

Introduction:

A few years ago, I preached a series of lessons "What is Needed in Religion" and I named things such as respect for God's authority, godly zeal, and seeing the big picture. After preaching on "Choices & Consequences" and "Differences Which Makes a Difference" I got to thinking of the need for consistency. Defined in the following ways; 1. a degree of density, firmness, viscosity, etc.. The liquid has the consistency of cream, 2. steadfast adherence to the same principles, course, form, etc.: There is consistency in his pattern of behavior, 3. agreement, harmony, or compatibility, especially correspondence or uniformity among the parts of a complex thing: The final definitions get to the point I want to make in this lesson.

I) Facts

A) **Bad people sometimes do good things.**

1. Even a bank robber can love his/her mom.
2. A liar can sometimes tell the truth.
3. People in the Bible who were bad but did something good.

a. Balaam, the prophet, listened to God at least one time.

Numbers 22:12 *And God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed." 13 So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Go back to your land, for the LORD has refused to give me permission to go with you."*

b. But Balaam was not a godly person.

2 Peter 2:15 *They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;*

B) **A good person can do something bad.**

1. A Christian can give into temptation and sin.

1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

2. A Christian can get angry and sin.

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.

Ephesians 5:15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, **16** redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

- a. Peter denied Jesus and also was hypocritical in dealing with Gentile when around the Jews.

Galatians 2:10 They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do. **11** Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; **12** for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. **13** And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

- b. However, Peter was an apostle, an elder in the Lord's church, one who preached on the Day of Pentecost.

C) We recognize consistency when we see it and when we don't see it.

1. Daniel (in **chapter 1**) would not eat from the king's table, **v. 8**; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego would not bow down to the image, **3.12ff**; **chapter 6**, Daniel in the lions den.
2. With King Saul we see the lack of commitment to serve God.

II) Consistency

A) Paul calls upon us to be like athletes in training.

1 Corinthians 9:24 Do you not know that those who run in a race

all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

III) How To Obtain Consistency (Faithfulness)

A) **Accept responsibility to your actions**

1. For the big things and the small things.

Matthew 25:21 "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' "

2. In one sense, there are no "small things" as they build up to the big things.
 - a. Example: Jerry Rice kept all his equipment polished and in perfect shape. Why? They mattered and they helped him play better.
 - b. What is a small thing in your service to God?
3. Always be ready to answer the following questions:
 - a. What are you doing?
 - b. Where are you and who are you with?
 - c. By what authority are you doing these things?
4. Responsibility is accountability. "You break it, you buy it."

B) **Practice discipline in every area of your life.**

1. Some people compartmentalize their lives. Secular/Christian/Work/Etc.
2. In everything you do, you are to do it as a Christian.

Colossians 3:17 *And whatever you do in word or deed, do*

all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

- a. Go to ballgame – speak as a Christian
- b. Go to work – work as a Christian

Ephesians 6:5 Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

- c. Go on vacation – go as a Christian.
3. Can a person be a teacher and be a Christian and go to heaven? How about a policeman, doctor, factory worker? No. But a person can be a Christian and be a teacher and go to heaven. They can be a Christian and be a policeman, doctor, factory worker, etc. and go to heaven.

C) All the time –.

- 1. Compare to diet and exercise- to get benefit from both, you must do this daily.
 - a. Cannot “diet” one or 2 days and then splurge for days.
 - b. Cannot exercise one day and then take off for the next week.
- 2. Consistency means you don't take days off being a Christian.
 - a. Religious practices which say to sin today and then be holy the next day.
 - b. Daily Bible reading, prayer, helping others, etc.

D) Consistency requires us to act with a purpose.

- 1. The athlete trains for a purpose, everything is aimed at obtaining

that purpose.

2. As a Christian I need to think before I act.

Hebrews 12:1 *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*

- a. Does this help me to obtain my goal?
- b. Or does this hinder me in obtaining my goal?

3. Just as there is impulse buying there are impulse sins. Do without thinking.

Conclusion:

Luke 10:27 *So he answered and said, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind," and "your neighbor as yourself."* **28** *And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."* **29** *But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"* **30** *Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. **31** "Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. **32** "Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. **33** "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. **34** "So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. **35** "On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' **36** "So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" **37** And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."*