

“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 straight your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Well Christian, Indian summer appears to be behind us now and the pleasant autumn weather is fading fast and, as we enter into the next-to-last month of 2018, another year is almost behind us. This year, just as it has for the last several, the arrival of autumn ran a little behind schedule as the rain and warm, summer-like weather lingered until early October. Along with the warmer than normal weather, the annual spectacle of fall colors also arrived a little later than usual and when it finally did, it didn't seem to have lasted as long as it has in previous years. For those of us who reside in the Midwest, November has always been a time of transition from the last vestiges of the relatively pleasant days of Indian summer to the cold, blustery, snowy days of the winter ahead. Officially, winter doesn't begin until December 21st but, as we flip over to the next page of our calendars, we're moving into a period of colder weather and another round of earthly stresses brought on by the rapidly approaching hustle and bustle of the holiday season. So, as we bear witness to the last vestiges of autumn leaves as they float to the ground, how can we not be reminded that the seasons of the year are also being replicated in our own lives? But that Christian... is another discussion for another time.

Autumn is the time of the year when the trees shed the leaves that have adorned them throughout the spring and summer months. So it is that autumn can also be the perfect time for you to shed all of those earthly sorrows and burdens that you've been holding on to. We all know and (should) understand that we should give our burdens over to Jesus as they arise and then set them aside! But sometimes that's easier said than done. Christian, Jesus loves you dearly and when it comes to the trials and tribulations of your earthly life, He wants to be the mediator between you and God. How often have you heard someone turn the phrase, “I've got this?” Well, the truth is, none of us has “got this” at all! We are all, every single one of us, vain people who insist upon trying to carry our own burdens only to fall woefully short, ultimately ending up worse off than we were when we started. Wake up and smell the coffee Christian, your “I've got this” mindset needs to go if for no other reason than its diametrically opposed to God's plan! Jesus said, ***“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*** (Matthew 11:29-30) Yes Christian, it really is that simple! Yet despite all of Jesus' teachings you continue to cling to burdens that would be lifted from your shoulders if you would only give them to the Lord and let Him deal with them on your behalf. Well, as foolish as it sounds, you've probably been holding on to most, if not all, of our earthly burdens far too long. As a result, when things don't go your way, you become angry with God. But Christian, the fault doesn't lie with God. That's all on you because your “I got this” attitude has caused you to become so consumed by life's stresses and burdens that you just can't see an end to them. Fortunately, God does! He understands your uncertainty and your doubt and wants you to know that He is now and always will be there when you need Him. ***“Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.”*** (Psalm 55:22)

For most of us it's virtually impossible to acknowledge our personal shortcomings to ourselves let alone confessing them to God. So, if you're seeking that perfect time to shed the afflictions

and miseries that's been keeping you from becoming the kind of Christian that God expects you to be, there is no better time than right now! Jesus said, *"But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."* (Matthew 7:14) He also said, *"Let those who have ears hear..."* so please Christian, hear this. When you made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior you were NEVER promised that your walk would be an easy one. As a matter of fact that was never in God's plan and even the most devout Christian will face the inevitable highs and lows that will befall us all on our journey. The reality is that when you're not walking as close to Jesus as you should be, when you subscribe to the *"I've got this"* mindset, Satan moves in and sets you up for even more hurt and anguish in your failure.

Without Christ in your life, you will most certainly experience times when your earthly problems and/or afflictions can become extremely intense and more than just a little overwhelming. When that time comes, and it will, that's when you'll finally come to the realization that you haven't *"got this"* at all and... you never did! *"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."* (2 Cor. 4:17-18) Christian, you are not God, you are an imperfect, weak being who is subject to all of the limitations and shortcomings that comes with being human. So, as you prepare to close out yet another year and another chapter in your life, wouldn't this be the perfect time to take an inventory of where you are in your walk with Jesus as compared to where you expected to be when the year began? Goals are not a bad thing but remember, as hard as you try to achieve Christ-like perfection, the truth is that's probably not going to happen. That said, it doesn't mean that you should ever stop trying because Jesus is right there with you and He's just waiting for you to call on Him for help. Christian, we are all imperfect beings who are predisposed to the *"I got this"* mindset and quite often hold on to and try to control things that we can't possibly control. So, right now, today is the perfect time to shed those doubts and worries, step aside and get out of the way so Jesus can deal with them for you.

Church, the next time you find yourself in the midst of one of life's trials, call on Jesus. Pray to God in Jesus' name because there is no problem too big or too small. He expects us to give them **all** over to Him so just do it and then get out of His way so He can get to work for you.

Your servants and brothers in Christ Jesus,

Carl, Rod and Brian