

The Old Paths

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“Things In Which We Must Continue”

Jarrod Jacobs

One of the most difficult things a Christian must do is continue living the life of a Christian. The day-to-day activities and hardships can wear on us and discourage us if we allow it. I believe that this is one reason why many turn away from God to live their life in sin after becoming a Christian. Put simply, they cannot bear up under the strain of living for Christ on a daily basis.

The downfall of the Israelites was that they kept wanting to go back to Egypt (Hosea 13). They selectively remembered what little good they enjoyed in Egypt, and wished for those things so that they would not have to live as God's people any more. Many Christians today do this same thing. They selectively remember some good point(s) about their lives in sin, and wish to return to that rather than being patient, and waiting for that eternity in Heaven with the Lord. James said, “Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (Jas. 1:25). Let us take a few moments and consider some things in which Christians must continue so that they might be productive citizens in the Lord's kingdom and see Heaven one day.

Continue In God's Word.

Jesus told the Jews: “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed” (Jn. 8:31). When Paul wrote to Timothy, he told him, “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (I Tim. 4:16). Yes, God calls upon His people to continue in His word. This was the instruction James gave the Christians in James 1:25. To “continue” is to: “abide, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry” (Strong's). Further passages show us the importance of continuing. Consider Paul's words to the Galatians (Acts 14:22) and the Colossians (Col. 1:21-23). In both places, he encourages them to continue in “the faith,” i.e., “the gospel”! Let us remember the words of Paul to Timothy: “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them” (II Tim. 3:14).

Continue In Prayer

Prayer is a great and wonderful blessing afforded the Christian. When we pray, we speak to God, thanking Him for His blessings, asking Him for help, and simply communicating with the Creator of this universe! When Jesus was upon this earth, He instructed people “always to pray and not to faint (lose heart)” (Lk. 18:1). When Paul wrote his epistles, he taught the same thing Christ did and encour-

aged the brethren to continue “steadfastly in prayer” to God (Rom. 12:12, NKJV). To the Colossians, Paul wrote, “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2). In the letters to the Thessalonians, Paul requested prayers. At one point, he told the Thessalonians to, “Pray without ceasing” (I Thess. 5:17). In fact, one of the marks of a “widow indeed” was that she “trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day” (I Tim. 5:5). Let us never take for granted the blessing of prayer and may we continue in prayer on a daily basis.

Continue In Brotherly Love

“Let brotherly love continue” are the words of Hebrews 13:1. Certainly, we need more love toward our brethren. In fact, brotherly love ought to be a way of life for the Christian. Paul said, “Let love be without dissimulation (hypocrisy, JJ). Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Rom. 12:9-10). Christians ought to have true love for their brethren, and not concealed hate! In fact, one of the things we are to add to our faith is brotherly love or brotherly kindness (II Pet. 1:7). Are we continuing in this, or are we of such a nature that we have more love for worldly people than for our brethren??

Conclusion

Brethren, consistency is invaluable! Let us continue in God's word, in prayer, and in brotherly love. In continuing, let us never look back, nor apologize for living as God demands. We know His way is best; therefore, let us continue in it all of our lives!

1 Timothy 1:3, Same Ol' Same Ol'

Larry Ray Hafley, Baytown, TX

“**A**s I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine” (1 Tim. 1:3).

In Christ, are you tired of the “same ol’ same ol’”? Some are. Therefore, they pervert and pollute the word, work, and worship of the Lord. They, of course, deny it, but no matter how loudly they protest, saying, “Lord, Lord, have we not done many wonderful works in thy name,” the Lord will reject them and their projects in the last day, for every plant which he has “not planted shall be rooted up” (Matt. 7:21-23; 15:13). As Paul said, “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1:8).

Whenever and wherever you find corruption of the Lord’s church, you will find, without exception, a change in attitude toward the word of God. When men lose their faith in the word of God, they cease to preach it and exalt it is the only revealed plan of God. They begin to allow exceptions and substitutes—sprinkling for baptism comes to mind. The same spirit which brought sprinkling for baptism also moved men to incorporate instrumental music, entertainment and social meals, gymnasiums and “fellowship halls,” crafts and church camps, into the work of the church. This is the es-

sence, the very heart of denominational religion in all its forms.

How many elders, preachers, and brethren are charging, commanding “certain men not to teach a different doctrine” today? Not many, or not nearly enough, I fear.

Let us be content with the doctrine of the Lord. “Therefore you shall be careful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left” (Deut. 5:32). In our worship, whether it be singing or the Lord’s supper, let us keep only the ordinances and traditions, or teachings, of the apostles (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:1, 2, 23). In other words, let us be satisfied with the “same ol’ same ol’” when it comes to serving the Lord.

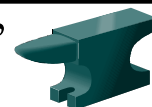
Yes, I know that some call for “a change,” for “something new and different.” They charge us with being too formalized and fossilized in our worship of the Lord. Well, has the cross changed? Has there been an updated version of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Savior? Has the gospel story of the body and blood of the Son of God been modernized? Has salvation by grace through faith changed? Has the promise of eternal bliss and

blessedness in heaven been altered? Is there still a lake burning with fire and brimstone for the wicked, or has it been replaced by a detention hall or reform school?

No, neither God nor his word have changed. It is upon that fact, the fact that Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday and today, and for ever,” that the Hebrew writer commands, “Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were thus occupied were not benefited” (Heb. 13:8, 9). Therefore, until someone finds a change in the plan and pattern of God for the salvation of mankind in the word of God, we dare not make any amendments or alterations of our own. “As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:9).

“Anvil Sparks”

R.L. Whiteside



- ◆ Where you are on the road is not as important as which way you are headed.
- ◆ Straight living cannot come out of crooked thinking.

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