

If Thou but Trust in God to Guide Thee

If thou but trust in God to guide thee, with hopeful heart through all thy ways,
God will give strength, whate'er betide thee, to bear thee through the evil days.
Who trusts in God's unchanging love builds on the rock that nought can move.

Only be still, and wait God's leisure in cheerful hope, with heart content
to take whate'er thy Keeper's pleasure and all-discerning love hath sent.
No doubt our inmost wants are clear to One who holds us always dear.

Sing, pray, and swerve not from God's ways, but do thine own part faithfully.
Trust the rich promises of grace; so shall they be fulfilled in thee.
God never yet forsook at need the soul secured by trust indeed.

TEXT: Georg Neumark, 1641; trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1855, 1863, alt.

MUSIC: Georg Neumark, 1641, WER NUR DEN LIEBEN GOTT

This hymn is a testimony of experience. The original seven-stanza German text (based on Psalm 55:22) and its tune were created by the author/composer at the age of 20 in thanksgiving for finding employment many weeks after being left almost penniless following a robbery. Neumark called it a "hymn of consolation" acknowledging God's providential care.

*Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you;
he will never permit the righteous to be moved.*

Psalm 55:22

The Story That Prompted the Hymn

Georg Neumark (1621-1681) was only 20 years old when he wrote this text in the winter of 1641. He had set out in September of that year from his home in Mühlhausen, Thuringia, with the intention of enrolling in the University of Königsberg. On his way there he and his traveling companions were plundered by highwaymen, who left him with nothing but his prayer book and a little money sewn into the clothes he was wearing. After several months of looking for employment in various towns, at the beginning of December he arrived in Kiel, where he found a friend in Nicolaus Becker, the chief pastor and a native of Thuringia. For weeks there seemed to be no possibilities, but near the end of the month a tutor in the household of a prominent judge had to leave town in disgrace, and Becker's recommendation helped to secure the appointment for Neumark. This hymn was written in thanksgiving for this long-sought blessing.

SOURCES

Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal, Westminster John Knox Press, 2013

Carl P. Daw Jr., *Glory to God: A Companion*, Westminster John Knox Press, 2016