

The Encouragement Newsletter

Continue...

II Timothy 3:14

But as for you, CONTINUE in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you have learned it

My Observation –

I've been pondering for several months why or how people go from holding prominent roles in the church as preachers, teachers, singers, musicians and saints with potential to be world shakers for the gospel of Christ to turning their hearts from God to some shocking things. The affection of many are horizontal rather than vertical, without any thought of eternal ramifications. My observation is not a new observation. It is one that has been seen for centuries. It was written in the word by the apostles. I believe the reason is locked in this one word – **CONTINUE...**

DEFINITIONS –

Continue – To go on without interruption; to resume; to last; to remain in a state of place; to go on with; to extend; to remain indefinitely in existence or in the same state. **Synonyms** – abide, endure, hold up, hold on; keep up; last; persist; run on; linger; remain; stay; stick around; tarry. **Antonyms** – Cease; desist; discontinue; quit; stop

Strong's concordance – to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy) abide, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry for

Paul's Exhortation to Timothy

In II Timothy 3, Paul lists mindsets and behavior patterns Timothy could expect to see in people during the day he lived. The purpose of Paul's warning was to put him on alert. He was also saying to Timothy, "Don't act like this".

If you can, grab your Bible and let's dissect II Timothy 3:1–17. Starting with verse 1, Last Days – Some have defined the last days as the period of time from the ascension of Jesus until his return to earth. I would like to just keep it simple by saying during your life time, there will be **perilous (difficult, dangerous, painful, hard to deal with)** times. In reality, because of sin, as long as there is life on earth, times will be perilous in some way shape or form.

II Timothy 3:2 - 4

I want to focus on a few points Paul listed in these verse.

- **People will be lovers of themselves and Without Love** – When people love themselves in an unhealthy way, the love for others will be almost non-existent. Today, many are so narcissistic and totally self-consumed. The next person does not matter. Many will do whatever it takes to climb the corporate ladder and church ladder. Positions and titles have come to mean less about truly serving a people. In too many cases it has become more about an individual's prestige, reputation and status. For those that truly serve others, it can seem as if the love and care for others does not have any personal rewards, but do not turn your love inward. Godly love causes one to give to others, even when there is nothing in return. Continue loving the Father first and then continue loving and serving others as Christ instructed. He will reward us and God will help us all to love according to I Corinthians 13 without compromise. See Ephesians 5:2 and St. John 13:34-35
- **Lovers of money** – Ecclesiastes 10:19 tells us that "Money answers all things". It is a fact that we need money to survive. It is the source that is used to supply our needs and wants. However, when we read Proverbs 23:4 and I Timothy 6:7-10 we find there is a warning about this necessary source. Today, we are bombarded with marketing strategies to get our money. When we turn on the television, we are flooded with commercials that provide a new, improved better than the competitor product along with the money back guarantee. It is definitely a fact that everybody want your money. Recently, in the state of Maryland, a new casino opened. People waited in line for hours to get in to have their chance at winning money. It was reported that some even stayed on the casino's premises all night long so that they could be first in line to get into the casino the next morning. Sadly, the love for money has crept into the church. I agree that the Lord wants His people to be prosperous, blessed with things and we should give. We have Abraham as our Biblical example of one blessed of the Lord and a man who tithed. Nevertheless, over the past 10 years or so, a doctrine totally dedicated to causing people to becoming lovers of money rather than lovers of God has entered into many Christian circles. The Christian television networks are offering

oils, cloths, lapel pins, special Bibles, calendars, pins and partnerships for money. Very often the television ministry dedicates more time to promoting products than preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Just when you are into the apex of the message, there is an interruption to buy something or promote a conference. It is also not uncommon for callers or partners to contact a ministry for a prophecy for a dollar value. God will judge all, but we are required to discern and open our eyes to see deception. Sadly, an entire generation that have been taught that having things symbolize prosperity and blessing from God. Spiritualism has been replaced with materialism. Things are not the sum total of God's prosperity and blessing. I firmly believe that if we keep money in its place, we will be able receive and give money as the Father wills.

- **Unforgiving** – Extending forgiveness is something that everyone will have the opportunity to do in their lifetime. To some, it is easy to extend forgiveness; but, then there are other situations we experience where forgiving can be challenging. There are so many books, videos, articles and messages about the importance of forgiving by both saved and unsaved authors. Holding unforgiveness in the heart is not worth the affects. It is a known fact that when we do not forgive, it affects our life and well being— that includes our health.

Forgiveness is the beginning of FREEDOM!

A few years ago, I went through something called a “deliverance session”. Some may prefer to call it a counseling session or inner healing, but to help you understand, let me explain it this way. We have issues in our life. Although saved and living a good Christian life (*the best we know how*), we find ourselves with struggles and issues of life. Finding myself in such a predicament, I decided to submit myself to someone who could zero in on some things in my life and help bring freedom (a.k.a deliverance). You may not follow these steps, but that is not important, the most important thing is doing what it takes to get free. To go on and stay on topic...this session spent a lot of time on me extending forgiveness to many people that hurt me in some way. After recalling some events, the names of individuals associated with those events and verbalizing that I forgive them for what they did to me, I asked the Lord to bless them. Yes, bless them because that is our instruction from the word of God in Romans 12:14. After doing this, I was so lifted and free in my soul. What I truly realized after this is forgiving is not an option. I want to be quick to forgive when I am hurt by someone because forgiveness will bring freedom to my spirit, soul and physical body. Let me be clear. Extending forgiveness does not mean that you excuse the misbehavior of an individual that caused you pain. It means that your personal healing process begins with forgiveness. (Ephesians 4:32) Try it...Remember this is not a choice and you have the strength of the Father to do all things.

- **Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.** This is simply being lovers of things that please self, doing what “feels” good and pleasing to the flesh, body or senses rather than what pleases God. We can all get caught up in the pleasures this world can give. No one is exempt. The problem is not with going to a healthy wholesome movies and plays; looking at sports and socializing with friends. The problem comes in when we love to do these things more than loving the presence of God and building a relationship with Him. It is a problem when we would rather eat than be humbled in fasting; read books that are full of sensual content that causes the mind to be full of foul imaginations, rather than the word of God or books that build spiritual stamina; and look forward to sports time, rather than time with God. This type of behavior lends itself to trying to have two lovers or idolatry. Scripture says in Matthew 6:24, “You can't serve both. You will either hate one and love the other”. In the NKJV, Luke 8:14 lets us know that the pleasures of this world will choke out the word of God, which means, you and I can hear the word of God, but it

will not take root that

results in a changed life because it is being choked out or becoming overwhelmed by pleasures of the world, which will not allow the seed of the word to be planted. There are pleasures that can be found at the right hand of God (Psalms 16:11). Why not trade the pleasures of this world for the right hand of the Father, where there is joy and where He will show you the path of life.

II Timothy 3:5— Again, what Paul describes is what we see in/outside of the church. However, Paul gives some vital instruction to Timothy that we should be quick to apply to our lives. In verse 6 Paul explicitly says, “...And from such people turn away! The NIV version says, “Have nothing to do with them” and the Message Bible says, “Stay Clear of these people”. We most definitely should show love and respect to all, but having deep relationships with people with opposing scriptural character is another story. As parents, my husband and I would watch the behavior of other children and warn our sons saying— “Don't hang with him or her” or “That person is trouble. Stay away from them”. This would include some of their own friends. Paul knew, as we all know, that the company you keep will affect your behavior, attitude and outlook on life, which is why he penned I Corinthians 15:33—“Be not deceived: evil company corrupts good manners”. Another version (NIV) of this scripture says, “Do not be misled, evil company corrupts good character”. Paul is saying “Stay Clear” because they exhibit the behavior (go back to verses 2-7) knowingly and unknowingly that oppose the truth of God's word. This is our warning as well. We must watch and wisely choose the company we keep. A good way to test the company you keep is to take a self inventory. After being around them are you challenged to move closer to the Lord and build your faith, or do you find yourself moving away from your First Love, Jesus Christ.

II Timothy 3:6-9— The people with these characteristics are those that creep into homes and gain control over weak willed women who are weighed down with sin. Entry is easy because the women do not “Shamar” over their heart soul and mind. Shamar is a Hebrew word that means-guard, watch over, to protect and to be aware. They are not watching and have not have built their spiritual walls. Thus, making them vulnerable to those that “Worm their way into homes”. In this passage, Paul was referring to “women” as the female gender, but the church is the bride of Christ and we associate a bride with the female gender; therefore, I would venture to say that the women in this passage could also represent the churches in various locals. In Jude we find this same idea as Jude sought to bring warning to the church. In verse 4, he says, “For certain men have crept in unnoticed...” To combat this drawing away from the faith that was delivered to them, Jude tells the church to—1) contend earnestly (verse 3); 2) to build yourselves up by praying in the Holy Spirit; and 3) keep yourself in the love of God (verses 20—21) because He is able to keep you from falling (verse 24). Let us heed this warning. May we open our eyes to do likewise.

II Timothy 3:10—13— Paul told Timothy you have followed my conduct and way of life. His conduct was not selfish. His teaching was not motivated by money. Nor, was his teaching was not to deceive. (See I Thessalonians 2:4-6). He had a longing to see the church come into the fullness of the power of the resurrected Christ. Paul demonstrated endurance, faith, and patience. Timothy witnessed Paul's unwavering passion.

Whether we realize it or not, someone is always watching our conduct and how we conduct the affairs of life. The life of the believer is supposed to noticeably contrast with the unbeliever. We are not supposed to fit in and we will experience the rejection and isolation. Actually, we should expect it. Let me challenge you to determine not to crave the acceptance of the world, compromise the scriptural standard and what you have been convinced of spiritually. Paul pointed out there would be hard times and

persecution would be inevitable. We may not have natural flogging and beatings, as Paul experienced, in our country for being a Christian. However, we face a spiritual battle every day that has the purpose of beating us down daily in our minds.

Someone is always watching you.





CONTINUE...

As chosen vessels we must abide in Him. (See St. John 15:16)

We must spend time with the Lord to remain a soldier. (See II Timothy 2:3)

Evil men and imposters (those that deceive; one who engages in deception under an assumed name or identity) will go from bad to worse. As time goes on, they imagine more and more schemes to deceive. The enemy's job is to get the message of deception out really quick. There are many methods used by the enemy to disseminate lies. However, The internet is a major source employed to communicate deceptive information globally. This is why we need to know the truth of God's word. Do not be ignorant of the enemy's schemes. Be wise.

II Timothy 3: 14—15— In verses 14—15, Paul was sharing with Timothy, "Yes, these things will be going on all around you, but you have seen my life and I want you to **CONTINUE**". Continue in what? Continue in what you have been **convinced** of (convinced – persuaded of; to prove as true or false/right or wrong). Continue in the teachings. Continue in your faithfulness and commitment to God. Do not do the things you have seen that is unlike what has been demonstrated to you.

We are admonished in James 1:22-25 to not only hear the word, but do the word, which is the perfect law that brings freedom. The one that **continues** to look into the law, not forgetting, but doing it and applying it will be blessed in whatever he/she does. When we stop, quite and discontinue, we begin the process of forfeiting the promises of the word of God spoken over our life. We cannot get caught up in verses 2-5, but we must continue in the things we have learned - the things that have been proven as truth. Troubles and trials will always be a part of life, but don't walk away from Christ because of trouble. Look at the living examples you have seen. Everyone is not turning away from the Lord. Look around you, they may not be your age. They may be much older than you, but they demonstrate a life that has CONTINUED in what they have learned, even in the challenges of life. Build yourself up in your most holy faith – Jude 1:20.

Have you been convinced? Have you been persuaded? Then continue because the Lord has no pleasure in those that look back.

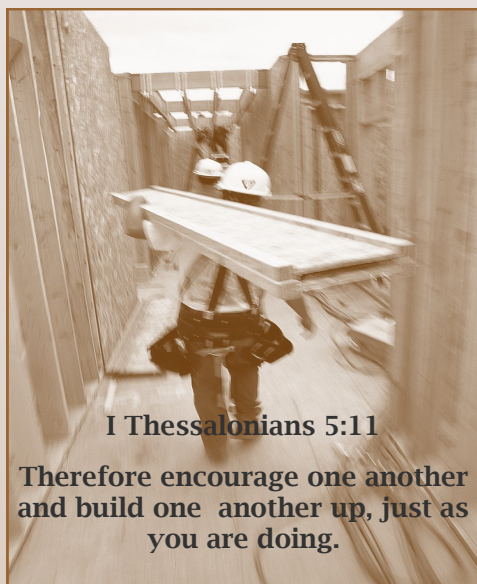
II Timothy 3:16 – 17 – The word of God has to be a living document that we read for life instruction in righteousness. Within it contains the word of life and guidance. It is quick and powerful according to Hebrews 4:12. To sum things up, these final words from Paul tell us, the Holy Scriptures (divinely inspired writings) will make you wise through faith and it is profitable (beneficial/useful) for –

- 1) **Doctrine** – The word teaches us God's principles.
- 2) **Reproof** – Because we are children of God and we are learning to live for him. There are many things we must undo in our mindset and behavior patterns. In learning a new way of life we will need to be rebuked, just like we would do with our natural children.
- 3) **Correction** – It will bring us into alignment and correct our thinking.
- 4) **Instruction in Righteousness** – Shows the path to righteousness or right way of living.

When scripture is applied, you and I will be 1) Complete and 2) Thoroughly equipped for every good work. The word is an essential part of our life as believers and we must study it to show ourselves approved unto God and not man. When we do this we will not operate in the character we read in verses 2-5.

Concluding Word of Encouragement from the Father —

*My sons and daughters, continue to hunger and thirst after Me. Continue to run the race that I have set before you. Forget the things that are behind and press more into Me. Continue to walk before Me and be perfect (mature and grow). Become more like Me, which is a process. Continue to be an example of Me and My way of life. Continue to seek My face and live. See My will. Seek and you will find I am willing to strengthen you and direct your path.
Continue in Me. Continue in Me.
Continue in Me.*



I Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Jesus Christ is the Author & Finisher of My Faith
Veronica B. McCray, Co-Author
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If this newsletter has been an Encouragement to you, please let me know by e-mailing me at -
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