

The Importance of Being Consistent & Stable

He who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does - (James 1:6-8).

God wants both faith and stability to be evident in your life. This passage, taken from the book of James, implies that God will not bless double-mindedness or instability. But how can you find stability when the conditions are bad - when the storms of life are hitting you hard? How can you stop being like the wave of the sea, tossed to and fro by extreme weather conditions? This is what we will be examining today.

One thing's for sure, life is about fluctuation, adaptation and variation. The conditions and tempo of life are in a state of constant oscillation. So it would be true to say that our lives are in continual motion. We live in a sea of change, where time doesn't stop for anyone. Therefore, because everything is always shifting, change may affect your behaviour and also your natural response patterns. To many of you the effects of such change may never be that extreme, unless you suddenly find yourself in a serious crisis, but to others change brings about significant instability. Anything out of the ordinary (or that isn't commonplace), causes such people to become unstable and insecure.

There are many different things which cause change in us, and the effects of change can be either beneficial or destructive. Change in our circumstances can be foreseeable or unpredictable - slow or sudden. So how can we learn to deal with the various aspects of change, and still remain stable and balanced? Here are three things you can do:

(1) **Keep your eyes on God**. You must learn to keep your eyes on the Lord, because in God there is no variation, oscillation or deviation. He has declared that, ***"His Word will stand forever."*** And that, ***"He is the same yesterday, today and forever?"***

James 1:16, *"Every good gift and perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."* **Hebrews 1:12** *"Like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same (unchanging), and Your years will not fail."* **Hebrews 7:24**, *"But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood (ministry)."*

One of God's strongest attributes must be the fact that He is unchangeable! Numbers 23:19 declares, ***"God is not a man, that He should lie (deviate), nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"*** You can rely on God 1000%. Can you imagine what major problems we would all encounter if God didn't mean what He said? Yet many people treat God as if He changes His mind continually.

(2) **Build your life on the Rock**. The best way to sit out any storm is to be anchored to the Rock of Ages. When you attach yourself to Jesus, standing and acting on His Word, you become as stable and as secure as He is. Let's read **Matthew 7:24** together.....

One thing I find very interesting concerning this parable is this, it serves to illustrate clearly the absolute necessity of *doing what God has told you to do* (obeying God's word). Only by 'hearing' and then 'doing' the will of God, will you be able to bring true stability into your life. God has not promised you clear and calm weather all the time. However, *"When the rain descends, the floods come, and the winds blow and beat on your house; it will not fall, because it is founded on the rock."*

In life, it is not the storms or adverse conditions that determine whether you stand or fall, but simply what you are grounded in or founded upon. If your life is built on shifting sand, you too will shift and change until you stumble and fall. However, if you build your life on the Rock (Jesus), you will stand secure and have the ability to stay afloat in all adverse conditions.

Good weather all the time causes draught and even pollution. Constant wind and rain may cause blizzards and floods. But on their own, and in moderation, the elements which cause change or variation in our weather conditions are harmless. It is only when they move to the extreme that they become potentially destructive. It is the same with all of us! By being fixed and balanced you can survive any extreme weather.

(3) **Don't loose heart**. Every time you loose heart, or just give up, you become unstable and unreliable. ***"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day."*** - **2 Corinthians 4:16**. Notice, "not losing heart" is not optional. The apostle Paul declared – "we do not loose heart." That's what we do!

Many of you spend so much of your time talking and thinking about keeping your body fit, and spend so little or no time making sure that your heart is kept in good spiritual health. Your happiness is governed by whether things are going your way or not. Everything must be going right in order to keep you in a cheerful mood. But the Bible tells us to "not lose heart" when everything around us seems to be "wasting away" (in a state of confusion and disorder). Why is this? The answer can be found in the same verse, "because inwardly we are being **renewed** day by day."

I heard about a girl's volleyball team in a small rural village that had achieved an unbelievable winning record of 65 games. But what was so incredible about their success was that the school had only 18 girls in total and 16 of them were on the volleyball team. Although it was one of the smallest schools in the country, it won the volleyball championship for three years running. Then, after 65 victories, they were eventually defeated. The local paper reported the defeat with a large headline. But, two days later, another headline appeared in the paper... "Team Rebounds with a Winning Streak of One." That's all you need - one!

The key to not "losing heart" is making sure that you understand (and believe) that even in defeat you can be renewed in Christ. Defeats may come and go, and this will never change. Yet, for you, defeat is one of those things that you should strive to manage amidst the expectation that even in disappointment, you are victorious in Christ. Therefore, when you're down, you must always be on the rebound – always making a comeback. When one foot is entangled in defeat, the other should already be moving on; looking for that "winning streak of one!" Just one win after any defeat is all it takes to get you back on top.

You are the "comeback kid." Jesus set the stage for your comeback by dying and being resurrected from the dead. All the forces of hell must have thought that they had totally extinguished the *light of the world*. But behold, the resurrection power of God did not fail! It raised Jesus up and from the dead. The stage was set and the curtain was parted for the start of a new chapter - birthing a new generation of conquerors.

The enemy's main aim is to distract your mind from accepting this simple truth. ***"His grace is sufficient for you, for His strength is made perfect in (your) weaknesses"*** [2 Corinthians 12:9]. Weak believers make spectacular comebacks and go on to be great winners for Christ! And why do we always bounce back stronger? Because Jesus Himself came back in total victory - the greatest comeback of all time! And the Bible tells us it's going to be repeated. But until then, we have His infallible Word to stand on.

To end, I'd like to join together two scriptures that you can repeat in order help you never to "loose heart" again (a literal, first person translation). *"I do not lose heart. Even though outwardly I am experiencing physical change, yet inwardly I am being renewed by the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead. And He who raised Jesus from the dead will also give life to my mortal body through His Spirit who dwells in me. Therefore, I am a strong and stable person."* (2 Cor. 4: 16 and Rom. 8:11). Even in defeat you are being renewed and quickened daily - you are always making a comeback! Even in defeat you are being given new life - being energised physically and mentally! Your future is secure and stable because you are being transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ (who is the Rock).

Truly, the most important thing any believer can achieve is consistency and stability. While everything around you is in the process of change you must remain strong, steadfast, consistent, reliable, and unchangeable. Just like Jesus! **Isaiah 61:3** provides us with valuable insight into the consistent, stable and upright walk we should have..... *"To give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees (oaks) of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."* We as individuals are referred to as "oaks of righteousness." And as His special planting, we are to be *strong, stable upright and mighty!* Yes, like these majestic trees, we too are *mighty pillars of strength* displaying the stability of God before man.