

Dutch Sheets: We Must Trust God and Not Ourselves

The new year is such a wonderful time, offering us the opportunity to look back on the road we've walked, and then dream with God to set bigger goals and tread higher ground. With the closing of 2015, troubles abound in our nation and abroad; even so, some still find themselves joyfully celebrating great victories in the Lord.

God has blessed us with His goodness and hope for what lies ahead. While reflecting upon these things, the Lord reminds me of a paramount principle He long ago seared upon my heart. It is a fundamental truth that can help us stay in God's will and fulfill His intended purpose for our life.

Horses and Chariots

When an alliance of enemy armies threatened Joshua and the people of Israel in their quest to possess the land promised to them, God encouraged them not to be afraid, promising to deliver the enemy into their hands. But the assurance of victory was accompanied by a set of critical instructions for maintaining their success. The Lord told them to hamstring the horses and burn the chariots they had acquired as spoils of war (Josh. 11:6).

To hamstring a horse is to cut a particular tendon so as not to kill or completely maim the horse, but certainly render it useless for engaging in battle or pulling chariots of war. Disabling the horses and destroying the chariots was God's way of ensuring Israel would not become self-sufficient and dependent on their own military strength and ability for winning future battles. Instead, they would be reminded to trust Him.

The Lord set this safeguard in place because there was a

tendency among the people of Israel, as there is within all of us, to lean on Him in times of great need, yet fall back on our own abilities and strengths when our struggles wane. Psalm 106 illustrates this unfortunate truth. After God so powerfully delivered Israel from slavery, they quickly forgot His miraculous works and did not seek His counsel (verse 13).

History repeated itself after Israel's conquest of Jericho when they set out to take Ai, a small and seemingly weak city. Having become overconfident and self-sufficient after miraculously winning the battle at Jericho, they did not seek the Lord's counsel for taking Ai. Attempting to go against the enemy in their own strength and ability, they suffered a most humiliating defeat.

Friends, especially after we've experienced times of great success, breakthrough, or promotion, we cannot forget our source of strength! We must rely on the Lord even more, with all the "more" He entrusts to us.

Lean on the Lord

In this season, God is attempting to give us a greater understanding of His authority and strength for breakthrough in our personal lives and family, for all of our labors, and for this nation as a whole. But we won't grasp the concept of operating successfully in God's delegated authority if, even unconsciously, there is any form of self-sufficiency in us. We must recognize that each day we need God's wisdom for our decisions and His strength for everything we undertake.

There are times in life when we are traveling upon what seems to be familiar ground. In those instances, it is important that one not give place to presumptuous self-sufficiency with a "been there, done that" mentality. Even in the seemingly easy times, we must be careful to heed the words of *Proverbs 3:5-8*:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your

own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your body, and strength to your bones” (MEV).

Boast in the Lord

There are other times when the Lord will take us into situations where we feel a degree of intimidation, facing challenges that seem beyond our natural abilities. Following the example of the apostle Paul, we go to the Lord and say, “Lord, I want to glory in my weakness, because You then can be strong in me” (2 Cor. 10:17, 12:10; Ps. 20:7; Joel 3:10b).

Our greatest asset can be our area of weakness if we allow it to drive us to God, His vast wisdom, His limitless ability and His magnificent strength, rather than trust in our own.

“Thus says the LORD, ‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, and let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not 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 who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, says the Lord.’” (Jer. 9:23-24, MEV).

“But the people who know their God will be strong and take action. The wise among the people shall instruct many” (Dan. 11:32-33).

The Lord desires to accomplish great exploits through those who take time to know Him intimately and hear what’s on His heart. He will cause them to rise up in great strength and take bold, strategic action that leads from victory to victory, bringing glory to His name.

New Strength for the New Year

Let’s make this simple yet vital principle our plumb line for

moving into the New Year: Trust God, not ourselves. In doing so, we won't forget the Lord after witnessing great miracles. We won't let our guard down or act in presumption after experiencing victory. And we won't become like a weakened Samson who awakened from sleep thinking, "I will shake myself free and overthrow my enemies as I've always done," not realizing that the Lord had departed from him (Judg. 16:20).

In this new year, God is releasing grace to trust Him more. Lean into it, take hold of it. As you strengthen yourself in the Lord, He will add strength to your abilities and release creative thoughts, wise solutions, divine appointments, great favor, good contracts and timely sales. Struggling ministries will soar in God's strength and families in need of help will experience breakthrough. The Lord will even bring good from your past defeats.

In this coming year, let's work hard and be diligent, being mindful of His faithfulness, and look to Him for all we need. My friend, put your trust in Him!

Dutch Sheets is an internationally recognized author, teacher and conference speaker. He travels extensively, empowering believers for passionate prayer and societal transformation. Dutch has pastored, taught in several colleges and seminaries, and served on the board of directors of numerous organizations. Dutch's greatest passion is to see America experience a sweeping revival and return to its godly heritage. He is a messenger of hope for America, encouraging believers to contend for awakening in our day and reformation in our lifetime. Dutch has written over 20 books, many of which have been translated into over 30 languages. Please visit .

For the original article, visit .