

INTRODUCTION Today, I want to show you the most important spiritual quality to impact your physical health, relational intimacy, financial potential, and help you accomplishing your goals.

This quality is not based on your appearance, background, or education. But the quality that has the potential to impact your entire life is consistency.

Your consistency has more potential to impact your life than you would ever imagine. So many of you are saying, **"Well, I'm in trouble!"** Because I'm so inconsistent.

We're inconsistent with what we eat, with our desire to exercise, in reading the Bible, in our prayer time. We can't be consistent in being on time. Some of you might say, **"The only thing I'm consistent at is being inconsistent."**

If you find yourself with really good intentions, but you struggle to follow through, I completely understand.

If you find yourself wanting to do certain spiritual disciplines or be an encouragement to your kids, yet you're very inconsistent, it is comforting to know that the guy who wrote a big portion of the New Testament found himself battling with inconsistency.

The apostle Paul said in Romans 7 beginning in verse 15, ***¹⁵I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it.***

Instead, I do what I hate. ¹⁸... I want to do what is right, but I can't. ¹⁹I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.

If you know that consistency matters, but you find yourself often inconsistent, and you're tired of having good intentions but falling short again and again, this message is for you.

THE QUALITY OF YOUR DECISIONS DETERMINES THE QUALITY OF YOUR LIFE.

The direction of our life is determined by the quality of our decisions. We make our decisions and our decisions make us. The problem is many of us are not very good decision-makers.

So instead of waiting for a moment in the future when faced with a situation that we know we're likely to face, we're going to decide now. We're going to pre-decide.

When faced with such and such scenario, I have pre-decided to take this very specific action.

We're making six pre-decisions and spending one week talking about all of them.

We are ①ready, ②consistent, ③devoted, ④generous, ⑤faithful, ⑥a finisher.

What we're doing today, is pre-deciding to be consistent.

WITH GOD'S HELP, I AM CONSISTENT.

Why does consistency matter? Because successful people do consistently what other people do occasionally.

We're going to look at a Bible character from the Old Testament, who was maybe one of the most consistent spiritual leaders of all time. His name is Daniel, and he was consistent morally, relationally, and spiritually in his leadership.

And to give you a little background on the story, it's around 605 BC, about 18 years after the evil Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem.

The Babylonians came in and abducted a lot of young boys. They specifically picked the best and the brightest young boys, often around the age of 12, with the goal of indoctrinating them.

We're going to feed you our type of food, teach you our education, teach you our values, so that the best of the best can become part of us and may be future leaders.

That was a way to build up leaders. And Daniel stood out., And King Darius noticed that this young man, Daniel, displayed unusual consistency. Consistency is contagious, attractive, and it builds great leaders.

So, king Darius said, **"This kid's got is and I want to raise him up to promote him."**

But some of the Babylonian leaders said, **"We don't want this guy. We don't want him getting our spot."** So they decided to dig up some dirt on Daniel and try to get him canceled.

And oddly enough, Daniel 6:4 says, ***4... but they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy.***

Those are powerful qualities. What was he? He was faithful, responsible, and trustworthy. What do you need to have to have those qualities? You need to have consistency.

So, these enemies who didn't want Daniel getting their job said, **"Okay, the only way we can get this guy is he so devoted to God, we're just going to attack that."**

So, these guys went to the king and said, **"We got an idea for you. You are the man, you're the best, and we think you should issue a decree that if anyone prays to any God besides you in the next 30 days, then we throw them in the lion's den."**

So, the king says, **"Thank you! And your suggestion is good. Let's make a decree that anyone who prays in the next 30 days to any God besides me will be thrown in the lion's den."** And what do you think Daniel, who was faithful and consistent to God, did in that situation?

Daniel 6:10 answers that question, ***10But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God.***

Daniel did what he always did. He consistently pursued the heart of God. So, when the leaders found out that he had disobeyed the king's orders, they said, **"You have to throw him in the lion's den."**

The king wasn't happy about it, but he stood by his word and he threw Daniel into a pit with hungry lions. But what happened is God sent an angel, and the angel closed the mouth of the lions.

And here's what happened to Daniel, verse 23, ²³... *And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.*

Question: when did Daniel learn to trust God? And the answer is he didn't learn in the lion's den. He learned in his prayer closet.

His faith wasn't built in the battle; his faith was built when he was on his knees. He had consistently sought after the heart of God three times a day, day after day. He consistently sought God.

Why is it that some of us are inconsistent with our relationship with God? It's because Daniel prayed consistently and we pray occasionally. It's not what we do occasionally that makes the difference, it's what we do consistently.

So how do we grow in our consistency? We're going to pre-decide to be consistent. Three big thoughts:

- 1 The first thing we're going to do is we're going to **start with the "why."**
- 2 Second thing we're going to do is we're going to **plan to fail.**
- 3 Third thing we're going to do is we're going to **fall in love with the process.**

Number one,

1 **START WITH THE "WHY."**

Answer the question, why did Daniel pray consistently? I'll tell you it was never about an outward show. It wasn't like the Pharisees who said, **"Look how spiritual I am. I'm praying on the street corners, long prayers so you'll think I'm spiritual."**

Daniel went to his closet privately, knelt down three times a day because he was devoted to his God. That's why he did it. He pre-decided that three times a day, he connects with the heart of God. It was born out of devotion.

If you just have a desire, you might not have a why, but a why pulls out the devotion. If you don't have a compelling why, you're not likely to succeed.

If you want to grow in consistency, you start with the why. Where do you want to be more consistent? Maybe you want to be closer to God. Or want to have a better marriage. Or want to have financial stability. What is your why?

① You may want to be **closer to God**. Then your why might be, you are sick and tired of the devil distracting you. You believe you're created by God for His glory and you want to serve Him wholeheartedly with everything in you.

② You may want a **better marriage**. Then your why is that you want to honor God with the vows that you said before Him. And you want to show your children a godly example of what marriage can be.

③ You may want **financial stability**. Then your why might be because you are sick and tired of living paycheck to paycheck. You want to be financially free so you can be generous and make a difference in the lives of other people.

What's your why? The why moves it from desire to devotion.

I'm not talking about willpower; I'm talking about why power. This brings out devotion.

Because when you want to be consistent, you're going to have some resistance. A lack of support and from friends and you're going to say, "**I don't feel like it today.**" But when you know your why, you will find a way. We're talking about why power.

So, when your values are clear, your decisions are easier. If you want to become more consistent, define your why. Daniel knew his why. His faith wasn't built in the lion's den; it was built in the prayer closet. You start with the why.

The second thing, is you,

② PLAN TO FAIL.

You actually plan to not be perfect. Daniel prayed three times before, we read that, just like he did before. Here's a question. Do you think he ever missed one of his daily prayer times? Of course he did.

How do I know? Because he's a human being who lives in a very real world.

Why is it that so many of us are inconsistent? It's because we have an all or nothing mindset. It's because if we fail one time, we think we are a failure. I failed, so forget it.

And that's why we have to remember that being consistent isn't the same as being perfect. You want to give yourself grace to fail because being consistent is not the same as being perfect.

Here's the thing is, is you're going to mess up. Plan to allow for it. Know that a momentary failure is actually a part of the process. And here's the problem. It is the illusion of perfection that's keeping some of you from getting started.

"Well, I'll never be great at that, so I might as well not try." Some of you aren't following Jesus today because you think, **"Well, if I follow Jesus, then what if I mess up?"**

The answer is you probably will, but don't let that stop you from starting. You want to follow Jesus.

You're going to mess up. You're going to eat the wrong thing. You're going to oversleep and not to work out. You're going to buy something stupid while you're trying to get out of debt.

You're going to be reading the Bible every day and then you're going to miss a day. Don't confuse being consistent with being perfect.

Here's what we're going to do. We are going to start with why, plan to fail, and we're going to,

③ FALL IN LOVE WITH THE PROCESS.

Daniel wasn't praying because it was a duty, he just loved time with God. He loved the intimacy. He was just consistently living his life in a way that honored God.

And here's the mistake that so many of us make is we obsess about the goal. I have to lose 20 pounds. I have to pay off both credit cards. I have to read through the whole Bible.

And then we're inconsistent. And we feel like we don't succeed until we hit the goal. And the goal is so far out there in the future that the path is often more difficult. And that's why we don't obsess about the goal. We fall in love with the process.

My win is when I show back up. What I know is if I'm consistent, I will make progress.

You're not successful when you achieve the goal in the future. You're successful when you honor God today.

So, we're going to pre-decide. With God's help, I am consistent.

And here's the key, it's with God's help. Meaning you can't be consistent on your own.

Paul said, **"I don't even understand myself."** He asked a question later in the text, **"Who can deliver me from this body of inconsistency, this body of death?"**

And he said, **"Praise be to Jesus Christ. He is the one who can empower us to live a life that honors God."** We pre-decide with God's help. I don't drink soft drinks. I walk three times a week. I'm going to put \$50 extra a month to paying off my credit card debt.

With God's help, I'm going to read God's Word every single day. We're pre-deciding, so our decisions aren't made in the future, but we're deciding today what we're going to do before God. We pre-decide.

So, my question to you is this: where is God calling you to be consistent? Just say, **"God, where do You want me to be consistent? Where could I honor You more? Be more faithful? Show me, God."**

Maybe in your giving, in your prayer time, your words, your attitude, in the time you go to bed, in the way you treat the people around you.

God, where do You want me to be consistent? Let Him speak to you and He'll show you the values that matter to Him and should matter to you.

And when your values are clear, your decisions are easier. So, what do you do? You pre-decide, "**I'm consistent.**" Three times a day Daniel said, "**I seek the Lord.**" I pre-decide. That's not going to happen by accident.

You start with the why. And you know you're not perfect, so you plan to fail, and you fall in love with the process.

And the great news is you're not successful when you achieve the goal, but congratulations, you are successful when you honor Him today.

So with God's help, may you honor Him in consistency in the area that brings Him glory and makes you more effective in this world.

PRAYER Father, I pray that Your Spirit would empower us and give us a clear and compelling why connected to glorifying You.

God, help us understand that because we are fallen people we're not going to be perfect, but we're going to fall in love with the process of honoring You, doing what You called us to do. And we will trust You for the results.

Heavenly Father. Forgive all of my sins. Jesus, save me. Fill me with Your Spirit. So, I could know You. And serve You. And walk with You consistently, showing Your love and making You known.

Thank you for new life. I give you all of mine. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

THE END