-21), won’t do that. They also get to vote at the ballot box! Moreover, it is our opinion that the two presidents in our lifetime who called themselves “Born Again” (John 3:3) were among the worst presidents we ever had! One made the statement in an interview with “Playboy” magazine. He could not even protect our embassy in Iran! The second got us involved in a war we never should have fought, allowed its leader to be killed, and created an instability in the Middle East. That eventually led to the formation of Isis, a terrorist group similar to Al Qaeda!

So what’s the answer? First, we need to give the country back to the people, not the special interest groups! We must have a leader who will put the safety and security of our nation ahead of what is “politically correct”! We need someone strong enough to deal with world leaders and restore the Judo-Christian heritage this nation was built upon. And someone who can fix our broken financial system, restore the American dream, and make America, once again, the “shining city on a hill” that President Reagan spoke about!

Make your New Year resolution to seek out a closer walk with Christ this year. Pray for our country. And have a beautiful and blessed 2016 everyone!

In the Lord’s service, *Eric and Anne Kaestner*

Footnotes –

* *Washington Post* article on June 29, 2015 about Sandy Hook

** *Wikipedia* - Secular humanism



Take Your Troubles To The Lord

By Anne Kaestner

Eric and I had only been married about five years when we needed a new couch. I picked out a nice one at Macy's Department Store and was assured that it would be delivered to our apartment in about two weeks. Consequently, when the delivery date was approaching, Eric took the old couch out to the street for the sanitation department to pick up. We eagerly awaited the new couch. In those days I worked on and off for an agency that sent me out to various companies for temporary secretarial assignments. So on the day set for delivery I was able to stay at home. I waited patiently for the couch to arrive, but it never came. I called up the customer service department at Macy's and was told that the couch had been sent out. But the delivery people couldn't find our apartment.

We lived in a small, two bedroom apartment above an antique store in a commercial area of Baldwin, New York. So I understood that they might have a problem finding it. Therefore, I gave them specific directions on where to find us so that they would not have a problem on the next scheduled delivery. Yet the same thing happened. I called up Macy's customer service again. "Maybe the person I had spoken to last time had an off day and didn't pass along the instructions properly," I thought to myself. I went through the exact procedure once more with someone else. We didn't have a couch anymore, so I was hopeful that this time everything would work out alright. But it didn't! Again, and again, just about every weekday, I got on the phone with the customer service department. And each day I was assured that they would pass on my exact instructions that anyone should be able to follow!

Obviously, I was getting frustrated. I was given the option to cancel the order. But I wanted that particular couch. So, tenaciously I refused to give up. This went on for about a month or more. Eric would come home from work each time hoping to find the couch that wasn't there. I tried asking them to give me the phone number of the warehouse so that I could call them directly. But I was told that it was against their policy. Then, finally, one day, after my many complaints, one of the customer service representatives let it slip that the warehouse was in New Jersey. I had lived in Staten Island for four years prior to my marriage and had driven out to New Jersey several times to shop. So I reasoned that the warehouse was probably in a town just over the New York border. Therefore, I called up a Macy's department store in the area, bypassing the customer service department altogether. And I asked the woman I spoke to for the phone number of their warehouse, which she quickly gave me.

Thank God, I hit the target! It was the right warehouse where my couch had been kept. "Oh, I am so glad you called," the woman at the warehouse told me. "That couch has been going out so many times and coming back without making the delivery." I assured her that it was just as frustrating for us! I gave her exactly the same directions that I had given so many times to customer service, and within a few days the couch was delivered! Praise God, it worked! This anecdote comes to mind when I see how people put their confidence in the many wolves (Matthew 7:15) and hirelings (John 10:12) preaching from church pulpits today.

When I think of all the problems that could be eliminated, all the misery that could be averted, if only people would forget about the wisdom of human counsel (Mark 7:6-9), and take their troubles to God through Jesus Christ! It's natural for people to seek out the advice of a religious leader when they are troubled. I've done it myself at times, especially during the early years of my marriage. And some church leaders have known how to handle the matter. They would say, "Let's pray about it and see how the Lord wants to

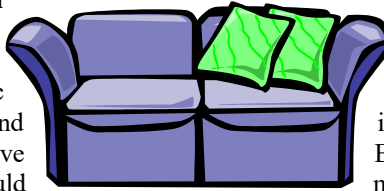
leads." However, Jesus said that in these last days "...many false prophets will appear and deceive many people" (Matt. 24:11 NIV). Such people do not have their hearts right with God. They are pompous, egotistical, and hypocritical. "For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity - for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning" (2 Peter 2:18-20 NIV).

Such ministers do not rely on the Word of God to lead them. They twist and manipulate the Word to support their own philosophy and what is "politically correct." Such pastors rely on their own ideas and psychology (1 Cor. 3:18-20), to advise their congregation. The Apostle Paul told the leaders of the church in Ephesus, "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears" (Acts 20:28-31 NIV).

There are two popular doctrines in the church today that are dangerous enough to cause people to lose their salvation (2 Peter 3:17). And they have been quickly accepted by those who want to be able to keep one foot in the world and sin with impunity (see 2 Timothy 4:3-4). They are (1) "once you are saved, you can never lose your salvation." And (2) "that person may have lived a life of sin, and there is no evidence or hint that they ever repented to God. But maybe they did so at the last minute and they might be in Heaven." Brethren, God isn't stupid! "The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:8 NIV). And Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44 NIV).

A Christian friend of mine once said to me, "I go out to bars at night trying to find a boyfriend because God hasn't given me His Holy Spirit" (Acts 19:1-6). I replied, "God isn't going to give you His Holy Spirit so that you can go and hang out at bars at night. You have to want Him with all your heart." Paul compared the Christian walk to competing in a marathon. Starting the race is like being Born Again (John 3:3). Finishing the race is like getting to Heaven. Paul said, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize" (1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NIV).

This proves that Paul himself was worried about losing his own salvation! Yet "once saved, always saved" is still a popular doctrine with those who take a lackadaisical or lukewarm (Rev. 3:16) attitude toward their walk with God! Those who want to be in the Olympics do not do a little exercising once in awhile. For several years, their whole lives revolve around that goal. This is what Paul was talking about. The food they eat, the company they keep, the things they have eliminated from their lives, the time they wake up, the time they go



to bed. Everything in their world is directed by the simple goal of getting the gold! The ancient Athenians, when they won the race, were crowned with a wreath of bay laurel leaves. We who finish the race for God will receive “the crown of righteousness” (2 Timothy 4:8), the crown of life (James 1:12), and “...the crown of glory that will never fade away” (1 Peter 5:4 NIV).

When my mother-in-law was dying, I was in her hospital room one day. I mentioned to a man who happened to be visiting her, that she had accepted Christ before she died. I know this because the Lord put it on my heart to lead her through the sinner’s prayer. She had been a big blessing to us and our ministry. The man was glad to hear this. He claimed to be a Christian. Then, the subject of a very worldly entertainer came up. He had died about that time. “He may be in Heaven,” the man said. I was thinking to myself, “Are you kidding! One of his most famous songs was ‘I Did It My Way.’” My Dad used to call it “The theme song of those who are going to Hell.” That’s because we have to get there God’s way, not our own way! “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 16:25 KJV). Jesus said, “...I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6 NIV). So then, “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” (1 Peter 4:18 NIV).

So how can you be sure you will get to Heaven? “...Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other; so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. **I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God**” (Galatians 5:16-21 NIV).

Even good Christian leaders can fall away from Christ (Matt. 7:21-23 and Galatians 1:8, 5:4) if they allow their ego and the blessings of God to become stumbling blocks to their faith” (Hebrews 6:4-6). That means those who once knew Christ as their Savior, but backslid (2 Peter 2:20-22) away from Him. Then they continued to call themselves Christians, perhaps even “Born Again” while they continue to commit the vilest of sins! If someone goes around telling everyone that they are obeying your will while they commit horrible crimes, how would you feel? That’s what it’s like for Christ when those who once knew Him engage in hypocrisy (Matthew 6:1-5)!

The problem is that elevating Christian pastors up on a pedestal, and putting ones trust **totally** in human wisdom (1 Cor. 1:26 thru 2:5) is not good for the pastor. And it is not good for the congregation. For it can lure him into the sin of pride (Proverbs 16:5). And there’s nothing that can cause a worse roadblock between humans and God! It was the original sin that caused Lucifer to think that he was smarter than God (Isaiah 14:12-15). In fact, it was the blessings of God that started the seed of pride in Lucifer’s heart. He had been the perfect Heavenly angel. The Lord had been so pleased with him that He had blessed him with beauty, wealth, and great prestige (Ezekiel 28:12-19). But the blessings became so great that Lucifer thought he was smarter and more powerful than God. Consequently, He led a failed mutiny against the Almighty. The Bible tells us that “...there was war in Heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in Heaven. The great dragon was hurled down - **that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him**” (Rev. 12:7-9 NIV).

Pride was also the original sin of us humans. It was Eve’s pride

that lured her into biting into the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden and falling away from God (Genesis 3:4-6). That’s part of the reason why the Apostle Paul was not happy about the Corinthian church bragging about Christian ministers. Deeply concerned, he wrote back to them, “Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a ‘fool’ so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight. As it is written: ‘He catches the wise in their craftiness;’ and again, ‘The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.’ So then, no more boasting about men!...” (1 Corinthians 3:18-21 NIV).

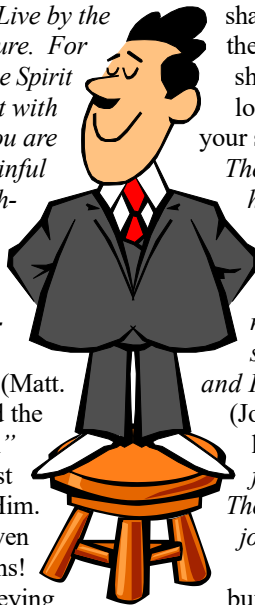
What Paul is saying is that those of us who put Christ first in our lives are considered fools by other people. For they would trust in human wisdom. Yet human wisdom is foolishness to God. Because He sees how foolish we are when we act like little lambs gone astray (Isaiah 53:6). For lambs are among the most stupid of animals. They will follow everything that looks like a leader, even when it is a wolf in disguise! That’s what Jesus meant when He said, “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves” (Matt. 7:15 NIV). Jesus Christ is your true Shepherd!

If you’ve served Christ in the past, but have listened to the sound of wolves baaing, He’s the one who will go out searching for you, all night long, if necessary. The thorns and thistles are dense and sharp where good fruit will never grow (Matthew 7:16-17). But the Good Shepherd will pierce Himself (Isaiah 53:5) and has shed His own blood for you (1 Peter 1:18-19). He will keep looking until He finds you or the wolves destroy all hope of your salvation. That’s why Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know My sheep and My sheep know Me - just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father - and I lay down My life for the sheep” (John 10:11-15 NIV). And what happens when the Good Shepherd finds one of His wayward little lambs? “...When He finds it, He joyfully puts it on His shoulders and goes home. Then He calls His friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with Me; I have found My lost sheep’” (Luke 15:5-6 NIV).

Many years ago I learned not to trust in human wisdom, but to rely on the Holy Spirit, through prayer and supplication to God. So often when I listened to the voice of others, things didn’t turn out well. But when I went to God the Father in prayer (Matthew 6:9) and asked for help, trusting in the Word of God, everything worked out so much better! I remember one year I was called for jury duty. It came at a time when we had just moved into our office building and I was having problems with some of our employees. And I also had some personal anxieties about things at that time. Jury duty did not go well that first day. To my dismay the judge and lawyers made me the forewoman of the jury! I was having enough trouble just dealing with problems at my office, but now a new anxiety arrived. I fit in about as well with the other jury members as an evangelist in a casino. And gambling was one of their favorite topics of conversation. I went home that night and spent about an hour in prayer. The next day, everything had changed! We all got along. And when it came to vote on the guilt or innocence of the accused, to my surprise we all came to the same decision. I was so pleased that I said, “Hallelujah!” “Hallelujah?” one of the men repeated in a surprised tone. But it was over, and we were all very glad!

On another occasion, soon after we moved into our house, I was again confronted with a mini crisis in my life. October was just around the corner and four anxiety causing events were about to occur during the month. I was going to have

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oral surgery. I was going to see a new ob/gyn. I had just been called again for jury duty. And I now had to prepare for the onslaught of Halloween “trick or treaters” and their parents, who made a yearly pilgrimage through our neighborhood. This was something I had never had to do before, since we had lived in a commercial area, above a store. Now we had a house. I didn’t want to seem unfriendly to my neighbors by not answering the door. But, being a Christian, I knew better than to engage in any activity endorsing the devil’s favorite day.

Halloween has its roots in the Celtic religion, which existed in old England prior to the advent of Christianity. It involved human sacrifice. The Druids, the religious leaders, would go around to various houses looking for humans to sacrifice to their Celtic idols, which they called gods (Deut. 32:17). In reality, there is only one true God (1 Timothy 2:5). And to pay homage to any other entity is totally abhorrent to the Lord. Scripture tells us how angry God became when the Jews began to practice such evil rituals to heathen idols. He said, “For a fire has been kindled by My wrath, one that burns to the realm of death below. It will devour the earth and its harvests and set afire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap calamities upon them and spend My arrows against them. I will send wasting famine against them, consuming pestilence and deadly plague; I will send against them the fangs of wild beasts, the venom of vipers that glide in the dust” (Deuteronomy 32:22-24 NIV).

Just facing one of these anxiety producing events would be scary enough. But at least four of them were rapidly approaching. I knew that I needed a lot more than human advice. And that I wouldn’t be able to handle these situations without God’s help. So I prayed about it. “I’m going to trust You through it all,” I told the Lord. “I’m going to give this problem to You and ask You to deal with it for me.” Thank God, it all turned out well! The Lord answered my prayer. The oral surgery was easy. For the tooth came out in just a few minutes with minimal discomfort. The new ob/gyn doctor was very nice and I felt very comfortable with her.

Someone else was made forewoman of the jury this time and I actually enjoyed serving. As for Halloween, the Lord taught me to turn the devil’s day into an opportunity to get the Gospel out. When the kids came to the door, I responded with candy along with Christian “Chick Tracts” comic books. The children and teens seemed to like them. And since then they have been coming back every year for a new comic book. I’d hear comments like, “Get that one. I got it last year and it was really good. I’ll take this one over here.” As the song goes, “What a joy it is to trust in Jesus!”

Some people reading this will probably say, “I’ve prayed for God’s help many times, but He never answers my prayers.” Well, maybe you’re praying for the wrong things! A woman doctor, who claimed to be a Christian, once asked me to pray that her daughter would get an acting role in a soap opera. “I can’t do that!” I responded. Then I began to quote scripture to her. “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever” (1 John 2:15-17 NIV). “Well, just pray for her,” the doctor replied.

Christianity is like a bank account. The more you put into your walk with God the more you will get out of it. “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in

heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21 NIV). As James put it, “You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God” (James 4:2-4 NIV).

James is not talking about sexual adultery. He is writing about adultery to Christ! For if you are a Christian, saved by grace (see Ephesians 2:8) you are spiritually married to Christ. As Paul stated, “I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough” (2 Corinthians 11:2-4 NIV).

Please don’t misunderstand. I’m not telling you to never ask your religious leaders for advice. I am simply stating that the most important advice you should be relying on is that which comes through prayer and supplication before God (Psalms 118:5-17). Even godly men can give bad advice if they rely on their own counsel (1 Kings 13:7-24). My mother once told me about the pastor of a large, wealthy church she had stopped attending. She said that he had preached so much about prosperity and how God will bless people who give to their church that a woman in his congregation had asked him, “Pastor, I don’t have much money for giving. I have to pay the mortgage on my house. But should I give the money to the church instead and trust God that He will provide the mortgage money?” The pastor told the woman yes. My mother said that, as a result, the woman lost her house and her husband divorced her. It’s what Jude was talking about when he wrote, “These men are... shepherds who feed only themselves... without fruit and uprooted - twice dead” (Jude 1:12 NIV).

Faith is a good thing (see Hebrews 11:1, 6) when God tells us specifically to do something, and we obey **Him**. But when it comes to something as important as a house payment, the Holy Spirit is the only one who has the right to tell you not to pay it, but to trust God. Does that mean that a pastor cannot tell a member of his congregation that God has told him to tell them to do such and so? No. It is a minister’s job to hear the Word of God, even in the lives of specific individuals, and tell them about it. However, if it’s really coming from God, the Holy Spirit will confirm it in the heart of the recipient! The job of a true man or woman of God is to point you toward the right gate. Your religious leader is not the gateway to God. Christ is (John 10:9)! The righteous minister is the watchman (John 10:3) who opens the Gate and enables the little lamb to enter into communion with God. He’ll say, “Let’s pray together about this.”

In short, “...Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD... But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit” (Jeremiah 17:5-8 NIV). So, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart... In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6 KJV).

