

STAYING WITH IT



by
Evangelist Norman R. Stevens

STAYING WITH IT

Please open your Bibles to II Timothy chapter three and verse fourteen. I would like to preach a message entitled "Staying with it."

I rejoice in the fact that many of you have learned some things. You have made some great decisions this week. But the beauty of that decision will not be what happened this week but the beauty of that decision will be what will happen in the days, weeks, and months ahead if you continue in the things which you have learned.

In Psalm 62:6, David said, "...I shall not be moved." In I Thessalonians 5:21, the Bible says, "...Hold fast that which is good."

You say, preacher! Are there some things that I can do that will help keep me doing what is right? With the time remaining, we are going to look at three things that will help keep you doing what is right. Number one, the restraining power of convictions will help keep you doing what is right; number two, the influence of godly Christians will help keep you doing what is right; number three, the clear guidance of Scripture will help keep you doing what is right.

Please notice number one: the restraining power of convictions will help keep you doing what is right. In II Timothy 3:14, the Bible says, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and has been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them."

What was Paul saying? Paul was saying this. Timothy, you have learned some things. You have learned some facts. You have learned some principles. You have been taught truth. You have been taught how to serve God. You have been taught how to live for God and do what is right. You have learned some things. And you have been convinced in your heart that those things are true. So continue in the things you have learned and have been assured of that are true. Don't change. Don't move. Don't go back to the thing you have rejected.

It is a blessing to see folks get saved. It is a blessing to see folks get right with God. It is a blessing to see folks get their sins forgiven. It is wonderful to see folks give their lives to Jesus Christ. But it is also wonderful to see Christians continue in the things which they have learned and have been assured of that are true. You remain faithful. You remain true. You don't compromise. You don't turn aside as so many other believers do.

Listen! If you fall by the way side as so many other Christians do, you do so at the expense of your convictions. Convictions that the Holy Spirit of God has assured you of that are true. Don't you see that? You have learned some things. You have learned some things from a preacher from a Sunday school teacher from a godly dad or mom and the Holy Spirit of God has done His work on convincing you that they are true. And if you will not violate those convictions they will help keep you doing what is right.

I am simply saying this. Don't ignore your convictions. Don't turn your back on those things which you have learned and have been convinced that they are true. Don't do that.

Do you know why Sampson got into the mess he got in? He got into the mess he got in because he ignored that which he knew was wrong. He knew it was wrong to cut his hair as a Nazarite and thus violate his separation. He knew it was wrong to party and flirt with the loose women of his day. He knew it was wrong for him as a Nazarite to touch the dead carcass of a lion. He knew that. But he was willing to set aside his convictions and ignore what he was convinced was right. He got out of fellowship with God and the tragedy of all that was he did not keep doing what is right.

My friend! If the Spirit of God has used the Word of God and the council of godly people to convince you that some things are true you had better not violate those convictions. Because the moment you began to cross over those conviction and ignore the things you have learned and have been assured of that are true you are heading for trouble. It is that simple.

Those personal convictions that you have those principle convictions that you have those doctrinal convictions that you have will help keep you doing what is right if you will live inside of those convictions.

Listen! If you want to keep doing what is right, today, tomorrow, and five years from now. Live inside the things the Spirit of God has assured you are true.

We have noticed number one, the restraining power of convictions will help keep you doing what is right. But notice number two, the influence of godly Christians will help keep you doing what is right. In II Timothy 3:14, the Bible says, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and has been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them."

What was Paul saying? Paul was saying this. I want you to remember who taught you those truths. Whom was he talking about? I think he was talking about three people.

In II Timothy 1:5, the Bible says, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."

What was Paul saying? Paul was saying this. Timothy, when you think about not doing what is right you remember that godly mother who poured herself into you. She taught you and led you in the right way. You remember that godly grandmother. She taught you and led you in the right way. And don't you dare betray them.

The Apostle Paul was another person. In II Timothy 2:2, the Apostle Paul said, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

What was Paul saying? Paul was saying this. Timothy, it was my privilege to teach and to train you and bring you to that place of real discipleship. Don't you betray me by turning your back on God.

Brethren! To backslide and to get away from God some of you will have to break the heart of those who have done their best for you. That pastor that youth pastor that dad or mom that Sunday school teacher that bus worker or somebody in the church that has done all they can to train you and guide you spiritually. Don't you see? Their influence keeps you doing what is right.

You say, preacher! You should not set your eyes on men. That is not true. You need to realize men are just men and they can make mistakes. However, the Bible tells you in numerous occasions that you ought to follow the example of godly men and godly women. In I Corinthians 11:1, the Bible says, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." In Philippians 3:17, the Bible says, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."

Listen! You have others watching you and that is why it is so important that you are a godly influence. You see if your influence will help others stay in the way will help others stay in the will of God will help others stay right with God you ought to exercise all of that influence you possibly can.

Let me ask you something. Dad do you have that kind of example? Mom do you have that kind of example? Is your godly lifestyle a restraining influence on the behavior of your children? Is your godly lifestyle an influence for Jesus Christ?

In Hebrews 13:7, the Bible says, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

Do you know what the Bible is saying? The Bible is simply saying this. You watch those men and women who have lived all the way from the beginning to the end consistently. They have exited this life still living for God. They have exited this life still serving the Lord. They have exited this life still true to God. They have exited this life still doing what is right. The writer of Hebrews says you watch those godly men and women.

You ought to be very careful about abandoning those views that have been rejected by godly parents and spiritual leaders. If your pastor is a godly man and he loves this and hates the other. You had better be very careful about rejecting what he loves and what he hates. If you have a godly dad or godly mom with all their imperfections but they love God they want to do the will of God they want to do what is right in God's sight you had better be very careful about rejecting what they accept and accepting what they reject.

We have noticed number one, the restraining power of convictions; and number two, the influence of godly Christians; but notice number three, the clear guidance of Scripture will help keep you doing what is right.

In II Timothy 3:15, the Bible says, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

What was Paul saying? Paul was saying this. Timothy, not only do you have these convictions to help keep you doing what is right not only do you have the influence of godly men and women to help keep you doing what is right but you have the clear guidance of Scripture its self to help keep you doing what is right.

The Bible comes from the Holy Spirit of God and as you read the Word of God, the Holy Spirit of God can speak to your heart. He can bring about convictions. He can give you guidance. He can lead you.

What was Paul saying? Paul was saying this. If you will mediate in the Word of God if you will stay in the Word of God if you will keep in the Word of God that Word will keep you straight. It will keep you in the way. It will keep you doing what is right.

Listen to the Bible! In Psalm 119:133, the Bible says, "Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me." If your steps are ordered by the Word then sin will not dominate you, and you may make mistakes but you will not come under the rule of sin if you come under the dominating force of the Word of God.

In John 15:3, Jesus said it this way, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." The Word of God has the ability to help keep you doing what is right if you will read it and study it properly.

In II Timothy 2:15, the Bible says, "Study to shew theyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

You are to keep in the Word of God. In II Timothy 3:16-17, the Bible says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

The Bible tells you what to believe. The Bible tells you when you are wrong. The Bible tells you how to get right. The Bible tells you how to stay right. The Bible tells you how to live and if you will obey the Word of God, you will always do what is right. The Word of God has often spoken unto you. Don't ignore it.

You ought to read the Bible every day and ask God the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart. You ought to set some time aside every day so that you can open the Bible and read the Word of God not quickly, not casually, but carefully and patiently.

Every Christian should read the Word of God every day. You will never be the Christian you ought to be if you do not spend quality time in the Word of God every day.

There is something about the Bible. There is something amazing about its power to convince, convict, and cause you to walk in the right way and to find truth and happiness for your heart.

There is something else every Christian ought to do he ought to sit under the preaching and teaching of the Word of God faithfully. You will never be the Christian you ought to be if you are a church hopper or a service hopper.

You say, preacher! What are you talking about? You hop from church to church. You go here a while and move over here a while, and you go over here or you choose Sunday morning and not go to Wednesday night.

If you are going to amount to something for God if you are going to do something for God you need to be in Sunday school where the Word of God is taught. You need to be in the preaching hour Sunday morning where the Word of God is preached. You need to be out Sunday night where the Word of God is preached and on Wednesday night were the Word of God is preached.

In Titus 1:3, the Bible says, "But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching..." You need to be faithfully coming to the local church and ask the Holy Spirit of God to teach you truth and then you need to apply that truth to your life through obedience.

You will never be the Christian you ought to be if you do not meditate on His truths continually. In Psalm 1:1-3, the Bible says, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in [soap operas] but his delight is in [the fellowship with others]. Is that what is says? No! But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

The word meditate literally means to speak under your breath. To meditate in the Word of God is to read the Word of God paying attention to what you are reading and committing it to memory and then when circumstances and situations occur you should race through your mind rapidly to the Word of God and say Lord what do you say I should do.

Brethren! Let the Word of God transform the way you think, the way you talk, and the way you live and that will keep you doing what is right.

The child of God who goes astray who backslides does so as he turns away from his convictions as he ignores the influence of godly men and women and as he steps outside the guidance of Scripture its self.

If you are out of fellowship with God today, you are not out of fellowship by accident. You have been sloppy in some part of your Christian life.

So let me ask you something. Have you ignored your convictions? Have you ignored godly influence? Have you ignored the Scriptures themselves?

In II Timothy 3:14-17, Paul said Timothy, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

How is a Person Saved?

Salvation is all of God. God does the saving. Just take God at His Word and claim His salvation by faith. You will never be able to work your way into heaven. God does not have a scale in heaven whereby He weighs your good and bad works. That is a lie of the Devil. Romans 3:24; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:18; Romans 5:8.

Salvation is as simple as believing on Christ as the one who bore your sin, who died in your place, who was buried, and whom God resurrected from the dead. John 1:12, 3:16, 6:47; Acts 16:31; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 10:9-10; Romans 10:13.

Simply admit that you are a sinner and believe on Christ as your crucified, buried, and risen Saviour. You will receive forgiveness for all of your sins. You will receive His free gift of eternal life by faith. Romans 3:10, 23; I Corinthians 15:3-4.

Jesus did a wonderful thing for you some 2,000 years ago on Calvary's cross. He died for you. He was buried for you. He rose again the third day for you, and nothing would thrill Him more than to save you today.

Won't you go to Him right now in prayer and tell Him in your own words that you will trust Him as your Saviour? Or pray this simple prayer: Dear Lord, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died for me and that He arose from the grave. Here and now I ask You to forgive me of my sin and save me. In Jesus's name. Amen.

If you prayed that simple prayer, I would like to hear from you. Please contact me by e-mail or phone (813) 760-4028.

Evangelist Norman R. Stevens
602 Canterbury Road
Kings Mountain, NC 28086-9601
Phone: (813) 760-4028
E-mail: normanstevens@evangelistnormanstevens.com
<http://www.evangelistnormanstevens.com>