

Lean not on your own understanding

I keep falling over.

What?

Just lately, every time I lean against something I fall over.

I lean against the wall, I fall over.

I lean against the car, I fall over.

I lean against the fence I fall over.

Here, I'll show you. I will lean against this podium. (*Leans and falls over*)

See. I don't get it. What's going on?

Yes, that is strange.

Not only that, but when I try to walk in a straight line, I end up walking crooked. Let me show you. Just watch this. I'm going to try and walk straight toward that chair there. (*Walks and veers off crooked*) See, I ended up veering toward Pastor Edgar. How crooked is that?

Wow, that is weird.

I know right. Can you tell me what's going on?

Mmmm. What else is going on in your life at the moment? What else have you been up to?

Umm...well...I suppose one thing is ... I have been having trouble with a kid who's in one of my classes at school.

Ok. Tell me more.

Last week, we were all leaving the classroom and he deliberately stuck his foot out and tripped me. My books went flying and I fell on my shoulder. It really hurt.

Ouch, what happened then?

Some of the other kids laughed at me. I felt humiliated.

Yeah, I can understand that.

I was really angry. I got up and shouted in his face – 'You tripped me'.

What did he say to that?

He just laughed and said I tripped myself, and that I was a clumsy idiot. But that's not what happened. He deliberately tripped me.

Did you tell the teacher?

No. But I had a think about what happened, and I worked out what I would do to fix the situation.

Ok.

During the lunch break ...

Yes?

I made up a bucket of mud ...

Yes?

And poured it into his school bag.

Oooh, ok.

The next day the kid who tripped me came up right into my face and shouted at me: 'You put mud in my school bag'. Guess what I said?

What?

'No, I didn't put mud into your school bag, just as you didn't trip me up. Think about that', I told him.

Ok, I think I know why you have been falling over when you lean, and why you have been walking crooked.

Yeah?

You've been leaning on your own understanding.

Really? Is that bad?

Well you keep falling over and walking crooked don't you?

Oh yeah.

You've been leaning on your own understanding about how to deal with wrong, and that means you haven't trusted God and followed his ways. It's no wonder you have been falling over and walking crooked.

Proverbs 3:5 says: '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.'

Wow, I've been leaning on my own understanding, and that's been causing me to fall over and walk crooked.

Yes, God says: 'Do not return evil for evil', 'Love your enemies', 'Do good to those who harm you'. Now that doesn't mean that you just put up with wrong and don't do anything about it, but whatever you do, you will not be taking revenge. And you will be trusting that God will look after you and protect you, not least protect your reputation.

I'm going to trust God, and lean on his wisdom. Help me, Holy Spirit. I'm going to have to own up to what I did, and pay for the damage.

(puts his hand out and leans against the podium – doesn't fall over).

Hey, you didn't fall over!

No. And, ... *(starts walking to see if he's walking straight)* ... I'm walking straight again. Thank you Jesus!