

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: II Timothy 3:14-15 “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, *knowing from whom you have learned them*, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

Quote: “Those who fear You will be glad when they see me, Because I have hoped in Your word.” (Psa. 119:74).

The word “continue” is the same word translated “hold to” or “abide” in John 8:31-32 where “Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you *abide* in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’” Jesus also used it in John 15:5-6 where He taught a sobering truth. “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who *abides* in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not *abide* in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”

Paul observed fruit in Timothy’s life. His young student had learned some truths that he embraced as reliable, and that he had made a part of his life. Paul challenged Timothy to “stick with it.” In order to continue successfully in an endeavor, we must have an appreciation for it, a dedication to it and an understanding of what is required to do so. “The word continue” can mean “to remain or to endure” in a condition or in a place. Remaining where we are in our *knowledge of God’s Word* leads to a “cruise control” approach to the Christian life, and just “going with the flow of popular opinion.” Continuing in our obedience to the Word necessitates personal study of it as our all-sufficient Guidebook for life. Paul exhorted Timothy to “hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”¹

In addition to personal study, Christians also learn the Word of God from others through formal teaching, and by considering their example. They are to “remember

those who rule over them, who have spoken the word of God to them, whose faith they should follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.”² There has only been one perfect teacher who consistently and perfectly modeled the Scriptures that He taught. That teacher is the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are wise, we will acknowledge that imperfections are part of all of our lives. We will carefully observe and selectively imitate the outworking of Biblical principles that other Christians model. In this same text, Paul told Timothy, “But you have *carefully followed* my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. *But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them....*”³

Learn from Your Heroes!

There is a sense in which all Christians bring their own unique personalities to living out God’s Word. It is somewhat like a group of people coloring inside the boundaries of the same black line drawing. The subject is the same for all of them, but the care and the colors that individuals bring are unique to them. The “heroes of faith” listed in Hebrews 11, as well as those who have lived and ministered since New Testament times, are unique individuals. And yet they all are recipients and beneficiaries of God’s amazing grace. What Paul wrote to Christians in Philippi applies to each believer today. “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is *God* who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”⁴ Salvation is indeed the unalterable “design” of God. It is only by *grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone for the glory of God alone that anyone is saved*.⁵ Like past and present “heroes of faith,” may we carefully and gratefully “color in the lines” as examples of the believer who shine forth the gospel of grace in an ever-darkening world.

¹ II Tim.1:13 ² Heb.13:7 ³ II Tim.3:10-14 ⁴ Phil.2:12-16 ⁵ Jn.14:6