

# Do You Trust God, Numbers, Money, or Preachers

by Tim Conway

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**Scripture:** Matthew 6:24, Isaiah 2:22, 1 Corinthians 3:7, Psalm 20:7, Proverbs 3:5

**Topics:** "Trusting God", "Avoiding Worldly Reliance"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Brethren, sometimes you have to ask different questions. See, if we ask the question, who do we trust? Oh, you know, call on me. I've got the answer.

We trust God. Well, we know the right answer. Sometimes we have to ask the question differently.

You know, I find it very telling to find out why God's people can't do things. Like you bring up to a church, hey brethren, you know what we ought to do? We ought to do this. And listen to the reasons as to why people don't think we can do that.

Because that often will tell you exactly what they trust. Let me just finish here with just several things that we commonly like to trust other than God. Now, obviously the devil outwitted David by numbers, but I'll tell you numbers, oh, it may not be how big the military unit is of Israel, but you know what? The same thing can afflict the church.

Churches love numbers. Churches love to boast in numbers. I'll be honest, brethren, I'm afraid of that.

One of the things that you'll never find me doing is counting the people in this church. You're not going to find me ever able to tell you exactly how many professing Christians we have in the church here in Manchester. At Grace, I didn't count and I never counted.

And the reason that I didn't is because I know, and I'm wired like other people. It's not because I'm trying to set myself forth as being more righteous. It's I know the tendency.

I know the temptation. And I'm afraid of that. And pastors love to compare numbers.

I don't think that's good. And what good are numbers? You know, the thing is, the moment you boast in numbers in the church, God will split the church. The moment we look at numbers, well, how many are even true? I mean, do we know the wheat from the tares? And brethren, the thing is, we just have to think like Jonathan.

Whatever it is we're up against, whatever it is we may want to do, the thing to ask is not how big we are. The thing to ask is how big our God is. That's always the question.

Or here's another one. Money. Oh, what a big temptation.

We know what a big temptation it is to trust money just by our Lord's words. Out of all the things he could have compared, out of all the things that might challenge serving God, isn't it amazing that there in Matthew 6, Jesus says you cannot serve God and money. And it can become so subtle.

The thing is, Christians need to work with money. Jesus worked with money. We know Judas held the bag.

Well, it wasn't evil to have a bag. It was evil that Judas stole from the bag. But they were all good with having a bag.

Why? Because from the bag, you could feed the poor. We need to deal with money. The Bible everywhere talks about money.

Money's not a bad thing in and of itself. The love of money certainly is. But the thing is, because we're always using it, there's that temptation and it's subtle.

You just get to the place where you start making decisions not based on prayer, not based on the promises of God, not based on the character of God, the power of God, the goodness of God. But you do everything. Well, before we can do this, brother, how much do we have in the bank account? We don't want to get there.

The thing to do is not to figure out what's in the bank account. I can't tell you the number of times I have found God very willing to stand with us in some endeavor when we did not have the funds in the bank account. I remember just recently we had our annual business meeting and we're talking about what we should increase certain missionaries to.

And there was somebody who was new to the church, hadn't joined the church yet. They were just kind of auditing our business meeting. They raised their hand and they said, well, what's the church's budget? And I just smiled and I said, you know, sister, we don't operate that way.

In other words, it's not based on statistics. It's based on we came into this financial meeting with a week of prayer and fasting where we really have sought the Lord. Brethren, I'll tell you, I can't tell you how many times in our business meetings, financial meetings that we had in San Antonio where I would say to the brethren, I feel like by faith, you know, I feel like we ought to support this certain missionary at this amount.

And then somebody raises their hand and says, brother, that's the same number I had. And then a sister raised her hand. Brother, that's the same number that I had.

And we don't want to trust money. We don't want to serve money. We don't want to look at how many giving members are in the church, how many breadwinners are in the church.

What are the numbers in the bank account? What does the bank account ledger say or the checkbook ledger? We don't want to live like that. What we want to do is we want to seek the Lord and ask the Lord what the Lord wants us to do. And then in faith and looking at the promises of God and the character of God, step out in faith and seek to do it.

I cannot tell you. I'll just tell you this. Every single time without exception, there's not a single exception.

Every single time in the life of the church in San Antonio over just about 20 years that we have stepped out many times when we did not have the financial resources, God came through for us every single time. If it was 99%, I'd tell you, but it's not that. We serve us a faithful God.

A third thing. Isaiah 2.22 says, stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he? Let me tell you something. You start trusting somebody even if they are an apostle.

Remember Peter? He was an apostle. He denied the Lord three times. He failed the church at Antioch.

Paul had to rebuke him. Some of you may feel that your former pastor has failed. I'll tell you this.

Men are weak. And I hope that the church is not putting their trust on me coming. I remember Asahel Nettleton.

He was one of the American figures at the forefront of the second great awakening in the United States. And you know what? He was known to be a man through whom God worked. But if he ever got into meetings somewhere and he felt like the people were trusting his being there more than God showing up, he would walk away.

He would leave the conference and walk away. Sometimes he would go into a neighboring town and just pray for the people in the church that he just left or in the village that he just left until they were broken, until they were calling on the Lord and desperate for the Lord. Then he'd go back.

Brethren, you'll remember what Paul said. What is Apollos? What is Paul? Neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything. Only God who gives the strength.

Don't put your trust in men. God may use certain men. That may be true.

But you don't want to put your trust in them because just as soon as you do, they will fall right on their faces in front of you. Men are just vessels that will or will not be used to the degree that God designs and desires. And that's true of Charles Spurgeon, of Martin Lloyd-Jones, two of my favorites.

But they only were what they were by the grace of God, as it was said of the Apostle Paul.

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