

CONTINUE IN WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

I want to speak to the youth this morning. The school year is about to end, some of you have or will be graduating soon, and our Sunday School ministry for this season is coming to an end. I want to take a moment to commend you all for your work and studies. I particularly want to show my gratitude to the teachers and helpers in our Sunday School program.

Dr. Russel Moore is a significant theologian in America. He holds a PhD from Southern Seminary and he's a professor. He wrote:

"I've often said that I wouldn't want to have to choose between my seminary education and my childhood years in Sunday school, but if forced I would choose Sunday school each time. Now that's saying something since I believe so strongly in seminary education, and gave most of my ministry to it. I'd never want to give that up. But as important as theological education was for me, Sunday school was more so."¹

I've often said that it's harder to teach Sunday School than to preach or teach adults. I believe, without any fear of contradiction, the best teachers are the teachers of Sunday School. So, I want to say something to all the students today who have been through our youth and Sunday School ministry. I want to give you one word to think about. One word that will change your life. That word is:

"Continue"

Let's pray!

CONTINUE

The word "continue" could be the most important word that the Christian should understand, believe and live. The dictionary defines it as "persist in an activity". We might say that it means, "Keep going. Keep, keeping on!" I get that word from my text today. Please turn with me to 2 Timothy 3:14 (ESV),

¹⁴ *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it*

Now the writer is Paul. The "as for you" is Timothy. Timothy is not in Sunday School. Timothy is a pastor. He's about 30 years old. He's been pastoring for about 4 years in a city called Ephesus. Paul has been his spiritual Dad, his teacher, his encourager. Timothy's spiritual Dad is soon going to die. The Roman government is going to execute him for his faith in Jesus Christ. This is a good-bye letter.

¹ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-cosmic-importance-of-childrens-sunday-school/>

Timothy is not leaving him. He is leaving Timothy, but his final word is important. It's the word "continue". In what way is Timothy to "keep on, keeping on"? Well the answer is to keep on in the things you have learned. You see the role of Christian instruction is not to pile up information. It's not to save a bunch of information on your hard drive. The role of Sunday School and Youth instruction is to *"continue in what you have learned"*.

Now let me ask a question. Why should you care? Why should any of you bother to listen to any more that I have to say? Well the reason is important. The Bible teaches that a true Christian is known by this behavior. A Christian continues on. Jesus said, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples."² That word "abide" is the same Greek word as "continue". The idea is to live life in that teaching that you've learned.

Now let's be clear about something that I said before. Learning, according to the Bible is not storing up information. Paul clearly says that here. "Continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed."³ Another translation says, "what you are firmly persuaded". You do not really believe something until you practice it. James says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (James 1:22).

When the Holy Spirit, through the Scriptures, speaks to us today, He says, "Those things that your parents, your youth leaders, your Sunday School teachers, your pastors, etc. have taught you from the Bible – you are to live in those things and keep putting them into practice. Let me put it in a negative way: *If you and I are not doing what we have been taught – WE LEARNED NOTHING!*

Remember this is our mission from Christ. Jesus does not call us to "teach" disciples alone – we are to teach *"them to obey everything I have commanded you . . ."* (Matthew 28:20b, NIV). Contextually, Paul supposes also that to continue also means continuing under adversity. The context is *"Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,"* (2 Timothy 3:12, ESV).

WHY CONTINUE?

Now Paul is going to give two reasons why we should remain steadfast applying what we have learned.

- #1. This first reason we should keep on living and obeying what we have learned is because of who taught us. Paul adds "knowing from whom you learned it."⁴ Think back to the people that have taught you the truth of the Scriptures. Some of you can recall grandparents and loving relatives, parents, Sunday School teachers, pastors, great friends and wonderful authors and speakers. Look at the people that taught you. If Paul had himself in mind, he would say, check out my "teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 8:31). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (2 Ti 3:14). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (2 Ti 3:14). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

persecutions and sufferings.”⁵ Why would you walk away from someone who walked the walk? Check out the quality, the credibility of the people who taught you. The first reason to continue in what you have been taught is because you recognize that it comes from really credible people – people who love you.

#2. Secondly, don’t wander from what you’ve been taught because it came from none other than the inspired Word of God – or in other words, God himself. Paul reminds Timothy that these are the Scriptures that give you the wisdom of salvation, that teach you, reprove you, correct you, show you how to live righteously; and completely equip you for all you will ever need in life or doctrine. (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

In summary, if you were to ask me, why should I keep living in and applying the teaching that I have received, my answer is: a. Because it comes ultimately from God and is all your will ever really need; and b. Because it comes from people who really love you, and walk the walk, not just talk, the talk.

APPLICATION & CONCLUSION

This passage teaches us so much. It teaches us what real Christian education is. We are reminded that learning only exists when it is lived out. This verse teaches us the importance of being good examples to those we teach. Our lives are one of the reasons they are encouraged to obey. This verse also reminds us that the Bible contains all that we need to live lives that are pleasing to God. So my question to the students this morning is simply this: ***Are you obeying what you have been taught?*** “Are you continuing in the things you have learned?”

When I was younger, I sometimes obeyed my parents because I was scared what was going to happen to me if I didn’t. As I got older, I learned to obey my parents because I started to see all that they had done for me. The more I learned about their love and their sacrifice, the more I was compelled to honor and obey them.

If we have been born again^[John 3:3], we quickly find the same thing in our relationship with Jesus. We obey because He first loved us^[1 John 4:19]. We realize the extent of that love^[Romans 5:8] and all that Jesus did for me. We obey, not because we are afraid of Him, but because we motivated by all that He has done for us. This Jesus came and lived the life we are to live – and did it perfectly^[2 Corinthians 5:21a]. Now by faith in Him, he sees us perfect too^[2 Corinthians 5:21b]. He died for all my sin^[1 Peter 3:18] and gave me His Holy Spirit^[John 14:16] who is constantly helping me choose what pleases God and giving me the ability to please God^[Philippians 2:13]. And the best part is still to come. Everyone who shows that are a Christian by “continuing” will someday spend all eternity enjoying Christ in a perfect world^[Revelation 21]. They will not perish but have eternal life^[John 3:16].

If you have professed Christ as your Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit’s message to you today is “continue in what you have learned and become convinced of.”

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (2 Ti 3:10–11). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.