

# 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.



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## 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?

**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?

**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?

**Read Proverbs 28:13, Psalm 34:18 and Psalm 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?



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

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