

COMMITTED TO THE FAITH

Part 8 of Confident Living

1 John 2:18-28. The Cornerstone Church, June 27, 2021

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to part 8 of our ten part series on Confident Living. We've been talking about ways to stay strong in the storms of life.

Today, I want to show you how to stay committed to the core truths of the Christian faith. Here's why:

***When we commit to the core truths of the faith,
we connect to the presence and power of God.***

We need God's presence and power to empower us to face our giants. His supernatural resources help us prevail under pressure.

(Psalms 27:1) The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?

When we need guidance, God is the light. When we need forgiveness, God is our salvation. When we need safety, God is our stronghold. Goodbye fear and anxiety.

(Psalms 121:2) My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

When I don't have the strength to go on, God helps me.

(Psalms 86:7) When I am in distress, I call to you, because you answer me.

When I'm out of solutions, God hears my prayers.

(Psalms 86:15, 17) You, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness ... 17 ... for you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

So, you see how important it is to be connected to God and his supernatural resources. But how do we get connected and stay connected to God?

1 JOHN 2:24: HOW WE CONNECT TO GOD

There is an answer in 1 John 2:24.

(1 John 2:24) As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.

What they had heard from the beginning was the Gospel and the teachings of the apostles about Jesus. These former idol worshippers learned that God came into the world in Jesus Christ and that he lived, was crucified, and rose again to restore them to God and to bring them into eternal life. They received these teachings and trusted in Jesus as their God and Savior. And so have most of here today.

As a result, they (and we) experienced a special connection to God. They were in the Son and in the Father. And the Son and the Father were in them (1 John 4:12-16). They were united with and joined to God. Don't take that for granted. It is simply amazing.

HOW WE STAY CONNECTED TO GOD

Now notice something very important in verse 24. That connection to God continues or remains as long as we remain in what we have heard from the beginning; that is, the core truths about who Jesus is and what Jesus has done.

There was lots of pressure on them to deny those core truths. False teachers that John called *antichrists* were telling these new Christians that Jesus was not the Messiah and he was not the Son of God (1 John 2:22).

John stepped in to remind the Christians: **remain**. Remain in the teaching you received at the beginning and you will remain in God.

That reminder is good for us. The source of our strength is our connection to God and the key to that connection is remaining in the core truths of the Christian faith. What, then, can we do to remain, to stay committed to the faith?

HOW TO STAY COMMITTED TO THE FAITH

There are three habits that help us remain committed to the core truths of the faith.

1. WE REMAIN THROUGH THE HABIT OF REJECTING.

In the apostle John's day, there were false teachers who undermined the core truths of the Christian faith. John called them *antichrists* (1 John 2:18) because they taught a fake Christ who was not truly human (1 John 4:1-3).

(1 John 4:1-3) Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

These antichrists denied the incarnation, thereby undermining the power of Christ - truly God and truly man - to restore us to God. You cannot remain connected to God while rejecting the incarnation.

There has never been as much access to false teaching as we have today. Social sites and YouTube make it possible for antichrists to reach the whole world with counterfeit Christianity.

Therefore, we must get in the habit of saying NO. We have to reject what is false in order to stay rooted in the faith and connected to God.

Here's a helpful way to know what is true and what is false. Our association of churches has a statement of faith that contains ten core doctrines. If you read a book, or a rant on social media, or you watch a video that has teaching that doesn't fit with those ten essentials, then you're probably right to reject it.

You can download the statement of faith at efca.org/sof.

The second habit is ...

2. WE REMAIN THROUGH THE HABIT OF RESTATING.

Restating is another word for sharing or teaching the core truths of the faith; for example, those ten doctrines at efca.org.

Ask any teacher and they'll tell you that teaching something is the best way to learn and understand it.

Not all of us are teachers in a formal sense. And you may feel very inadequate to teach. However, there is a time and place for all of us to teach. For example:

- Teach your kids a little bit of the faith every day.
- Teach a Bible study that "forces" you to study the faith.
- Share a doctrine in your small group. Read Gentle and Lowly to gain some really beautiful insights into Jesus that you can pass on to the group.
- Explain Jesus to a friend who doesn't yet believe in Jesus.
- Teach yourself by reciting a creed, or Christ-centered song, or Philippians 4/John 1.

The late Christian philosopher, Francis Schaefer, said that the best way to learn theology is to teach it to little children. You have to master a concept first before you can put it into words simple enough for kids to get it.

I've often thought that the Lord called me into pastoral ministry because he knew that teaching the faith would keep me committed to the faith. Get in the habit of restating.

The third habit that helps us remain committed to the faith is ...

3. WE REMAIN THROUGH THE HABIT OF REMEMBERING

When we remember Jesus, we remember who he is and what he has done for us in his saving ministry. We also remember that he is alive and powerfully working in our lives every day, and this helps us stay committed to Jesus and the core truths of the faith. Thankfully, God has given us tools to help us remember Jesus. For example:

- **The Holy Spirit helps us remember.** *(1 John 2:20) But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.* The anointing is the work of the Holy Spirit in our minds as he confirms the core truths of the Christian faith. It's not all up to us.
- **Holy Communion helps us remember.** *(Luke 22:19) And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."*
- **The Bible helps us remember.** Every page of the New Testament contains some insight into Jesus. How are you doing on reading through Luke? Remember the intro to Luke? *(Luke 1:4) ... so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.*
- **Church helps us remember.** Every aspect of our Sunday gatherings is intentionally designed to focus our minds and hearts on Jesus. This has been the practice of Christ-followers since the beginning: *(Acts 2:42) They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching (core truths of the faith) and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread (Holy Communion) and to prayer.*
- **The Daily Office helps us remember.** The Daily Office is an ancient method of keeping Jesus front and center every day through readings, prayers, and the creed (see prayer in Acts 2:42 above).

Phone and tablet app: apps.apple.com/us/app/the-daily-office/id1513851259

Website: dailyoffice2019.com

Booklet: anglicancompass.com/dailyofficebooklet/

CONCLUSION

***When we commit to the core truths of the faith,
we connect to the presence and power of God***

The three habits of rejecting, restating, and remembering are time-tested by millions of Jesus-followers and they work. They work invisibly and internally in our minds and hearts by God's power to keep us committed to the faith.

All three habits are important and necessary, but the most effective habit is remembering. It's foundational to rejecting and restating. Therefore, we should spend most time on remembering. It should be daily. Even multiple times a day.

This week:

Spend some time in Gentle and Lowly. You'll discover Jesus in some compelling ways that will help you remain committed to him. Copies are available on the book table.

Or ... read a chapter a day in the Gospel of Luke.

Keep Jesus front and center. Use whatever means God provides.

(John 14:18, 20) I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you ... 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.