

# The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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*Fifth Anniversary Issue!!!*

What Shall We Do Now? (Part 5)

Luke 3:10; II Timothy 3:14

Last month we began considering the second answer to our question, What Shall We Do Now? That second answer was that we must Keep Praying. What should we pray for? We must pray For the Power of God and For the Propagation of the Gospel. But as we study Scripture, we find a third aspect to our praying. We must pray For Persistency in Growth.

Sadly, many believers do not grow spiritually. There are physical and mental diseases that cause people not to grow. Some have mental problems whereby their brains do not advance beyond a certain age. Some rare diseases affect the physical body, and the body does not grow. We see these situations and often feel sorry for those people and for their families that have to go through that difficulty. However, in many churches, people who have been saved for years have no more knowledge of the Bible than they did when they were saved. They are spiritual babes. Why do they not grow? There could be many answers to that question, but I believe the basic answer is carelessness. It could be carelessness on the part of the believer himself, or it could be carelessness on the part of others around him. By carelessness, I mean that the believer just does not care to grow. He has been invited to learn from the Bible, but he does not care to be regular in his church attendance. He has been offered instruction as to how to study his Bible, but he does not care to study it or even to read it. On the other hand, some babes in Christ were never taught right. They had a desire to learn, but no one ever cared enough to take the time to teach them how to study the Bible.

When I was growing up in Sunday School, we sang a song about

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reading our Bible and praying. It went like this, “Read your Bible, Pray every day, Pray every day, Pray every day, Read your Bible, Pray every day, and You’ll grow, grow, grow.” A second verse said, “Neglect your Bible, Forget to pray, and You’ll shrink, shrink, shrink.” Sadly, we relegate the song to children, when we adults need to sing it to remind ourselves of the truth. If we do not stay in the Word and do not pray, we will be weak, anemic, powerless, and immature believers.

Paul was concerned about spiritual growth—both his own and those that had been converted under his ministry. Colossians 1:9-10 says, “*For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.*” The entire prayer is full of wonderful thoughts, but notice especially the words at the end of verse 10—“*increasing in the knowledge of God.*” Paul did not want the Colossians to stay the same. He did not want them to be stagnant. He wanted them to grow. We must have the same desire. We must pray for our own growth and for the growth of others.

Peter was also concerned with spiritual growth. I Peter 2:2 says, “*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*” He concludes his second epistle with this thought—“*But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*” The apostles were concerned about growing spiritually. It is not normal for babies to stay the same physically and mentally. If there was no growth, we would be alarmed and rightfully so. It should be the same spiritually. If we are not growing, we need to find out why. We should have the desire to be more like Christ every day. We should have the desire to learn more from His Word. We should have the desire to grow. We need to be concerned about others too. We should pray for them that they might have persistent growth. We

must follow the example of Paul and Peter in Scripture and pray For Persistent Growth.

What Shall We Do Now? We must Keep Preaching and Keep Praying. But we must also **Keep Persevering**. There are many things that the devil throws at us to keep us from being faithful to Christ. The world and the flesh are antagonistic as well. If we do not determine to keep on for Christ, we will give in to the flesh and quit. All of us know people who at one time were in church, but now stay at home on Sunday. Others may keep coming to church, but they do not take an active part in serving at church or serving Christ wherever they are. Some can give what seems like a valid reason for quitting church or not being as faithful as they were at one time. Some like to blame a preacher. Others point the finger at church members. Some blame God for taking their child or parent or friend. But all of these are excuses. There is no good reason for quitting on God! There is no excuse for quitting church. We must determine to Keep Persevering, no matter what comes our way. Now some will say, "You just do not understand. You do not know what they did to me." Well, join the crowd. I do not know anyone who has never been treated wrongly by someone else in church. Sometimes it is intentional; sometimes it is accidental. But never quit serving God because of what someone else did to you. You may have to leave and find another church. But do not quit going to church. Some may be mad at God because someone died expectedly or unexpectedly. But do not quit on God because of that. May I remind you—God makes no mistakes. He knows what He is doing. Rest in Him. Do not quit! Stay faithful to Him, no matter what. No one faced more opposition or had more reason to quit than the Apostle Paul. But notice in Acts 20:24 he said, "*But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*" Paul was determined that nothing would stop him. How did he finish? Right before he died, he wrote II Timothy 4:7—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." May the Lord give us the same

determination as Paul.

But in what should we persevere? First of all, we should Keep Persevering In the Midst of Trials. I Peter 4:12-13 says, "*Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*" Now, these verses would seem unusual to many believers. What is the common reaction to trials? Most of us say, "Why is this happening to me?" But Peter tells us to not think it strange. The word trial means the testing of man's fidelity, integrity, virtue, or constancy." The trials that we face are not meant to destroy us. They are meant to make us better for Christ's use. Yet how many times do we fail this testing and come out bitter. We begin to question God. We wonder if He knows what He is doing. We complain and murmur and sometimes people end up quitting. But let us not be like that. May God find us faithful even in the midst of trials. Some of the greatest blessings have come through trials. The apostles were faithful in trials and out of those trials people were saved, churches started, and Scripture was written. Later in history, many Christians were faithful in trials, and we have their songs to sing. Horatio Spafford lost his children at sea and wrote "It Is Well with My Soul;" Ron Hamilton lost an eye to cancer and wrote "Rejoice In the Lord" and began a ministry for children, "Patch the Pirate." Many, many other examples could be given. May we not think that the trials are strange, but may we see them as God's working in our lives.

We must also Keep Persevering In the Midst of Temptations. I Corinthians 10:13 says, "*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*" The word temptation in this verse is the same word translated trial in I Peter 4:12. It means both testing of fidelity and solicitation to do evil. In I Corinthians 10:13, the verse has both meanings in mind, but I will

only focus on the negative side for now. We are in the flesh, and we will be tempted. We will never reach the point, in this life, where temptations will cease. Therefore, we must constantly be prepared for them. We cannot give in. The world, the flesh, and the devil will constantly attack. If we are not determined to keep persevering, we will succumb to the temptation, and sin, and perhaps wreck our testimony. Countless stories could be told of people that gave in to the temptation and damaged their lives. We must persevere In the Midst of Temptations.

Finally, we must Keep Persevering In the Midst of Tribulations. Acts 14:22 says, “*Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*” This is what Paul and Barnabas were instructing the disciples on their first missionary journey. Tribulation means pressing, pressure, oppression, and affliction. We must be prepared for it to come, and when it does come, we must continue on. May we be like the faithful in Hebrews 11. They faced great tribulation and continued on.

What Shall We Do Now? Keep Preaching, Keep Praying, Keep Perservering!