

BEYOND CONFLICT

August 21 & 22: Inconsistent People

Series Overview

Some people are difficult to live with. They may cross your path every day at work, at school, at home or at church. They may be critical, phony, inconsistent or cruel. Each of us needs to learn how to respond to these people. We need to know when to confront, encourage and forgive, because we are supposed to live at peace with everyone.



Take a second look ... visit cpccweb.org to watch the sermon or get the highlights here!

Sermon Highlights *(Mark 14:27-31, 46-54, 66-72)*

Simon Peter struggled with inconsistency on the night Jesus was arrested. He was determined to remain faithful to Christ, regardless of the cost, but the pressure was awesome ... and he fell. We can all profit from his mistake and learn something about how we can be consistent.

1. He over estimated his strength.

Mark 14:27-31

2. He associated with the wrong crowd.

Mark 14:46-54

3. He intensified his denial.

Mark 14:66-72

4. He repented with the right spirit.

Mark 14:72

Four Characteristics of Genuine Repentance:

- **An admission of the facts**
- **A broken and humble spirit**
- **A complete break with the past**
- **Accepting God's forgiveness and reinstatement**

After being reinstated by Jesus, Peter preached the first Gospel message

Acts 2:22-24, 36-38

On inconsistency...

- Nothing that isn't a real crime makes a man appear so contemptible and little in the eyes of the world as inconsistency. –Joseph Addison
- *What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah? Your love is like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears.* –Hosea 6:4
- *Yet if you devote your heart to him and stretch out your hands to him, if you put away the sin that is in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent, then you will lift up your face without shame; you will stand firm and without fear.* –Job 11:13-15



Take it home ... Practical Applications

Is there an area in your life where you have been inconsistent? Has there been a situation where you have not stayed true to God and your Christian convictions? What do you need to do so you can know God's forgiveness and reinstatement?



Take it to the source ... Bible Study

Introductory question: What is the most notable example of public inconsistency that you can think of? Why?

Opening Thought

Our actions do speak louder than words, and an inconsistent life negatively affects people in many ways. How we live will have an impact on some person's view of Christians and Christianity. Use this question to consider the implications of how your group lives daily life.

Read Mark 14:27-31, Proverbs 28:26 and 1 Corinthians 10:12.

1. If you were one of the other disciples, what would be your response to Peter's self-confident statement?
2. How quick are you to assert your own ability or strength in situations that you are actually unsure of? Why can that be spiritually dangerous?
3. Why is it important for us to be aware of our weaknesses and the areas where we may be prone to inconsistency or failure?
4. How do humility and genuine dependence on God go hand in hand?
5. What are some things you can do to keep from being spiritually over-confident? How can you make these things a part of your daily devotional life?

Key Point

It is important that none of us thinks more of ourselves than we should. Over-confidence is a great danger in the spiritual life. There are many ways that we can fall and ruin our testimony. One bad day can undo months or years of solid living. Humble dependence on God means that we recognize our continual need for Him and His help in every aspect of our lives. It is a good spiritual practice to daily remind ourselves of how much we need His Spirit and His power if we are to live consistent lives that reflect the life and love of God.

Read Mark 14:46-54 and Mark 14:66-72.

1. Do you have trouble living a consistent Christian life when you are alone in a crowd of unChristian people? How so?
2. Why is it hard to take the feeling and commitment that you have after a Sunday morning service and translate it to Monday morning work? What can you do to maintain a sense of commitment to Christ and His plans for you day after day?
3. Why does it seem so hard to avoid the things that we know are our biggest weaknesses? What can you do to avoid the things that bring you down spiritually? What can your small group do to help each other?
4. Can you relate to Peter and his reaction in *Mark 14:72*? How?
5. What is your normal reaction when you come to that moment where you know you have let God or someone else down and you have to face yourself and the consequences of your action? What are you most likely to do?

Key Point

Staying above temptation is difficult for all of us. Vigilance and wisdom help us avoid situations that could be a big downfall for our spiritual growth and progress. It is important that we wisely consider who we listen to, who we spend time with and who we consider to be our life examples. Self-knowledge is a vital part of being aware of where we are weak and where we might have a tendency to fail. Repentance and forgiveness is always available to those who fail, but avoiding failure is a better way to maintain a strong testimony and a healthy spiritual life.

Read *Proverbs 28:13*, *Psalms 34:18* and *Psalms 51:1-17*.

1. Have you ever had a time when you tried to hide an inconsistency in your life from God and from others? What effect did it have on you and your relationships?
2. It has been said that repentance is often hard, because to confess a sin and repent means that now we have to forsake it. Is there an area of inconsistency in your life that needs to be confessed and forsaken? What is your first step to being spiritually stable and consistent in that particular area?
3. After reading these two passages from the *Psalms*, what would you say are the key elements in the process of repentance and restoration?
4. How has God shown you His love and mercy after a time of repentance in your life?

Key Point

Confession and repentance are keys to continual spiritual growth. Trying to hide sin from God is of no value, and it actually causes harm to your own spiritual condition. Repentance contains an element of being willing to forsake the sin that is a problem. Repentance is not just words but a change of heart and action. This opens the way for God to pour out His love, mercy and forgiveness. This is the way that relationship is restored and our spiritual life is able to continue to grow and develop. This is a sensitive area for a lot of people, but it is one of the key ways to true spiritual freedom.

Notes...



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All Bible references are from the New International Version unless otherwise stated.

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