

# 'The Prayer 20/20 Impact' - Knowing Jesus More! August 16th, 2020

*Dear Praying Friends, and Partners In Prayer Team, and whole Church Family,*

*"See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ." **Colossians 2:8 (NIV)***

*"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." **Galatians 5:1 (ESV)***

What is consistency? It is the action of something which takes place over and over through time that gives a harmonious cohesive end result. In our spiritual lives we all want to be consistent, right? We want to gain consistency of victory over our fleshly ways, our tempers, our fallenness, and our weakness which ever makes us prone to sin. We want to gain consistency in our prayer lives. We want to gain consistency with our Bible reading so we can grow stronger. We want to gain consistency so we are better at discerning the voices of this world, which we talked about in Colossians 2:5-13 last week in our message and Partners. It is my prayer for all of us as true believing followers in Christ that we will gain consistency in our spiritual walk more and more. Paul said this also in verse 6-7, "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith" (2:6-7 NKJV).



What is the power of consistency when it comes to discerning truth? It causes and allows us to grow spiritually. God's goal for all of us is to know Christ in His fullness! (Colossians 2:9).

Imagine a leaky faucet. Regardless of how hard you twist the knob, it still drips. One drop at a time. Incessantly – drip, drip, drip. The consistency becomes an annoyance pretty quickly. But put in the right environment and given enough time, that same dripping with that same consistency can have an immense amount of power.

That's how canyons are made. Not all at once, but through the power of consistency. Dripping isn't that exciting, but what it lacks in flash it makes up for in effectiveness. There's a lot to be said for the power of consistency. When we lead people in the way of discipleship, one of the issues we must deal with is the boring nature of it all. I mean, there's only so many ways you can "spice up" the habits that characterize consistent growth in Christ.

There will be many days when you and the people you lead won't feel like

reading the Bible. They won't feel like praying. They won't feel like memorizing Scripture or serving or doing any of the other practices of spiritual development. Consequently, we might be tempted to reframe or describe spiritual growth as some grand adventure completely free of drudgery. While it's true that at times growing in Christ will feel like that, it's also true that many times it won't. But it is during these moments that seem boring, that error can sneak into our lives. We want to make something better of ourselves spiritually. We don't want to be left out of a secret way to be a better Christian. We don't want to be treated as a second-class citizen of heaven. We want to stay ahead of our Christian competition. And that will just lead us into error faster than we know it.

In the end, what we'll find is that consistency wins over excitement time and time again. And here are five reasons why:

**1. Consistency emphasizes faith over experience for we are walking by faith, not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:7).** What makes someone get up and do the same thing day after day after day regardless of whether he feels like it or not? You could argue that it's simply being a creature of habit, but you could also say that such action is driven forward by faith.

You do the same spiritual practices because you genuinely believe that the Bible is the Word of God. You truly believe God hears you when you pray. The alternative to this kind of consistency is a life driven by experience. If that's the case, your spiritual development is like a yo-yo moving up and down with the flippancy of emotion.

**2. Consistency causes roots to grow deep in the fullness of Christ.** Remember what Paul was trying to remind the Colossian believers in Chapter 2:7? That they become rooted in "Christ." I love the way J. B. Phillips translated this in his own paraphrase: "Just as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so go on living in Him—in simple faith. Grow out of Him as a plant grows out of the soil it is planted in, becoming more and surer of the faith as you were taught it, and your lives will overflow with joy and thankfulness."

When you opt for consistency over excitement, you are developing the kind of practices that will carry you through the seasons of spiritual dryness all of us will encounter. In other words, your roots are growing deep.

When we integrate the same, repeated practices into our lives, day after day, we will find that when eventually we don't feel anything; when we are suffering; when we simply can't pray any more that our roots will have extended well past the shallows.

**3. Consistency works into other areas of life and leads to true spirituality.** One of the side benefits of this kind of spiritual discipline is that it will work

into other areas of life as well. You'll find, I believe, that not only are you disciplined "spiritually," but physically, emotionally and mentally. But then again, that's why "spiritually" is in quotes because I seem to remember Jesus saying that we should love God not only spiritually but with every part of ourselves.

Time is a powerful ally. Drip, drip, drip. One drop at a time. And slowly, the landscape changes. Let's pray that we will be consistent and discerning in our spiritual growth, and not accept false substitutes and false additives.

**4. Consistency will keep us from failing and faltering in our faith!** If we are not committed to consistency, what will happen? Remember the dangers of false teachers in this world that Paul warned are trying to "spoil" our faith (Col. 2:4)? I'm often asked: "What is happening in this world of ours?" So what is happening in churches across America, or this wayward old fallen and error-filled world? I have a quick and simple answer that doesn't solve the problem but it is the answer to exactly what is happening. What is happening is exactly what God predicted! Exactly! These end times are going to be filled with false teachings and false spirituality. We are seeing it more and more! We need to be on guard and discerning.

1 Peter 4:7 says this to believers: "But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers... Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you." In other words we are not to keep being surprised but consistently expect false error to bring suffering and persecution to our faithfulness to Christ. These are haunting words! Why? Because we are just surprised all the time since we are still expecting error to be the exception, not the mainstream rule.

1 John 4:1-4, 6 says: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." These are haunting words! Sobering warnings!

1 Timothy 4:1 warns us: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons." Could that be happening now? After the service Carol Cheshire reminded me that in popular Evangelical churches those very prominent speakers are proclaiming that "We should throw out the Old Testament, and it is not needed for us to grow as believers today." If that isn't a clear example of this warning, what is?

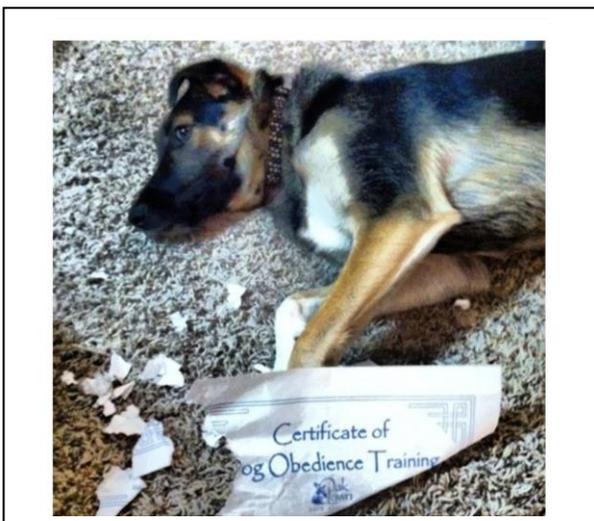
Our Savior Himself in Matthew 24:4-5, 24 proclaimed: "And Jesus answered

and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, “I am the Christ,” and will deceive many. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” The error of these last days will be so convincing and deceiving as so-called Christian teachers and preachers gain media popularity, that even true Christians will fall for them and not perceive the error. Jesus Himself told us this so I’m totally alarmed at this point!

The bottom line is that Scripture is warning of false teachings. And if we are not consistent to watch for them, we will have our freedoms and our spiritual maturity stolen. “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ” (Col. 2:8).

**5. We must consistently maintain guarding ourselves and be watching for truth!** What can we do to consistently keep from falling to error and false spirituality? You may or may not remember the pictures I shared in our “Partners in Prayer” two weeks ago, but I have several more pictures that I want to share with us that make clear the inconsistency in our Christian lives. These are examples and reminders of how our Christian lives need to be consistent and true from the false teachings that surround us and the American church today. So in application here are four small simple ways to remind us of consistency in our spiritual walk of Christ:

**a. Be consistently obedient!** The first picture is that of a cute small puppy. Do you want to know something? He is very proud of himself. Why? He has



completed and been awarded his graduation certificate from “obedience school.” Do you see that? And do you want to know what is most inconsistent? That though this little doggy knows all about what obedience is, he wasn’t consistent in his obedience and chewed up his little certificate. See that? I hope we remember that as believers if we want to grow in the fullness of Christ, we must be on top of our obedience to the things Christ wants for us. If we do not, we are just empty words. Our faith isn’t real. James 2:17 reminds us: “So you see, it isn’t enough just to have faith. You must

also do good to prove that you have it. Faith that doesn’t show itself by good works is no faith at all—it is dead and useless” (NLT). When I was a child during my Bible club years, we learned this song: “Obedience is the very best way, to show what you believe. Doing exactly as the Lord commands, doing it happily! Action is the key do it immediately, to show what you believe, yes

obedience is the very best way to show what you believe!”

**b. Be consistently real!** Here is the second picture. You have been experiencing this for months now that things are in shortage during the Covid-19 pandemic. We have been going to the store to buy things, and they are not there. Notice in the picture what the product is- it's 'invisible spray.' And is it there? No. Literally it doesn't exist for real on this shelf. Doesn't this give you a chuckle? Yet how often we as believers are not real in our walk with Christ. How can we expect our lives to deliver the real “fullness” of Christ if we are not real and authentic to what we say a Christian should be. Right?



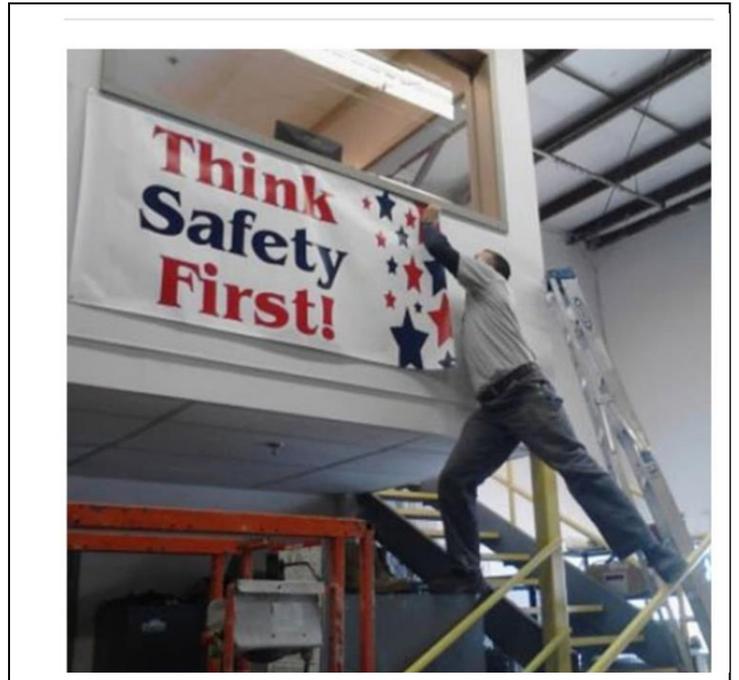
**c. Be consistently truthful!** Here is the third picture. You are working at your job at the mall, and something breaks on you. You decide that you need



someone to fix it. So you head down to the maintenance shop where those faithful workmen or women will be able to help you. If I was heading into that shop, I would hope and have assurance that my problem would be fixed to satisfaction. I would want assurance that they will know how to fix my broken object. But notice the sign. What does it say? So does this give you assurance that they know how to fix things? Absolutely not. In the Christian life there are going to be false teachers and false Christian leaders who

try to assure us that we can be spiritually fulfilled in Christ, but they can't deliver. That is what Paul is warning the church about in Colossians 2:16-23. He gives three warnings. There isn't a reason to try to find the secret fixes to spirituality in Christ from the people who can't fix the problem.

**d. Be consistently thinking!** Here is the last picture. It just brings about our theme of the importance of discernment. Remember what discernment is? A good Biblical definition would be: "to examine, prove, or test, to scrutinize!" Cross-reference and read 1 John 4:1-4 and find the word "test." We are to sift up and down the things we believe in Scripture to make sure we are discerning truth from error. The false teachers were changing what the believers had been taught about Christ. The phrase "empty deception" describes the philosophy which might take us captive. Looking again at this last picture, what was this person thinking? If we are discerning it will protect us and keep us from falling. Even Jude 24 reminds us of this, "And God is able to keep you from slipping and falling away, and to bring you, sinless and perfect, into His glorious presence with mighty shouts of everlasting joy."



So let me close with this last reminder, in a world of confusion, error, falsehood, imitation Christianity, and chaos, it is good to consistently remember what is NOT different. God is still sovereign and in control of "all things!" (Romans 8:28). The steadfast love of the Lord "never" ceases (Lamentation 3:22). His mercies never come to an end, and they are new "every" morning (Lamentation 3:22-23). Jesus is the same "yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). And Jesus is not sitting around the Father's throne all anxious and churned up over current events and false teachings invading His Church. But He is interceding and praying for you and me! I love the translation that says: "since He always lives to make intercession for them [meaning us believers]" (Hebrews 7:24). So let's pray for our church too loved ones.

***Will you pray with me?***

***"Our God, we come to You by Jesus Christ, who had gone within the veil on our behalf and 'ever liveth to make intercession for [us]' (Hebrews 7:25). Our poor prayers could never reach You if it were not for Him, but***

***His hands are full of sweet perfume, which makes our pleading sweet to You. His blood is sprinkled on the mercy seat, and our sins are forgiven nailed on the cross, and we know that You always hear those who approach You through that ever blessed Name. We have deeply felt our entire unworthiness even to lift up our eyes toward heaven. We daily struggle with our own failures and giving in to the pressures of this world, which is not our home. We are often trying to gain more spirituality by our own means, and we don't realize that there are spiritual hucksters who are ready to beguile us away from the true faith of Christ. We often feel we fall short of spiritual things. We often feel like second-class Christians who can't be as spiritual as others. We even attempt to hold ourselves and others by our rules of what a 'spiritual' Christian should be. How often You show Your mighty power, Oh Lord, we bless You that the voice of God has called us to discern and come to Christ. We pray that You will help us grow spiritually, but not with additives but simple love and devotions through the power of Your Holy Spirit. Sanctify us we pray! Help us Your own people to know the quickening of the Spirit of God, for 'greater is He who is in us than he who is in this world' (1 John 4:4). Make us Your people 'strong in the Lord and in the power of His might' (Eph. 6:10). Help us to know that 'in Christ we are set free' (Gal. 5:2). Lord, we find when we walk close to You that we have no desire for the world, or fake spirituality. We just want Jesus! We pray for some of Your own people who seem to be doing very little for You to want more of Your passion. Lord, make us useful. Help us be discerning and protected from the voices of error around us. Oh, let no believer live for himself. May we be trying to bring others to faith in Christ. Oh Lord, we ask You to visit Your church today. May none of us imagine we are living uprightly unless we are bringing others to the cross. Oh, keep us from worldliness. Keep us much in prayer. Keep us with the light of God shining upon us. May we be a happy people, not because we are screened from affliction, but because we are walking in the hope of Christ. Holy Spirit, helps us walk in freedom. Help us grow spiritually true. Lord, shake this earth with Your power. Oh, that real revival moves people to an authentic life for Christ. Last of all, come Lord Jesus! This is the great cry of our souls. Even so, come quickly, come quickly, Lord Jesus. Amen! (Rev. 22:20)."***

**Discerning and praying,  
Pastor Corvin**

Quote: "Spirituality really means 'Holy Spirit at work!'" ... Leon Joseph Suenens (1904)

Quote: "The concept of spirituality varies among different Christian groups. In

some circles the highly vocal person who walks religion continually is thought to be very spiritual; others accept noisy exuberance as a mark of spirituality, and in some churches the man who prays first a, longest, and loudest gets a reputation for being the most spiritual man in the assembly. But these are not so.” ... A W. Tozer (1897-1963)

Quote: “You can’t make yourself spiritual just as you can’t catch wind in a net.” ... Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)

Quote: “To put sin out of the life, or to live a separated life, are humanly impossible tasks. That is the work of the Spirit. It is not a matter of human repression of sin, but of divine expulsion.” ... Kenneth Wuest

**Do You Know Your Hymns?**

Dentist’s Hymn . . .	Crown Him with Many Crowns.
Weatherman’s Hymn . . .	There Shall Be Showers of Blessings.
Contractor’s Hymn . . .	The Church’s One Foundation.
Tailor’s Hymn . . .	Holy, Holy, Holy.
Golfer’s Hymn . . .	There’s a Green Hill Far Away.
Politician’s Hymn . . .	Standing on the Promises!
Optometrist’s Hymn. . .	Open My Eyes That I Might See.
IRS Agent’s Hymn . . .	I Surrender All.
Gossip’s Hymn . . .	Pass It On.
Electrician’s Hymn . . .	Send The Light..
Shopper’s Hymn . . .	Sweet Bye and Bye.
Realtor’s Hymn . . .	I’ve Got a Mansion, Just Over the Hilltop.
Massage Therapist’s Hymn.	He Touched Me.

AND for those who speed on the highway - a few hymns:

55 mph . . .	God Will Take Care of You
75 mph . . .	Nearer My God To Thee
85 mph . . .	This World Is Not My Home
95 mph . . .	Lord, I’m Coming Home
100 mph . . .	Precious Memories

Give me a sense of humor, Lord, Give me the grace to see a joke,  
To get some humor out of life, And pass it on to other folks.