

Norman C. Schwab
Yacolt EV Free
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Want to Look at the Map?
II Timothy 3:14-15

If most of you men are like me, this item is viewed as optional equipment when you are traveling. Especially if you have traveled in that area sometime within the last decade. Even if you have one in your glove box, it is almost an admission of defeat to look at it. Even if you have been lost and circling, possibly for hours, even if you have driven past the same burger stand three times, this item is still not consulted. Even though your wife may implore, yea verily exhort you as a sister in the Lord to at least let her peruse the seemingly innocent piece of folded paper, her promptings serve only to strengthen your resolve. You can find that place all on your own. You are not lost. You have been there before. You have no need of amap.

We are independent, self-contained and self-preserved people. IF we have been there once, we assume we no longer need to consult as to how to get back to where we once were. It is no different in spiritual matters, we think because we were once close to God, because we once knew well the way of truth, we once were tight with God, even though now in the midst of the storm and darkness, the landmarks do not seem as clear as they once were. Even though the wind is blowing hard and the rain pelting down. Even though we don't recognize the territory we have just entered...we still fail to consult the road map for life, God's holy Word, the Bible.

My purpose this morning is to encourage us all, to pull over from life, pull over in the middle of your storms, pull over when you realize your lost, pull over when things get foggy and consult God's road map. It is God's Word, the Bible that will put us back on track. It is God's Word the Bible that will give us the perspective and wisdom we need to make it through the tough times of life. Paul in his book to Timothy has described the attitudes and behaviors of evil men in the last days. There will be difficult times, confusing and dark times to come in the future. It is the Sacred and Holy Word of God wholly sufficient for life, salvation

and Godliness that will keep us on track when the tough times roll. Are you ready to look at your map for life?

Turn with me in your map to II Timothy 3. It is the Word of truth plus faith in Christ plus the power of the Holy Spirit that will lead us to a spiritually stable life. Not just to weather the storms that blow in, but to actually overcome them. We will be studying verses 14 and 15. (READ)

At the beginning of v.14 we see a contrasting statement with the evil attitudes and behaviors of the previous verses. Paul again calls on Timothy to be different. Don't let the world squeeze you into its mold. You be different! Continue. Continue to pursue truth. Keep on keeping on. Keep on consulting God's road map for life. When you get lost in life due to suffering, persecution, tough times whatever. Stability for unstable times comes when we follow the advice that Paul had for Timothy. Point number one. Continue to pursue truth. Remain connected. Stay in the same place. To keep the same course in pursuit of the truth. Keep on keeping on. At first brush continue doesn't seem very exciting does it. It sounds like a boring maintenance job like doing the laundry or pushing a broom. Continue isn't snazzy. Continue isn't jazzy. Continue is stable, loyal, faithful, it's follow through, responsible, mature. There is no "rebel" in continue. And we all have a little rebel in all of us. We get so easily bored with the same old, same old. We long for something new and different. A new change of weather. Some sun perhaps. Your tired of your boring stuff in the closet and want some new clothes. A new toy. A new car. A new job. We want to change to keep our attention. There are other people whose world has been so disrupted and out of their control, that they want to keep things as much the same as they possibly control. I think Paul knew that sometimes in the face of a foggy and confusing storm we are prone to change the right things and cling to the wrong things.

Paul calls us to continue. To keep on keeping on pursuing the truth. No new radical theology is needed here. Continue in the standard. Continue in the truth. Do not doubt in the darkness what God has so clearly revealed in the light. The word of God never changes. The Bible stands like a rock undaunted mid the raging storms of time; Its pages burn with the truth eternal, and they glow with a light sublime. The Bible stands tho the hills may tumble. It will firmly stand when the earth shall

crumble. I will plant my feet on its firm foundation For the Bible stands. The Holy Word of god never changes. We are to continue to pursue the unchanging truth that is held within it. To be sure, we must relate that unchanging Word to an ever-changing world. We must translate that truth for our culture in ways that they can hear and understand. But, a translation of truth relates the exact same message from God into a language they can understand. A translator never has the right to distort or change the original message. It is a continual challenge to present the same truth of God's word in a way our culture can know, understand and embrace. God has called all of us to be His messengers, his translators of His truth. And he happened to place us in the 1990's. Not the 1950's or 60's. We are place here by God at the turn of the century with a mission to translate his truth to those who have not yet understood. How can they best hear that message? What language do they understand? How can we help them get it without distorting the truth of God's word. That's a challenge. Continuing yet being relevant. I have found God's word to be incredibly relevant and cross-cultural, and has been for the last 2000 years. The Bible is never dull and lifeless. We are the ones that make the Bible out to be boring. It is the most exciting and transformational books ever. Do you need the word from God today that say. Continue. Keep on keeping on. Maybe there is something that you have failed to continue to do in the midst of your storm, distracted by busyness, dulled by pain, bored by the maintenance of life. What do you need to continue your pursuit of truth this next week? Maybe it's time to open your glove box and dust off God's road map and read it again for the first time fresh.

The Bible has been given to us by God to feed and nourish us in faith. Dwight L. Moody once wrote: "I prayed for faith, and thought that some day faith would come down and strike me like lightning. But faith did not seem to come. One day I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, 'Now faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.' I had closed my Bible, and prayed for faith. I now opened my Bible, and began to study, and faith has been growing ever since."

Point number 2. Learn from those you trust. Look with me at verse 14. continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them. Timothy had observed those

in his life who demonstrated, lived out the life of Christ. He had seen their spiritual maturity and learned from them. Paul in 1:13 Retain the standard of sound words which you heard from me. 2:2 The things which you have heard from me, these entrust to faithful men who are able to teach others also. 1:5 Timothy's Grandmother Lois and mother Eunice had demonstrated a sincere and mature faith, that Paul saw was passed on to Timothy. Paul brings all these spiritual mentors to Timothy's mind, people who have poured into his life, and says. Learn from those you trust, and have observed spiritual maturity.

These are the things even from childhood you have learned of. You have gained understanding, received instruction and skills. But beyond that you have not only the ability to know and study God's Word you took it a step beyond. You became convinced of these. You entered into belief. Your belief overcame any arguments, beyond all doubts. You made the shift from learning to believing. That shift from knowledge to belief is the point of salvation. Going from understanding God's truth to being convinced in belief of God's truth. For it is belief that drives actions. What you truly believe will be what you end of acting upon. Paul calls for Timothy and us to remember those who have provided a spiritual foundation, an example for us to follow. Who has done that for you? Was it a Sunday School teacher? Awana leader? Mom? Dad? Grandparent? A friend? Pastor? Youth leader? Have you ever thanked them. If not you need to write them a note this week and thank them for the spiritual foundation they have given you.

Maybe there are some here who have taken their spiritual foundation for granted, or secretly even despised those who have modeled God's truth for them. Maybe the model you watched wasn't all that great. Maybe there are some here who look at their spiritual training and view that only as kiddy stuff. They are in high school now, they don't need that bible stuff. They want something new and exciting. Maybe you have thought now that I'm growing up I don't need to go to youth group, I don't need to read God's word. I would say that thinking only serves to expose your own immaturity and foolishness. It is only the truly mature that knows they can not live without continual feeding of God's word with God's people. You will never get to heaven on the spirituality of your parents, or spiritual models. God has no grandchildren. It's time to begin

to do business directly with God. Learn and become convinced of God's truth. Learn from those you trust and have seen spiritual maturity in. Philips translates this verse, "Remember what sorts of people your knowledge comes from"

Point 1. Continue to pursue truth. Point 2. Learn from those you trust. Point 3. Train your children to know the way of truth. v.15 That from childhood you have known the sacred writings." Timothy was trained by his mother and grandmother. Timothy's dad was an unbeliever, so his mother trained him from an early age. The word used for child is a word describing a very young child, or infant, even to that of an unborn child. The Greek word for sacred writings hiera grammata. grammata we get our word grammar from. It implies that Timothy was taught the alphabet from the Old Testament Scriptures. He was probably taught to read by reading the scriptures. It is setting that foundation deep into the heart of the child at an early age. I remember very young memorizing scripture in a Bible Memory Association BMA. I remember curling up on my mothers lap and reading Ken Taylor's Bible Stories with Pictures, it's binding in tatters. What are we doing to strategically teach our children? Fathers don't be sitting here thinking that is mom's job, because in fact it ours. Deut 6:4 tells us its the dads job as spiritual leaders we are to be out front in teaching our children Gods truth. We have dropped the ball incredibly in this area. We spend hours teaching them baseball and soccer and hunting and fishing. How much time do we spend putting spiritual tools in their hands. Duet 6:4 says we need to be thinking about training them in godliness all the time. When we are going out for a walk, When we are tucking them into bed at night, when they are waking up. Dad's be praying for opportunities, looking for chances to teach a spiritual truth about life...in the course of living life. That means you must be able to have the tools and skills to pass on. You can not pass on what you do not possess. If your tools are not ready and available at the teachable moment then your opportunity will also be missed.

My garage is probably like many of yours. There are many tools and many of them are not as well organized as I'd like them to be. You may have had the experience of working on a project, knowing that you had a tool you needed...somewhere only you couldn't find it. If your tools

aren't ready and available we can use them in the time of need. Is God's word ready and available, sharpened for use in your greatest time of need. It's worth spending some time in preparation. Spending time in God's Book of truth. Spending time consulting God's road map for life. The only way we will be able to defeat Satan's lies is with God's truth. We need to saturate our minds with God's truth so we can easily spot Satan's lies. It is sin that will keep you from this book and also, this book will keep you from sin. Train your children to know the way of truth. Don't depend on others. We can supplement with s.s and awana and camps and vbs but we are responsible to train our children and be ready to do that job.

Abraham Lincoln once said. (He) is a person who is going to carry on what you have started. He is going to sit where you are sitting, and when you are gone attend to those things which you think are important. You may adopt all the policies you please, but how they are carried out depends on him. He will assume control of your cities, states, and nations. he is going to move in and take over your churches, schools, universities and corporations. All your books are going to be judged, praised or condemned by him. The fate of humanity is in his hands . (It is in the hands of your child. So train your child well.)

Point #4 Study the map that leads to life. In order to train our children well we must develop a love for God's word, the Word of God that leads to life and salvation.

The highest honor a French chef can attain is to have his restaurant listed as a three star restaurant in the Michelin Guide to fine eating. According to the Chicago Tribune, the 1995 Guide added a 20th restaurant to its three star listing the Augerge de l'Eridan in Annecy, France. The owner and self taught chef Mac Veyrat is a culinary maverick whose unorthodox ideas got himself kicked out of three cooking schools. The local hotels would not even let him in as an apprentice in the kitchen. Veyrat is from the French Alps and once a week gets up at dawn to venture into the mountains picking wild herbs. Veyrat is quoted saying, I know I'm not a traditional chef, I'm a student of nature. Because before you love cuisine, you have to love the ingredients. One who loves food often cooks well. If you love God's word, you are going to love sharing it with others.

Here in verse 15 it says that the writings are sacred and give you the wisdom to lead to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. The Bible is different than other books that may be on your shelf. It is holy because they are God's words. They hold the map to life and salvation. People have died for what we have in our hands. I think we would be wise in the way we treat our Bibles. This was not a concept I understood as a child. I remember playing in the tile covered basement of Minnehaha Community Church a game we called bowling for Bibles with the elders son. Setting up a row of church Bibles on edge and then from the end of the hall bowling our heavier Bibles to see how many we could knock down. This game did not please my mother. Why? I was treating lightly, taking God's Word for granted. We are trained to respect the flag of our country. We never let the tip touch the ground. We learn to respectfully fold our flag...but our bible we are content to use as a coffee cup holder, or place on the bottom of a stack of books. It is different than other books and we ought to show how much we appreciate it by the way we treat it.

Simply respecting God's word, or even knowing God's word will not produce salvation. But, the Bible does point to Christ. It reveals who He is and His plan of saving us. One who believes in Him will be saved. God's word brings people to Christ and brings people to maturity in Christ. Psalm 119:105 Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and light unto my path. Psalm 119 is packed full of the benefits of God's Word. In the face of foggy, threatening and confusing storms of life, we must study the map that leads us to life and godliness. I Thess. 2:13 "You received the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is the Word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe."

There is a picture of the Constitution of the United States, very skillfully engraved in copper plate, so that when you looked at it closely it was nothing more than a piece of writing, but when you looked at it at a distance, it was the face of George Washington. The face shone out in the shading of the letters at a little distance, and I saw the person, not the words, nor the ideas; and I thought, "That is the way to look at the Scriptures and understand the thoughts of God; to see in them the face

of love, shining through and through; not ideas, nor doctrines, but Jesus Himself as the Life and Source and sustaining Presence of all our life."

The Bible points to Jesus, as the answer for the world today, above him there is no other. Jesus is the way. Are you feeling like you need to spend more time in God's Road map? Romans 10:14 says that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. A practical application for some of you may be to begin listening to God's word on tape as you commute into Portland, as you do your chores around the house, as you exercise or drive the kids around from place to place. Kids may want to pop these into their walkman as they get ready for school. Faith comes by hearing is an opportunity to listen to the whole New Testament in 40 days by listening just 30 minutes a day. Isn't that amazing. You will pick up on things when you hear it read that you don't notice otherwise. You have received purple cards. A non-profit organization wants to help us provide these at cost in different versions, some with added dramatic effects and others in straight spoken word. Here is an excerpt. If you want a set of bible on tapes fill out the card and we will order all together and you can pay for them when they arrive. Write your name on the purple card and drop it in the basket at the back door.

Spending time in God's Word will never be a waste. I encourage you to continue to pursue truth. The Bible is always relevant and exciting. Get your tools ready and sharpened to be of use. When you find yourself in the confusing fog. Don't run away and try to escape, missing what god wants to teach you there. If you keep running away you will never grow up. In the midst of the storms, don't just feel sorry for yourself. Don't lounge around in self-pity. That gets you nothing and takes you nowhere you would want to be. Keep looking at God's road map and you will never get lost.