

# “Continue in the Faith”

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“If indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister” (Col. 1:23).<sup>1</sup>

By the grace of God, we are beginning a new year. It will have its hopes and dreams that challenge us to fulfill. It will likely bring with it many realized goals as well as abandoned ambitions. Joys and sorrows, confidence and fears, rewards and punishments, and many other things define our 365-numbered calendar.

With the beginning of this new year, it is appropriate to promote an old exhortation—*continue in the faith!* Will we exit this year with faith, with the same faith, with a wavering faith, with a dying faith, or a vibrant growing faith?

Christ extends hope, security, and blessings to those who are “grounded and steadfast.” The faith calls us to “continue” in it. Only then can we develop a firm standing through Christ. Each day we live is a test to either “continue in” or be “moved away” from the hope of the gospel.

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The effect of continuing in the faith might be viewed as a firm foundation on which we build our lives to withstand the storms of trouble (Matt. 7:24-27). It might be described as an “anchor for the soul,” where its cables of hope ascend upward and are firmly fastened in heaven’s tableland (Heb. 6:19). Yet this *security* is not present for the one who does not *continue*. It cannot be seen in the one who is “...tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine...” (Eph. 4:14). This security is not seen in the one who “doubts” where his faith is seen, as *a wave driven in the wind* (Jas. 1:6). Neither the wave nor the wind defines the course of the one who continues in the hope of the gospel. He chooses to not be moved away.

“Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace...” (Heb. 13:9). What is it exactly that can establish the heart in grace?

“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

The one who is striving toward *security* is the one striving for *stability!* He premeditates honoring the Lord at all times and in all climates. He regularly honors and serves the Lord in the opportunities that arise. He chooses regular worship with the saints to draw near to God to promote “continuing in the faith” (see Heb. 10:24, 25). He labors to build the sure foundation of faith by prioritizing his week, redeeming his time in prayer, and learning what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5:16, 17). He is not a *hearer only* but a *doer* of the word and work (see, Jas. 1:22, 25).

He will take care to not fall into one of the greatest snares of the soul—*lethargy*. The lethargic person lacks energy and the lethargic mind lacks enthusiasm. A spiritual stupor is a faith that's been battered and shipwrecked by a tempest that washes away purpose. It results in a direction that is lost, a confidence that has been cast away, and compassion that drifts with complacency. We desperately need the warning of the inspired admonition in Heb 10:26-39 lest our “**endurance**” simply drifts to its “end” in perdition. Complacency is a real state and very dangerous ground for “...if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him” (Heb. 10:39). Such irresolute indifference settled into the hearts of these Hebrew Christians, and they needed to be emboldened by the promises of divine steadfastness and shaken by the terrors of divine retribution. They were admonished to give all the more earnest heed to the things they heard so as not to drift away (Heb. 2:1). They were told to not neglect their salvation (Heb. 2:3). They were charged with becoming dull of hearing (Heb. 5:11). Because of their sluggish posture, they were unfit to be teachers, would choke on meaty preaching, and needed someone to teach them the elementary principles of Christ again (Heb. 5:12-14).

Rather than becoming hardened soil that produces thorns and briars, a Christian must carefully cultivate his heart to take advantage of heaven's refreshing rain when it is dispensed and then bear the fruit of heaven's herbs (Heb. 6:7, 8). The Bible presents a challenge to each of us every day of our lives. Where God is not unjust to forget our work and labor of love, we should not be unjust to forget His by becoming slothful! Jesus didn't go through the cross lethargically but rather lovingly, lively, and fervently to complete the will of God.

“For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:10-12).

May God bless your faith with strength this year.

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