

# The Old Paths

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## “If Ye Continue ...”

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**O**ur society often rewards those who endure to the end. Consider those who compete in various athletic events. Those who receive gold medals, trophies, rings, belts, etc., are those who do not merely practice one time, but continue to practice and train in their sport until they compete and win the competition.

In contrast, we also live in a society with many quitters. If something does not go right, many will give up. Too many feel like everything must be “just so” for them to continue in an activity. This has spilled over into the church until some are afraid for the preacher to preach on certain sins. They are afraid some people might hear something that condemns their sin, and quit! This is a sad commentary on the body of Christ, yet it happens, and is happening more and more as the years pass. The Bible places great emphasis on continuing. In fact, we see times in the Bible where God was specific in saying that we must continue in certain things. Let us notice some areas in which we are to continue:

1. We are to continue in Christ’s Word. “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed” (Jn. 8:31).

2. We are to continue in the faith. “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he

*reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven”* (Col. 1:21-23).

3. Looking to First Samuel, we see what is involved in continuing. “If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God” (I Sam. 12:14).

4. We are to continue in Christ’s love. “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (Jn. 15:9-10).

5. God expects us to continue in His goodness. “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.” (Rom. 11:22).

6. We are also to continue in prayer. “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2).

7. I Timothy 4:16 teaches that we must continue in the doctrine of Christ. “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.”

8. The writer of Hebrews said, “Let brotherly love continue” (Heb.

13:1).

Now that we see God’s emphasis on continuing, let us study about those who continued, and follow their example.

### Jesus: Our Example Of Continuing In Prayer (Col. 4:2).

I am impressed with the prayer life of Jesus. Several of His prayers have been recorded in the Bible. Let us take note of some times He prayed to His Father:

1. Before choosing His apostles (Lk. 6:12-16).
2. Before His crucifixion (Matt. 26:39, 42, 44).
3. He went without sleep to pray (Mk. 1:35).
4. He left the praise of men to pray (Lk. 5:16).
5. He prayed for others (Lk. 22:31-32).

If we are not continuing to pray to God, we are cutting off vital communication! We should follow Christ’s example of prayer, and continue to pray to God (I Pet. 2:21-22; I Thess. 5:17; Lk. 18:1). Without prayer, we cannot please God (Col. 4:2).

### When Was The Last Time We Prayed:

1. Because we were happy?
2. To thank God for His many blessings (Eph. 5:20; I Thess. 5:18)?
3. For help in time of trouble (Jas. 5:13)?
4. For others (II Thess. 3:1a)?
5. For our enemies? (Matt. 5:44)?

“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” (Jer. 6:16)

This is what it means to continue in prayer! How truly sad it is when people think little of prayer.

### Paul: Our Example Of Continuing In The Faith (Acts 14:21-22).

Once won to the Lord, Paul never looked back to His old life (Acts 9:18-20). He encouraged others to follow him as he followed Christ (I Cor. 11:1).

In thinking about his faithful life, let us remember that his life was not a "carefree" life. (II Cor. 11:23-33). Paul had the attitude of Job (Job 13:15). On one occasion, we read that he was put in jail for no other reason than the authorities wished to please the people (Acts 24:27). How many of us would have given up on God after being treated like this?

When times are bad, where are we? Do we look to the cross? When times are good, where are we? Are we living a faithful life at all times (Matt. 6:33; I Cor. 15:58)?

Let us be as the blessed man who continues in God's word. (Jas. 1:22-25).

### The Early Christians: Our Example Of Continuing In Brotherly Love (Heb. 13:1).

In good and bad times, these Christians showed brotherly love for one another. In reading Acts 2:41-47, we read the words "together," "all things common," "one accord," and "singleness of heart." These words show the brotherly love that abounded between these early Christians.

In Acts 4:24-30, we read where the first century Christians prayed to God for strength and help during the persecution they faced. Acts 4:32 said these people were "one," and had "all things common."

As a result of their brotherly

love, none lacked anything. They had those things needed for the sustaining of their lives (Acts 4:34-37).

Their love was not only for those of the local congregation, but they showed their love for all Christians. This is shown in the account of their sending money to those Christians who were enduring famine in Antioch (Acts 11:27-30).

What love! What concern for their brethren! Are we showing true love for our brethren? No, we should never condone error under the guise of "love," but we should truly and honestly love our brethren in Christ. Without this, we are nothing (I Cor. 13:1-8)! Nothing counts without true and proper love for God and our brethren (I Pet. 2:17).

### Are We Continuing As We Should?

It is one thing to say we are continuing in God's word. Are we truly doing it? What are the requirements for continuing? I Samuel 12:14 states, "If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God." Notice the things that God says are necessary for continuing. He states them in the form of an "if-then" statement. In other words, in order for God to look upon us as continu-

ing, we must meet the following requirements:

1. We must fear the Lord (Prov. 3:7).
2. We must serve Him (Jn. 12:26).
3. We must obey His voice (Heb. 5:7-8).
4. We must not rebel against God's commands. (One willful sin is considered rebellion, I Sam. 15:22-23.)

Continuing is comprehensive in nature. Are we doing this? Will we allow Satan to discourage us, or will we be as Paul and "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14)? We all must make the decision to follow the example of Jesus and others and continue in our faithfulness to God.

Let us not allow the world's attitude toward quitting to enter our minds, nor allow it to enter the church. The prize comes to those who continue to the end (Rev. 2:10). Please read the following passages and ask whether or not God looks kindly on those who quit serving Him:

1. I Corinthians 15:58
2. II Timothy 4:6-8
3. I Corinthians 9:25-27

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