

Do not lean
Skip Moen

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding”
Proverbs 3:5

Do not lean The Hebrew word for “lean” is *sha’an*. Used in this verse, it presents an interesting contrast. It can mean “support.” In the Old Testament, support is always referred to “trust in God.” Therefore, we see that Solomon is really saying, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart but don’t trust your own discernment of the situation.” Lean on God, not on your own staff (another meaning of *sha’an*).

Solomon is painting a word picture for us. In the picture, we have a man who is using a walking stick for support. He relies on it to keep his balance. But what he doesn’t realize is that the stick is flawed. It won’t support his weight. When he needs it the most, it will break and he will be severely injured in the fall. A prophet meets this man as he is traveling on the road. The prophet knows about the integrity of the walking stick and so he warns the man, “Don’t trust that stick. It is unreliable. Lean on me. I won’t let you down.”

In modern terms we would say that the man with the walking stick using a crutch. But we rarely think of our own way of living as a crutch. God reminds us that when we prop up our life with our own view of right and wrong, we are supported by flimsy crutches. God does not use crutches. He stands! When we need support (and we very often do), He invites us to lean on what is standing firm.

It takes a long time to unlearn the mental and moral crutches we find so familiar. We spend most of our lives putting weight on them. They have become habitual. But God knows that unless we stop leaning on the crutches, we will never walk a straight path. We will always hobble along, bent and crippled.

Throw down those crutches. Put all your weight on God and forget about trying to set your own rules for living. Live according to His reflection. His way is strong enough to bear the weight of the world. It can handle the few pounds you will add.