

How to Continue Steadfastly

by A.W. Tozer

To continue steadfastly in your Christian life, you must put yourself in the way of God's blessing, let repentance do its healing work, order your soul a chance to live, tighten up and eliminate carelessness, and cultivate God's people.

Duration: 37:32

Scripture: Jeremiah 7:3, Malachi 3:16, Matthew 6:19-21, Matthew 6:33, Luke 24:14-15, Acts 2:42, Hebrews 10:25

Topics: "Steadfast"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker encourages people to take time off and reflect on God, nature, and themselves. He emphasizes the importance of not living in a constant rush and urges people to expand their minds and meditate. The speaker also warns against being influenced by worldly distractions, such as television and Hollywood. He then references the Book of Acts and Jeremiah to discuss the importance of continuing steadfastly in doctrine, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer. The speaker concludes by questioning whether the blessings received from the sermon will last.

Transcript

After spending a lot of the riches here, and seeing how he handled everything, I'd like to rename him. I'd like to Barnabas, the son of consolation. For if anybody knows how to console everybody without compromising, and if his name oughtn't to be Barnabas, then we'll call him Barney for short.

So from tonight on, it's Brother Barnabas Richards, the man of consolation, whom God has given a gift. I'd like to say among your conventions, among the conventions a great deal. And I don't know a larger one than this, except my half of you just quit counting.

You don't even try to count anymore. You don't even try to estimate. But outside of that, you have a great convention here, and lovely grounds.

Apparently they're getting better all the time. I wonder what they'll be, if I should come back and count. They probably have, I wouldn't know what, but the finest.

And we're glad you're here. Now, I've talked this over with Brother Richards and with Brother Booth. Also I've had a little chat with Brother Richards' wife.

Who keeps him going. And I thought this would be the thing tonight. You know, this is the last night.

A lot of people at least clear out of here in a cloud of dust, right? And that's literally true. Right after the meeting. We've had wonderful evenings with the orders full.

And we've had a good many people who met faith. Some re-consecrated, some brought in from their wanderings. Some, I believe, have given themselves to the Lord, have been or will be filled with the blessed Holy Spirit.

Some have consecrated themselves to a new and deeper Christian life. Now, after tonight, this is over for another year. And you're going to have to go back to your church, back to your work, to your school.

And now the big question is, can you keep on? Will this last? Will the blessing that God has given you here in the Bible exposition of Dr. Turner, the missionary talks, the fellowship, will this last? Is it going to be with you as it charged against us, an emotional being? And then it's all over and we go back to being what we were before. Now, I thought that tonight, with that, instead of giving an invitation and trying to persuade anybody to make a decision, I would talk to you generally about how you may do what they said in the Book of Acts, they continue steadfastly in the gospel doctrine and in fellowship and in the breaking of bread and prayer. How can you continue steadfastly, not lose but gain? Well, now I go to Jeremiah, the 7th chapter, for my text.

The 7th chapter of Jeremiah, the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all ye that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to remain here in this beautiful house.

Tragically, they didn't, but you can. Now, in these words which have been read here, a kind, loving God speaks, a God who is not willing that any should perish, even that any should be weak or barren or disappointed. And he says, out of danger, the way to continue in the Christian life is to be a forest here in what we call amendment of life.

Somebody ought to write a book, one old man did, who lived back in the 1100s. He wrote a book called The Amendment of Life, Richard Rowe, a great English mystic. But nobody's written on it.

But I'm going to preach a little about it tonight. Amend your life. Now, when you take down, you're going to go way over what they tell us we should have.

They say you should have seven points. But I'll have about 12 or 14 here tonight. And you can't remember them all, so write them down and mull them over.

First thing that you must do now, starting now, is to put yourself in the way of God's blessing. It is a great error to think of the grace of magic, which operates fitfully and whimsically as a kind of windfall, which comes to you suddenly and unexpectedly as a wave of blessing, apart from condition. Remember that God is an intelligent God, and he made you intelligent, and his dealings with you are intellectual as well as spiritual, and he approaches you on an intellectual level.

And to God with caprice is not good. It's to believe that the grace of God leaps about like a fox, a will-o'-the-wisp, and that you can have it now and lose it tomorrow, and we're jumping all about this isn't good, this doesn't do things at all. God has certain conditions which he lays down, and those conditions are just as easy to reach as conditions for any building or buying or selling or working.

Any conditions, they're there, and one of those conditions would be that you put yourself in the way of God's blessing. Don't expect him to follow you around, and don't think that you can come to Canby and go to the altar one night and get all blessed up for another year. The devil will see to it that you're not.

Even Jesus, it said, the devil left him for a little season. And the devil, you have gotten so beautifully above here this year, will be back after you by Wednesday noon, I promise, possibly earlier, and you will have your troubles and your difficulties. Now, put yourself where God's grace is now, and you're not going to try to keep the grace of God while you're running away from the God flows.

Second thing is, let repentance do its healing work in your heart. Don't be afraid, don't be afraid to keep repenting. One great man talked about what he called a vain and over-hasty repentance, contrition with impatience.

We're impatient to get our repenting over with. We want to be happy, be happy regardless. And sin makes us unhappy, so we hurry and repent like a high school kid cramming just before nation, hurry to get it over with and try to get a high mark, and then promptly forget it as soon as school's out.

Now, repentance is the sorrow you have in your heart, not only for what you've done, but for what you are. A man who isn't deeply sorry for what he is, hasn't repented, and he's not a penitent man. Penitence, a sorrow for what we are.

We're sorry we're such poor Christians, that we are not as Christy, that we've not been as faithful as we should be, that we're as cold-hearted as we are, and that to be like Paul, he will never consider that he has arrived, but he will press on for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, and he will never forget that he once wounded his Lord. He'll never forget it. He will be a joyful Christian, or he can be, but he never ought to be in any way as he forgets he helped nail Jesus on the cross.

Repentance is a healing thing. Let it do its work with you. Be sorry, and if you're not sorry, then do what the old Methodists used to do, to pray for a spirit of repentance.

If you don't feel sorry, pray that you might feel sorry, that you've ever been a sinner at all. Don't excuse sin. Don't name it something else.

Don't go reading books on psychology and find big words. Call it what God calls it. Call it iniquity.

Call it sin. And insist that God hears you. Everybody know your meaning, and be penitent.

Now, that's the second point. Third one is, order your soul a chance to live. Most people don't give their soul a chance to live.

One old poet talked about, loaf your soul. Most American Christians don't know. They don't know they've got a soul.

They never get alone. They accept in a crowd. And they're happiest when the crowd is being led by some clown who keeps them all.

Now, sometime, go aside. Take a little time off. Now, you can do that down to ten years.

You don't have to be a hundred of this. This is good for children ten years old and on. Take time off.

Sit down quietly somewhere. Look at the blades of grass, the trees, and see the stars, and think about God and nature. And yourself, and the past, and the immensity.

Learn to talk to your own soul upon your bed and be called it. Don't live on the run and on the rush all the time. Some people just have, they live in a triangle, from their home to their work and back to their home and to the Alliance Church and back to their home and to their work and to the Alliance Church and back to their home.

They live in a triangle. And if they'd stop suddenly, they'd run into themselves. They're just chasing themselves around all the time.

God's people need to expand. They need to get big inside. They need to meditate and dream things.

Let me urge you young people, be thinkers. God needs sanctified holy thinkers in this terrible time. When everybody chases everybody else over a precipice and nobody stops to ask what this is all about.

It succeeds every Tom, Dick, and Harry from the rock-bound coast of Maine to the sunny slopes of California, as the politicians say. Pretty soon they've imitated it all over the country. Nobody stops to ask whether it's a good thing or not.

It's successful. And if it's successful and gets the money, everybody wants to run after it. Books are printed and pictures appear and stop to think.

God didn't saw your head off above your eyebrows when he converted you. He expected you to use that gray matter head. Be a thoughtful, meditative Christian and think and dream and let God the scriptures and out of these wonderful worlds put yourself where God can get to you.

Most of us, God can't get our attention. He says, attention please, but he, nobody pays any attention. We're racing madly on our way to another convention.

We're dashing to meetings. And we're hurrying off here to do some other religious bit. We never stop to get acquainted with our own souls.

You don't know yourselves at all. You haven't the remotest idea what kind of a person you are because you've never stopped to get acquainted with yourself. You don't know yourself.

Get acquainted with yourself and order your life so as to give your life a chance. And then tighten up, eliminate carelessness. Now, this carelessness may be in your prayer life.

It may be in your Bible reading, in your other reading. It may be in your speech. It may even be in your thought.

I hear an awful lot in the speech of God's people. God's people ought to speak the finest English that there is. And they ought to be the purest from the rock and roll stuff that there is.

But a lot of you learn more from television than you do at Canby. Come to Canby and you're here 11 days and you've got television all the other 350 whatever it is. Now, now, listen.

I'm not fooling. This isn't funny. We're learning more from Hollywood than we are from... And there are people listening to me now who know the face of Jack Parr better than you know the face of... the picture

better than you know the saints of God.

And I'm preaching to girls here now that if you thought that in Hollywood you'd desert the Alliance choir in five minutes and never even start to say goodbye to the director... You've been poisoned by the worm. Now you, if you hope, can suddenly have a surge of healing and then that's all I need now. Okay, that's not okay at all.

You're to live the same degree of consecration for the next year that you have at the altar if you're going to keep the blessing, keep anointed, and keep the face of God before you. So tighten up and eliminate these evil things, the things that destroy the Christian life. And God can't possibly go along with a careless person.

Careless on place can be deadly. And carelessness in the Christian life can cause you to backslide and be cooled off. Shortly your Christian life that was so beautiful will be like an old brown weed out yonder in the field.

In a little city in the south where I was pastor for four years, three years, a man, at least I heard this there, and I'm sure it's a true story, whether it happened there or not I'm not sure, but it happened nearby. Then he went to a doctor, an eye specialist, and he had trouble with one eye. And the doctor told him his eye's trouble was serious.

He said, it's only in one eye, but it'll spread. And he said, you're blind here in this one eye. But he said, if that's removed, I can save your good eye.

And the man said, well, I hate to have an eye taken out, but there's no danger of it spreading, and I'd be totally blind. So they arranged to have the surgery. They put this man asleep, and the doctor took out the good eye.

Now doctors don't do those things. They have an amazing thing for skill and trustworthiness, but that one didn't. Fanny Crosby, when she was six weeks old, a carelessness, hot towel on her eyes, and she never saw again.

She was a blind poetess. Carelessness, our ordinary affairs, can destroy sight and destroy life. And carelessness in your Christian life can put you back where you started.

Some people are like that man the Greeks told about. Was it Tantalus? Said that he was doomed to roll a rock. He's in Hades, you know, the bad, dark place of the Greeks.

So while he was alive, and so old Zeus sentenced him to a particularly terrible kind of punishment. His punishment, roll a big rock up a hill until he just got within one step of the top and then have it slip again. Then he'd go down and get it and roll it painfully to the top again with great straining of these muscles, and then with the top it'd roll back, and they said he had to do that for eternity.

Now I trust that some of you won't be that long at it, but God's people who make these conventions are a place of getting the stone rolled up the hill. Just as soon as you hit the first crossroads, it slips and rolls back down again, and next year you come up and roll it back up again. It can be, but I know human beings are human beings wherever you find them.

I know it's that way out in the east, and I am quite sure that crossing the rock is different. So I think it's true here. Now if you will tighten up and get rid of carelessness, you'll keep that rock up there.

Maybe you'll go to the hill and start it down up the next hill. But your trouble is, you're doing what you did last year and you'll be doing, and you'll think that's a shame and it's a disgrace to the kingdom of God. And then I also suggest this, that you make a clean break with the world.

Get clean away from the world. Well, I grew up here not long ago in a certain city, and I talked at a banquet they were having. I've touched on foolery in all my life.

Barnum was a piker compared with what they put on at that banquet. And then they preached, and I did, I preached. And I said, what's the matter with you people? I said there was a day that could be known by their separation, but you're just living like everybody else.

And they cried, and it lasted until they had a new building with radiant heating in the floor, and there wasn't any cold floor to kneel on or sawdust to just kneel on a warm floor. I don't think they did much, but I told them anyhow I thought of them, and I'm telling the Lance people this. We took it for granted one time that when you got converted, you gave the world up.

Nowadays we have managed to reason a place where we are able to carry on a sort of politics, living together, you know. We get along. We ought not to be there.

You either love the world, and you don't love both, and you can't love both. If you love God, you can't love the world, for whoever loves the way of God, James told us, and John told us, and said we were to leave the world. And some of you dear people, what help, and can't get permanently fixed on the mount.

It's because you are hanging on to the world, and you think action. You're so afraid your young people will run off and leave you that you're going all out with the world in order to keep your young people that way. And if you do keep them, they will be blessed.

They'll just be carnal worldlings, and they'll curse the church. I've been 31 years pastor of a church in Chicago. We're in a social situation now.

We've lost half the town, even Los Angeles, and all over the whole continent, and we're having difficulty at the moment. But for 30 years we had no difficulty, and we sent missionaries out, and preachers all over. And we never gave those young people anything but good old-fashioned joyous singing, occasionally.

But good old-fashioned singing, and something to do, and good music, and fellowship in the world. Our church has stood for 30 years as a proof that you don't have to go to the world to hold your young people. You don't have to say amen, and I don't care what you do.

I'm telling you the truth. Well, another thing I'd like to have you do now is to cultivate God's people, the best people. Cultivate them.

I never would be ashamed to walk with the people who walk with God. I'm never going to apologize to people who walk with God. Never.

As a pastor, I have never cultivated rich people. And I have never cultivated big shops, and big wheels. Never.

Because God never sent me into the world to cultivate big wheels, or terribly little wheels one of these times. As Vance Havner said, lots of men think they're big wheels because they have shiny hubcaps. These big wheels, you know, that's too bad.

Now, God never sent us to do that. He sent us to cultivate the best people. So you get to know the best people.

I think it's tragic how we've divided the young people from the older people. It's almost your past 50 now, and the young people look out of the corner of their eyes at some of the dear old saints. Young fella, you old saints, and you need them desperately bad.

You've got a head full of nothing, and you old saints, you need the shine on their face. You need the joy of their life. You need the richness of their experience.

Youth movement is on everywhere that imagines young people can tell us older people when to get off the bus. You're all wrong, kids. You ought to thank God for every old man and woman with a sunny face, and you go to them and get your help.

Well, why, Abraham and Job and Isaac and the rest of them, they wouldn't have been allowed in them. If you're over such an age, they shut you out. Young people have a church of their own.

No, no, there's no such a thing as a young people, no such a thing as a woman's church. There's no such a thing as a children's church. The church has them all, from the old man to the youngest child, and we ought to worship together and fellowship together and love each other and worship each other and not run in groups and bands, age groups.

We naturally, young people, like to be together normally, better than they do with older people, but when it comes to the things of God, young people, you need the older people, blessed people that have an old father that you have respect for. And blessed are you if you don't have such a young father. Somewhere else you can go and fellowship some dear, good, old, saintly people.

I remember, as I said, sweet old Christians, and I got my concept of Christianity from them, not from young people. They say now, and they have panel discussions where young people sit around and pool their ignorance and ask questions and answer them. I'd wipe the whole thing off the slate.

You young people ought to hunt up Richards here, Barnabas, the Consolation. Ask him questions. Hunt up the sweet old evangelist or young evangelist that fled in prayer here.

Hunt up him. Ask is no use for a man who hasn't been anywhere to ask, to try to answer a question about that place there. You can't go or come back from where you haven't been, and you can't answer questions when you don't know about spirits.

Cultivate the saints. Get to know them. Sit down with them.

They don't know the latest crack, and they don't know Elvis Presley, but they know Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They know Paul and John and James. They know Wesley or Knox, and they know the saints, and they've read about them, and they walk in the fellowship with them.

Cultivate the best. If you don't, you backslide. And going to Bible Institute won't help you.

I've seen from Bible Institute completely backslidden. Sit around, imagine they're mounted to something because they have it rolled up their arms. And I can find them, old ladies dressed in black, combing their hair back and tight and the bun behind.

They don't know about God and the Bible and spiritual things, and those kids know. But they've been somewhere, and so they look down their phobosis. Phobosis is just a learning word for no.

And so they look down their nose at others. No, no, no. I've had young people tonight, haven't I? But listen, kids.

My wife and I had six sons and one daughter. And I have 16 grandchildren. And I love our young people, and I preach a lot to young people, and I preach like this.

They invite me back. Now, cultivate the best people and don't coddle yourself. I've got two or three more here that I want to tell you about, and then I'll be through.

One of them is be serious-minded. The social life of too many gospel churches is kept up by continual banter and funny stories and nonsense. As soon as they get together, they start it.

As soon as they arrive at the church, and then the pianist or organist tries to get them quieted down to the doxology, and they do finally quiet down to roost. And then they flutter about until it's time to go, impatient with the sermon. And then before they've left, they're bantering and joshing and ribbing and kidding and fooling.

Now, I have a sense of humor. I think you've discovered that. I have a sense of humor.

Trouble at times, because I see funny things where other people don't see funny things. I see them further in than they do, and they get mad. But, you know, a church is a serious place, and God's people ought to be serious people, serious people in the world.

I don't mean gloomy. I don't think that a Christian ought to be gloomy. I don't think he will be.

He should be serious-minded. They that loved the Lord spoke often one to another, and the Lord heard it and wrote it down in a book. Be mine, saith the Lord, when I come to make up my jewels.

You know, we sing that for the children, and it's lovely that we do, but that wasn't written for children. That was written about that were grown up, and when they met, they talked together about God. And on the road to Emmaus, two men were talking, and they had notes about where the best fishing was and what the Mickey Mantle's box store was.

Brother, they never would have had a revelation. But they weren't talking about cricket or baseball or fishing. They were talking about the things that had taken place in the last days.

And Jesus drew near, and he added a third voice, and they discussed these things, and he taught them and told them. But oh, what they learned. Now, don't go out and say that I said that you never ought to have anything humorous or anything jocular.

I like to rib people, and sometimes around our table, it's pretty bad when some of our boys get back and they start in on me. They'll find all fault with me and all the rest, and the good natured jaw the way. So I'm not against humor, but I say that we Christians are of all people serious minded.

It's pretty bad, brothers and sisters, when the Communists are more serious than we Christians are. For the sake of the tape, I won't name them, but these religious Communists that we have in this country who call themselves by a name that doesn't belong to them that go up and down the country, they're serious about it all. They come to your door and play phonograph records and sell you books.

They're serious. But we Christians who know our Savior, we tend to run the other way. I would say deliberately narrow your interests.

I said you should expand, but now I say you should deliberately narrow your interests. They've been specialists. They've had to be.

You can't know everything there is to be known and go every place there is to go and see everybody there is to see. You know everything there is to own and be a specialist. You've got to narrow down.

There was a day when a practitioner, he went from baldness to bunions. He treated you clear from the top down to your feet. He took care of everything.

Nowadays they specialize. They don't do anything but operate on ears. There are other people that do nothing but take out tonsils.

And they do a splendid job because they specialize. There are others who do nothing but fool in their, what the English call the laboratories. And they labor there and they do nothing else.

Nothing else. Edison did only one thing. He didn't even say, I'll take you home again, Kathleen, the only music he liked.

He said, I'm deaf but don't pity me. He said it shuts out an awful lot of people. He was a specialist.

You've got to be a specialist. A Christian is specializing. This one, Paul, Jesus set his face like a flint.

And the great Christians were great because they ruled out unnecessary things. Service of God, one thing that they did. I shudder to think what the world would be like if John Wesley had been a cricket fan or if A.B. Simpson had been a philatelist, stamp collector, and had spent most of his time when he wasn't preaching, collecting.

I saved stamps for people that collect them so I've been inconsistent there. I don't save them. I would be caught dead saving them.

But I give them to some people and sell them. But imagine if that man of God who spent most of his time in prayer that he wasn't in the pulpit, imagine if he spent most of his time from Belgium and Chile. We wouldn't have had what we have now.

You gotta specialize. Spoonful of gunpowder lying here. You set a match to it and there would be a silent poof and out of the oil.

Spoonful of gunpowder in a case clamp it into a gun, put a bullet ahead of it and you can kill a deer with it. Just concentration that matters. Somebody said we have yet to know how big God can get him altogether.

If God can get the little man altogether he can make him big. And I dare to say that some of the great continents were not big men. They were little men highly concentrated.

Then start giving. Now whether you have an allowance or whether you're on a pension or whether what, start giving up some of it to God. Give it somewhere.

To the Church of Christ, to missions, to the poor. Seed to it. Cultivate generosity.

If we're not generous we're not like God for he's generous. Begin serious reading of the scriptures. Seed to it that you read the Bible through this year between now and next Canby.

I have three suggestions in case I never get back to Canby. I'll give you these three. Take these.

Take three little vows before God. First is, vow to possess nothing. Then have it and use it but don't think you possess it.

Ask God to deliver his action. Second is, vow never to pass on any injurious rumor you hear about anybody. All those rumors out in your backyard.

So many ministers of the gospel have lost their ministry because some gossip wolf, some gossip man and he told another gossip man and it got around and that man was looked down on and lost his ministry and he was as clean. But they heard something about him. I used to know a man.

I'm sorry he's still in the alliance but he is. Preacher too. And do you, you feel the garbage man has been around.

Really. He comes and there's a moral stench for all his... He's heard that this man did this and that man did that and this woman over there was caught doing this. The chances are there's no truth.

He makes a garbage can out of your ear and spews his garbage into your ear. Promise God that you'll never pass on any of God's children ever till you die. Unless you're on a committee where you have to tell the truth and we're not telling it.

Would work. Then you're free. But just as a rumor, never tell it.

And another thing is, offer and vow never to accept any glory. There is no limit to what God will do for a man if he can trust him with his glory. I talked one time to the old William T. MacArthur, the great old Christian who's now in heaven.

And he and Simpson intimately slept in the same bed with him, ate, eaten with him, lived in the home with him. He told me things about A.B. Simpson that I didn't know. I'd always thought of him, you know, as a wax saint that was dusted once a week.

And more or less and not too human before I wrote his life. And he told me about things that the doctor said. I don't mean bad things, not sins.

But, uh, you know, and forgetting about it and getting up and preaching himself and things like that. And, uh, I said, now wait a minute. He told me of other things.

Teeth. He said, uh, A.B. Simpson's teeth. I said, no.

He said, I did. I saw him snore. I saw his teeth one time.

Well, now, Brother MacArthur, if he was just an imperfect man like you and me, why did God bless him so that the old man sprayed him up and combed that beard the way he used to do? He said, by the closer, A.B. Simpson because he knew his glory was safe in his hands. He knew that A.B. Simpson would never percentage of the glory. God's glory was safe in A.B. Simpson's hands.

He said, so God not only blessed him, but he blasted everybody that opposed him. that was years ago, but I remember it. If you will bow before your God never to take any honor, but honor him, in him, you'll go right along the way and you'll grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

And tomorrow will be next week better than last week and next month better than this month. And the path of the just will be as a shining light more and more unto the perfect day. But don't imagine that you can get enough blessing it can be to last you for weeks and months to come.

Moody said, you might just as well think that you could this Monday morning enough to last you for the rest of the week as to think that getting one blessing is going to last you. We must walk in the way of the cross. We must amend our ways and our doings on the cross and along with God's happy saints follow in the way of holiness.

And you will keep the path you've taken this week and all the heights you've ascended to you will remain there and go higher. But the grace of God won't follow you and keep you blessed there. Stay where the blessing is.

Keep in the channel where the grace of Jesus and you'll be alright. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/5/SID5732.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/how-to-continue-steadfastly/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net