**In Consistency Lies the Power**

**Introduction:** In all my years of serving God as a pastor, I have observed people who do well, flourish spiritually and advance in their walk with God. I have seen people with a vibrant faith, passionate about God and who, despite what comes against them, seem to always bounce back and carry on – with enough encouragement to spare.

However, I have also seen many who don’t do well and who never seem to grow in God and see lasting breakthroughs. Here's an area that I believe a lot of people struggle with and that may account for where’re they are at: lack of consistency.

I want to talk about the power of consistency. I really believe that an adjustment in this area can absolutely transform a person’s life. As we will see today, consistency is one of the most important keys to spiritual growth, to experiencing breakthroughs and to flourish in life.

Consistency is a deliberate effort to stay the course, to be steady, unchangeable, immovable, constant, firmly fixed in a position.

With that in mind, let us look today at a passage of a time when Jacob the great patriarch of the 12 tribes knows that his time to die is at hand, and calls his sons to prophesy over each one of them. One by one, receives a word, until it was Joseph’s turn.

**Opening Text: Genesis 49:1-2, 22-26**

1. **Consistent Joseph**
2. Joseph is described as someone flourishing in life:

**V.22** – “*Joseph is a fruitful bough by a well, his branches run over the wall*”.

1. However, we know that Joseph went through many trials since he received a dream from God. He endured a lot:

**V. 23** – “*The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him*”.

1. However, in spite of all the attacks…

**V.24** – “*his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hand of the mighty God of Jacob*”.

The key word here is “*remained*”. Joseph didn’t quit, Joseph remained. He remained the same, he remained strong, he remained faithful to the assignment. He remained pursuing the dream God had given him, he remained in integrity, and he was never moved from the source of his power: the mighty God of Jacob!

**V.22** says that he remained like *a* ***fruitful branch******by the well****.*

He knew where the water was and remained by it. No wonder he was fruitful. He knew where his power was and didn’t move from it. He was constant.

He didn’t lack ‘staying power’, he didn’t change the course, he was constant and unwavering. He knew his identity, he embraced his assignment and never moved from where he was with God.

Joseph’s life is such an example of stability and consistency though the highs and lows of life. No wonder he was blessed and one day saw his God-given dream come to pass.

Jacob, therefore, spoke blessings over his son Joseph because he was stable and constant. However, that is not what he said about Reuben, his firstborn.

1. **Unstable Reuben**

**Genesis 49:4** – “*unstable as water, you shall not excel*”.

What a contrast! Because of his sin, Reuben, although he was the firstborn, he lost his birthright and, because of his instability he was not going to excel. His father described him not as someone ‘solid as a rock’ but ‘*unstable as water’.*

1. Unstable: uncertain, unreliable, always changing, unpredictable, fluid, wobbly, lacking substance.

Someone unstable can’t be trusted with a dream, someone unreliable can’t be trusted with an assignment.

**Proverbs 24:21- “***My son, fear the Lord and the king; do not associate with those given to change;”*

1. Unlike his brother, Joseph had some real stick-ability and was blessed. Reuben could not excel. What a contrast.

Inconsistency can never lead to success:

* A company with a great business plan and ambition can never succeed if they are inconsistent in the execution of that plan.
* An athlete will never excel without a consistent routine of training.
* A family will not do well if they’re unstable and always changing.
* Likewise, we will never do well spiritually if our relationship with God is unstable, with no specific set times to be in His presence, reading and learning the Word. We cannot expect to grow, expand, flourish if we do not make it a priority to abide in Him and His words abiding in us. The word ‘*abide*’ itself, describes what consistency is.

Someone said, *success is the sum of small efforts repeated day in and day out.* The truth is *what you do every day, matters more than what you do once in a while.*

We need to get better in this area – getting better at developing the consistent habits that lead to spiritual excellence and blessing.

1. Reuben was unstable as water.

2 Peter 2:14 and 3:16 speak about ‘*unstable souls’.* Do you know that being ‘unstable’ will even impact on the effectiveness of your own prayers?

**James 1:6-8 -** *But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.****7****For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;****8****he is a double-minded man,* ***unstable in all his ways.***

To be consistent also means to be single-minded and not to waver:

**1 Kings 18:21 NIV** - *Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”*

So, Joseph was consistent, Reuben unstable. What about God?

1. **A consistent God**

Consistency is in the very character of God.

**Malachi 3:6a -** *“For I am the Lord, I do not change;*

**Matthew 24:25** - *Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*

**Psalms 102:27** - *But You are the same, and Your years will have no end.*

**Hebrews 13:8** - *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*

**James 1:17 -** *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning*.

**Psalms 119:132** - *Look upon me and be merciful to me, as Your custom is toward those who love Your name.*

Custom is a repeated behaviour.

1. **The call to consistency**
2. God calls us to be a branch planted by the well (like Joseph was), a people planted in the house of God who will flourish in the courts of our God (Psalms 92:13).

There are so many scriptures in the bible that use synonymous words to emphasize consistency like, *steadfastness, being immovable, being constant, having patience, persevere, ‘stand and having done all to stand, stand therefore’* (Ephesians 6:13-14)

Consistency will always lead to blessing, to spiritual growth, to answered prayers etc. Being unstable like water will never cause us to excel in any of those areas.

1. Another word we commonly find in the Scriptures that describes consistency is the word ‘continue’.
* Romans 11:22 says to *continue in God’s goodness,*
* Colossians 1:23 says to *continue in the faith and not be moved away from the hope we have received,*
* Colossians 4:2 says, *continue earnestly in prayer.*
* 1 Timothy 4:16 tells us to *continue in the good doctrine we have received.*
* Hebrews 13:1 says to *continue in brotherly love.*

God wants *continuity* in our relationship with Him and in how we give ourselves to spiritual things – your time with God, time in the Word, time to be with other Christians in corporate worship etc.

The early church did exactly that:

**Acts 2:42** - *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

**Conclusion**

*Consistent* Joseph and *unstable* Reuben: one was blessed, the other never excelled. Let us be consistent like Joseph.

The early church was consistent in the Word (the apostle’s doctrine), in meeting together (fellowship, the breaking of bread) and in prayer.

**Luke 18:1-3 Message**: *Jesus told them a story showing that it was necessary for them to pray consistently and never quit.*

If we get these very basic spiritual habits going, consistently, I have no doubt we will experience the reality of God’s promises and, like Joseph, we too will be blessed and stand in our dreams, we will grow in God, we will see answers to prayers.