
Words of Truth

Hebrews 6:11-12

By: Brian A. Yeager

In this study we will be looking at some more words of motivation. After establishing that God would not forget their work of love they did toward His name (Hebrews 6:9-10), the penmen of this letter then wrote: *“And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises”* (Hebrews 6:11-12).

In this context we have seen terminology of endearment when these saints were referred to as “beloved” (Hebrews 6:9). There is care from those involved in the writing and sending of this letter to their fellow saints. Keep that in mind as we examine the Greek word “ἐπιθυμέω” that is translated “desire” in this text. The meaning of the word is: “To set the heart upon, i.e. long for (rightfully or otherwise): — covet, desire, would fain, lust (after). To turn upon a thing; to have a desire for, long for, to desire; to lust after, covet...” (Strong’s # 1937). This word is translated “lust; lusted; lusteth” in passages such as: Matthew 5:28, I Corinthians 10:6, Galatians 5:17, and James 4:2. It is translated as “coveted; covet” in passages such as: Acts 20:33, Romans 7:7, and Romans 13:9.

As we keep in mind what the Greek word translated “desire” means here, think about the thought presented thereafter. These brethren covet, lust after, strongly desire their fellow-laborers in Christ to continue to show their diligence in the works they were doing. Why is that? Why do they so strongly desire to see these brethren continue in the things they were doing? Well, how many start off strong and then slack off or completely fall (Psalms 106:3-14, Luke 8:4-15, Galatians 1:6-9, II Peter 2:20-22, and Revelation 2:1-7)? Think about what Jesus said to Simon Peter: *“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren”* (Luke 22:31-32).

In the letter to the saints in Colosse, we read: *“As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. 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... If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which*

was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister" (Colossians 1:7-10; 1:23). What was written to Colosse and what is stated here in this Hebrew letter, while differing in wording, is the same message. The desire of the teacher to the students is to continue (John 8:30-32, John 15:9-10, Acts 14:22, I Corinthians 15:58, Titus 3:8, Titus 3:14, and Revelation 2:8-11). Don't stop! Go forward and grow onward. The recipients of this letter should be thinking that they've read this exhortation already (Hebrews 3:1-4:11).

Their continuation of the good, like all saints of all-time, must be unto the end (Matthew 10:22 and Revelation 2:10). Later in this letter, the saints will be taught to look to Jesus for an example of a faithful finisher (Hebrews 12:1-3; cf. John 4:31-34 and John 5:36). To be finishers, they needed to continue to be diligent. That Greek word used and translated as "diligent" is translated in other Scriptures as "earnest care" (II Corinthians 8:16) or "haste" (Mark 6:25 and Luke 1:39). That is not a complete list, but partial to help give us an idea of what that word means. The fact is, there was a rush on this instruction. That leads into what is written next. What is the enemy of diligent work?

The enemy of diligent work is laziness. There is a full assurance (Titus 1:1-3) of the hope that they/we have (I Peter 1:3-9), why would we crush that hope with laziness? All who are familiar with the Scriptures know that God does not approve of laziness (Proverbs 6:6-11, Proverbs 10:4-5, Proverbs 12:27, Proverbs 21:25, Proverbs 24:30-34, Matthew 25:14-30, and II Thessalonians 3:6-15). Rather than being slothful (Proverbs 18:9), saints are to be fervent; zealous (Romans 12:11). Godly zeal results in good works (Titus 2:11-14). We know what every good work is through what we read in the Scriptures (II Timothy 3:16-17). Faith without good works is dead faith (James 2:14-26). For us who are in Christ, we are supposed to be fruitful people (Ephesians 2:1-10). The motivation comes from the full assurance of the hope that we have.

If the hope that laid before them wasn't enough to move them to continue, they were given another tool to use. Sometimes people need to consider that others have succeeded in the endeavor that they are engaged in. We are reading that they were told to be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. In the event that they are having trouble with identifying those individuals, this letter will give them some examples to consider in addition to Jesus (Hebrews 11:1-38). With those of old, it was said: *"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect"* (Hebrews 11:39-40). All of those of old did not live to see Jesus. They did not live to see what these saints had seen. They did not live to learn what these saints learned. Yet, they stood as model citizens to be considered.

Let us take these things to heart lest any of us get lazy. Remember, others have put in the work. We are built upon them (i.e. Ephesians 2:20-22). Don't ever slack off.