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### **Take the Plunge Proverbs 3:5-6**

When we have been disappointed, stabbed in the back, hurt and lied to, it becomes more and more difficult to trust... doesn't it. When we have been cheated on, run over, ignored, and rejected and forgotten. When people who we thought were our friends don't follow through, are dishonest and unloyal it makes it very difficult to trust. It hurts doesn't it when the one person you thought you could count on fails. its toughest when those you thought were close to you do something, say something to prove they aren't at all even close to where you thought they were. Its so painful when a parent, a child, close friend shatters the trust you had between them. And so after we have licked our emotional wounds we tend to hold back just a little the next time. We get smart. We're more guarded with our words. We don't like to feel pain. We hold the cards of our life just a little closer to our chest the next time. We were vulnerable once and got stomped on...we vow it won't happen again. Its tough to learn how to trust again when our trust has been so violently shattered. We feel we can't trust anyone.

Maybe you feel even God has shattered your trust. How can we begin to trust again? It certainly going to take time isn't it? Is it a blind faith to trust in One who says "Trust me" but has never done anything worthy to gain our trust? How about God? How do we know if God is trustworthy?

Turn with me to the crown jewel of all Proverbs. Next to John 3:16 this is probably the most memorized verse in the Bible. Proverbs 3:5-6 You will probably finish the verse before I can get it all out. More people claim this as a verse for life to challenge, encourage and direct their decisions and actions. Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight." This verse starts out with a challenge to trust, to trust in the Lord. Then it continues to describe the level of trust, the scope of trust, the

invasiveness of the trust, the totality, the involvement the radical completeness of the trust required to obtain the promise from God.

Trust in the Lord with "All". As a new believer we must make a choice, a decision. How serious am I going to take my new found faith? As a believer of many years we must continue to make that choice. How much of my life am I going to let God into. How much territory am I going to let him be in charge of? How much am I going to let my faith, my belief in God affect my decisions and actions and words? See if you are like me, I realize that Jesus died for me and saved me from hell and I want to show my gratitude by walking with him and following the model that he showed while on this earth. But...to what extent am I ready to go? I know that as a Christian I should probably read my Bible a little bit. I know that as a believer I should be praying a little bit. I know that I should get involved in church some and learn what I can about God...but how far do I need to take all of this?? How much am I going to let it affect my schedule? my priorities,? my goals? I know there are certain areas that I think Jesus would say I'm already ready doing pretty good at. Those areas wouldn't need much work to brush up on...but some of those other areas??? I'm not sure I want to give those up just yet? I'm not sure I can trust God with that area.

Maybe you have known a few radical "over the edge" type Christians where they took this faith thing so far that it was beginning to alter every part of their life. It was changing their morals, their relationships, their money management, even their sexuality and careers. They seem a bit extreme. Out there. Wildly committed as they took up the challenge of this verse to trust the Lord in all things. They took the plunge. Total, complete commitment. Folks that's where the fun starts. Half-way is boring. If you want to experience and enjoy the exhilarating Christian life, the way God designed it. Its time to take the plunge. Trusting that God knows what He is doing in all areas of our lives.

In fall of 1990 Erin and I were in New Zealand's south Island near Queenstown. Just north of town high above the Kawarau River was an old Railroad bridge. This was the place of Eddy Hacketts dream, some may call a nightmare, that has spread across the world. This was the birthplace of the bungie jump. Erin was eight months pregnant with

Nathaniel, so I couldn't convince her to join me. In fact, I was a bit terrified by the whole thing myself. They explained the process to me. They showed me the test certificates that stated the rope was capable of supporting a 1500 pound drop. I figured I was pretty safe there. They told me that they had thousands of successful jumps all without injury. They told of a 76 year old grandmother that jumped off. That one kind of got to me..Ok I should be able to do this. Out on the bridge they wrapped my ankles in a towel, then Velcro webbing and a caribiner. They asked me how much I weighed and far down into the water I wanted to plunge. I thought just getting my arms wet would be exciting enough and after converting my pound weight measurement to stones, they hooked an appropriately long rope to the caribiner and I was ready to go. I can tell you at this point I am sensing the need for an extreme amount of trust in these college age boys that they know what they are doing. I stood up on the jutting plank and instructed at the countdown of 5 I was to dive headfirst reaching for the distant mountain. I was quite terrified of the prospect of diving head first down 143 feet. It demanded an all out total commitment. There was no dip your toe in, test the waters, hang on it for a while first. It was take the plunge. Ultimate trust with my life, total commitment. As the countdown started I tried to act tough, but I was scared. I thought about backing out. But...I dove...and as I was falling with increasingly rapid velocity and the river was rushing right up to my face. I was yelling at the top of my lungs. Just when I was sure my neck would be snapped by the river below...the bungi cord started to slow me down until I came to a stop at the bottom with my arm in the river. Ahh..the exhilarating relief. My rope held. Then whoosh! Backwards feet first I shot skyward toward the bridge, twisting like a cat flung into the air, it was a terrifying yet exciting ride. An illustration of trust and faith. Unless you dive, unless you take the plunge, until you trust, you will never experience the thrill of God's catching you. (Video Clip) Don't you just wish you were there to see me scream?

Proverbs 3:5-6 offers us a dare, a challenge to trust the Lord with all our heart. Heart means all our will, emotion, mind. The very stuff of life that drives our beliefs and actions. Trust God with it all. So why don't you? Why don't you just go for it? Half-way is boring. Safe is no fun. Sure you can sit on the sidelines and take critical potshots at Gods radical

"over the edge" people who are trying and trying hard to go all out and sometimes failing. That's safe to stay up on the bridge, but its boring and irrelevant. Is that what you really want out of your spiritual life? There is nothing worse then playing half hearted. I challenge you to go all out for God and if He at anytime shows himself to be unworthy of trust then you can bail out at anytime, you can walk away. But until then, Give God the opportunity to lead and guide you life and do it His way. I personally don't like doing things halfway. I would never be satisfied unless I took the risk of trusting God fully.

If it sounds pretty arrogant to "give God a try" as if you are doing Him a favor for trying him out. Well, it is. But He knows about our small trust, and small faith and amazingly God Almighty of the universe calls us to test Him to live up to His promise of trust.

How do we begin to trust God on a daily basis, at work, school, during your down time? It begins with little steps of faith and trust. Imagine a dating relationship. Remember that first attraction. You watched that other person to see if they might be worthy of trust and your romantic interest. Whether consciously or not you began a process of testing that person. If he came to pick you up at 7 PM like he promised, a good feeling came and the trust account went up. If he showed up an hour late and offered no excuse, a cringe went on inside. You may take some conversation risks in opening up sharing your feelings never before let out. May discuss matters of the heart. You listen to her words, are they believable? Far-fetched? exaggerated. Does he listen carefully to me and respond appropriately. Does she offer good insights? Further conversations will tend to enhance or erode trust. As the relationship deepens you explore areas of loyalty and fidelity and dependability. Get the picture? Developing trust in any relationship takes times, it takes steps of action, it takes experiences walked through together, the good and bad, the joyful and sad that build trust. Little by little steps along the way access the progress. After a few weeks, a few months maybe years you comes to the realization, "I can fully trust that person...or decide, that person cant be trusted. I see far too many inconsistencies in their behavior. Too many disappointments. Too many times they failed to come through as promised. Too irresponsible. All that indicates a close relationship with that person is a bad risk.

As we learn to trust people, so also it is the way we learn to trust God, by engaging in every day situations over a period of time. As we step out in little baby steps of faith we learn that God's wisdom is sure, its right, God is a rock we can trust in. It wise to fully entrust our lives to God.

Can you hear that whisper this morning. That whisper from God that is saying "I am for real" This whole thing is true. I love you and if you just take that first step of trust I will prove myself trustworthy to you. How about it? Do you hear His whisper to walk with Him? Are you ready to take that big plunge, that dive of faith. Where are you on your spiritual journey? The truth is, you won't be able to progress with God until you take the plunge. John 1:12 "But as many as received him to them he gave the right to become children of God. Even to those who believe on His name." Romans 10:13 "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." But What you ask If I call out on God to forgive my sins, to lead my life and all I get is silence? What if nothing happens? Well, there is only one way to find out. You must take that step of faith and see if God proves trustworthy. If there is repeated silence from heaven then apparently it wasn't real. You are free to walk away. It was all just words. This could happen. But even though the experience of millions of others suggests otherwise...it doesn't give you ultimate proof. That is why it takes faith. You have to take the plunge and see if your bungi cord, if your trust in God will hold. The stakes are high aren't they? In fact, its a matter of life and death. Whether you choose to go bungi jumping or not is pretty optional dependent on how thrill seeking you are. but deciding how to respond to Christ's offer of salvation is not optional. Eternity hangs in a balance. Either choice demands faith. I believe it takes a far greater faith to refuse God's offer of salvation and not take the plunge. But if you don't you have to have great faith that God is not real and Christ did not die on the cross and pay the penalty for you sins. You have to have great faith that their is not a place called heaven and not a terrible place called hell. The down side to a poor choice can be deadly. Eternally deadly. Do you want to take that risk and trust that this whole God thing is a crock.

Take the plunge of trust today. For some it may be an emotional response. For others its not. Some experience a sense of peace of their

soul never before. I experienced a deep feeling of being loved by God. Some today may have said the words a long time ago, but went back to trying to make life work on you own agenda. You held back certain areas. You are now ready to ask God to forgive you for holding back and to begin to trust in His leadership again. If you are ready. Tell God about it. Tell Him you are going to need His help. He is waiting to hear your words. I want to begin taking small steps of trust. I want to take the plunge off the bridge of safe into the wild blue yonder of your amazing grace and forgiveness. To begin to live life the way you God the creator of the universe designed it to be.

Christ offers you salvation. Unlike the bungy Jump in New Zealand that cost 50 bucks for one jump and a T-shirt. Christ's salvation plunge into new life, cost God's son Jesus his life. Jesus died on a Roman execution cross many years ago, a perfect man paid for the sin of the whole world. Amazing really isn't it. Salvation is so costly its priceless. To try and pay anything for it would be an insult to its worth and value. We can't be good enough to earn it. Ephesians is clear. "For by grace are you saved through faith and not of yourselves it is a gift of God, not of works so that no one can boast about buying it, or earning it from God.

What about you? Are you ready to take the big plunge of faith? of trust? You can begin the process by praying a simple prayer with me this morning. "Jesus Christ I'm lost. I sin. I need a Savior. I need someone to forgive my sins and to lead my life. Please do that for me."

Maybe some this morning have prayed a prayer like that a long time ago, but then you have turned away from God's leadership. For whatever reasons, you went back on trying to make life work on your own. But now you are ready to ask God's forgiveness and once again trust in the Lord with All your heart. No areas off limits to God's leadership. Total plunge. Total sold out to God. Are you ready. To all who receive Him, God gives the right to become children of God." Are you ready to come to God in simple faith like a child? I am confident that those who act in faith will find a God so worthy of our trust. I have met no one who has followed God's leadership fully and not found Him to be fully trust worthy.