

CONTINUE IN THESE THINGS – 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-17

INTRODUCTION

1. We are still in the first few weeks of a new year and perhaps some of you are still reflecting on last year and hoping for even better things this year.
2. While each year marks the passing of time in our lives, each year also offers the opportunity to reflect and recharge and push ourselves to grow to new heights and new goals.
 - a. Each year offers us a new beginning, a time to implement new habits and goals.
 - b. But there are other things, things we have learned through experience, that we want to continue in because they help us be the best we can be.
3. While this is true in many areas, it is especially true in our spiritual life (**2 Tim. 3:13-17**).
4. This morning we want to consider both the power of new beginnings but also the need to continue in the right things so that we can abound and grow in our walk with the Lord.

DISCUSSION

I. IN THE BEGINNING

- A. When the Bible begins, everything is perfect, good, and full of promise (**Gen. 1:31**).
- B. God and mankind, heaven and earth, everything is united and in harmony.
- C. And as we begin our study this morning, I want each of us to stop and think about a new beginning we experienced either this past year or some other time.
 - i. Maybe the beginning of a new friendship or relationship.
 - ii. Or the beginning of a marriage.
 - iii. Maybe you experienced the birth of a child or grandchild.
 - iv. A fresh start in a new town or a new job.
 - v. The purchase of a new house or a new car.
 - vi. Or most importantly, the beginning of our relationship with the Lord.
- D. How did you approach that situation or circumstance?
- E. Most of the time, when we start out in a new situation or relationship, we want to do our best.
- F. We put in a lot of effort to make things the best they can possibly be.
- G. How do those memories make you feel?
- H. Happy, joyful, excited, hopeful?
- I. Most of the time, new beginnings elicit positive and hopeful attitudes, emotions, and actions.
- J. But so often, those positive and hopeful attitudes, emotions, and actions begin to diminish and sometimes cease altogether.
- K. This is what happened in humanity's relationship with God in the opening chapters of the Bible story (**Gen. 3:1-7; 22-24**).
- L. Jesus also warned of a time when believers would tire of enduring suffering and persecution in fighting the good fight of faith (**Matt. 24:12**).
- M. Peter and Jude also wrote about brethren who would grow tired in their relationship with the Lord and deny Him (**2 Pet. 2:1-2; Jude 4**).
- N. None of us want to find ourselves in this place – not only as individual saints but also as a local congregation (**Rev. 2:4**).
- O. What can we do that could help us avoid allowing our relationship with the Lord to wax cold?

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II. CONTINUE IN THESE THINGS

- A.** One of the things we can do that can be very powerful and effective in growing and maintaining our relationship with the Lord is looking back to the beginning, back to when we first began to walk with the Lord.
- B.** We see Paul doing this when he pointed brethren back to their baptism (**Eph. 2:1-10; Col. 2:6-15; Rom. 6:1-4**).
 - i.** He reminded them where they were without the Lord – no hope.
 - ii.** He reminded them where they were with the Lord – forgiven, adopted, and filled with joy and hope.
 - iii.** Reflecting on that transformation was powerful enough to stir up that initial joy and also to renew the fervor they had to love and serve the Lord.
- C.** This is in essence what Paul was encouraging Timothy to do (**2 Tim. 3:14-17**).
 - i.** From a young age, Timothy had been taught about God and His word.
 - ii.** Not only that, but he had also seen the outcome of a faithful life in his mother and grandmother (**2 Tim. 1:5**).
 - iii.** He had also been traveling, studying, and observing the life of Paul (**2 Tim. 3:10-11; Acts 16:1-5**).
 - iv.** Paul encouraged him to remember what he had learned and continue in those things.
- D.** If we take this idea and reflect on the new converts in the early church in the book of Acts, what do you think we will find?
 - i.** Unity and devotion to one another (**Acts 2:46**).
 - ii.** Focus on the apostles' teaching and learning together (**Acts 2:42**).
 - iii.** Focus on fellowship with God and one another (**Acts 2:42**).
 - iv.** Praying together (**Acts 2:42**).
 - v.** Eating the Lord's Supper together (**Acts 2:42**).
 - vi.** Sharing with one another (**Acts 2:44**).
 - vii.** Enjoying one another's hospitality (**Acts 2:46**).
 - viii.** Sharing the good news with others (**Acts 9:20**).
 - ix.** Rejoicing together and enduring persecution together (**Acts 2:46; 8:1**).
- E.** What do you think would happen to our relationship with the Lord individually and collectively if we would continue in the things the early church did after conversion?
- F.** Lord willing, this year we will spend some time each month examining some of the attitude and actions of the new converts in Acts.
- G.** Lord willing, our study and reflection on their attitudes and actions will stir us up to new heights and new growth in our faith and love for Christ.

CONCLUSION

- 1.** As we get further into this new year, let's take advantage of the opportunity to recommit to our relationship with the Lord individually and as a congregation.
- 2.** Let's harness the power of the opportunity for new beginnings and also to remember to continue doing the things that are tried and true in walking with the Lord (**2 Tim. 3:13-17**).
- 3.** If we will trust in what the Lord has shown us in His word, we will have the tools to ensure that our relationship with God will not grow cold or stagnant but that it will only grow deeper and stronger.