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Putting your best foot forward

Have you ever thought, or wondered about the old saying “Put your best foot forward”? Since we have only two feet, it must be your right or left foot! But which one is “best”? The strongest, or most dominant?

While the origin of the phrase is from long ago (perhaps the 15th century), its exact origin and context is open to discussion. Dictionaries suggests today it can mean:

- to work hard and energetically to make sure that something that you are doing is a success,
- to try your hardest; try to make a good first impression,
- to behave very well to gain someone’s approval,
- to try as hard as possible to do something difficult,
- or to act in a cheerful, determined way.



With this being said, is there any meaning or application for Christians in every day life? Each day we are faced with choices,

- sometimes easy while at other times most difficult,
- sometimes in the routines while at other times in new situations,
- sometimes involving important spiritual and moral matters,
- while at other times involving matters of freedom.

Proverbs chapter 3 verses 5 and 6 are familiar to many of us.

“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 is the starting point for putting your best foot forward. Yes, it is followed up with other steps such as doing your best, going at it diligently and with perseverance, but this is the starting point:

- Trust God completely. It has been said that to truly trust God is to trust Him fully. Yes, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart.” Isaiah chapter 26 tells us, “The steadfast of mind You [God] will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You” (3). The hymn sings,

“stayed upon Jehovah hearts are fully blest”, and, “they who trust Him wholly find Him wholly true.” Recall the warning Jesus gave about not fully trusting God to the church at Laodicea, and also gives to us, “because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will vomit you out of My mouth” (The Revelation 3:16). While there are many questions and discussions about the full meaning here, what is clear is that Jesus is not at all pleased, does not find a lukewarm, half-hearted trust in Him acceptable.

- Rely on His understanding revealed through the Scriptures and the wisdom God generously provides. We are told, “do not lean on your own understanding.” God’s truth and wisdom are given through the Scriptures. Putting your best step forward is not possible without reading, relying on, living by the truth in the Bible. Recall what God tells us through Isaiah, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts” (55:9). If we begin to think we know so much we need to recall what the apostle Paul tells us, “the foolishness of God is wiser than mankind, and the weakness of God is stronger than mankind (1 Corinthians 1:25).
- Acknowledge God—He is your God, your Sovereign, Loving God. “In all your ways acknowledge Him.” This means more than recognizing that God exists, and even more than agreeing He is Sovereign God. It means to trust and honor Him as such in every moment, every situation, every trial.
- Then God will straighten out the twists and turns so you can move forward, please Him, and experience His blessings. “He will make your paths straight.” We know the King James rendering, “He shall direct thy paths.” The verb has been literally translated as, “to go straight or direct in the way”, or in this verse and form as “to make a way straight.” It does not mean that life will be easy, nor that we will not encounter roadblocks and detours. It means that God will keep us on the straight and narrow way that pleases Him.

There is much more to explore on putting our best foot forward, but let’s get going, let’s keep going with this!

Pastor Lyle