

The Principle of Consistency

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[0 : 00] Galatians chapter 3 is where we find ourselves this morning.

We talk about moving forward with God.

How many of you would like to move forward with God? Take that next step and the next step and the relationship, the journey. And we'll see today especially the relationship of being able to call Him Father.

That we are His son or we are His daughter. Adopted by Him, the power that can be seen in that. Each chapter I have developed a principle, not developed, identified a principle.

And so the first chapter was the principle of authenticity. The second chapter was the principle of identification. And then today we come to the principle of consistency.

[1 : 16] And I probably have some biases here. I try to be consistent. As Mary and I, Mary was raised in Paul's Valley and I was born in Lawton.

And then first through ninth grade in Oklahoma City. And then high school and college in Ada. My parents still live in Ada. Mary went to OU for two years and then transferred down to East Central. And we met at the BSU there. And we moved out to California to start a church. At that time they called it the Home Mission Board.

Now it's called the North American Mission Board. And so it was in Roseville. I met Clarence last week. He's from Susanville area which is north of Roseville.

But it's a suburb of Sacramento. And so went door to door. Thousands. At one time I had counted 6,000. And I had a map on the wall. And would just identify each block.

[2 : 13] And then some of them had been doubled up. And I made little cards and followed up with people. And so we'd hear all kinds of excuses about not coming to church.

Or not wanting to know about God. Can you, I don't want to say guess. But what would you say would be the number one reason that people don't want to have a relationship with God.

Or they don't want to go to church. Anybody want to guess? They don't want to give up their sin. Okay. Yes. Okay.

They don't want to take time out of their day. Those are two very good reasons. Something else. Why would somebody not want to come to church? They don't feel welcome.

Okay. Dan? A hypocrite. Now that's the word I was looking for. Obviously, though, you know, the first answer.

[3 : 17] I really believe in reading through one of the books by Lee Strobel, The Case for Faith. And he, and the movie, I mentioned that the other day.

And, you know, going through that and talk to all these different scientists and these different intellectuals. The one guy, and this is just coming off the top of my head here. But, you know, he really said, it really all gets down to just control.

You know, who's going to be in control? And everything else is an excuse. But the number one excuse I would hear going door to door was hypocrisy. And what is hypocrisy?

Boiling it down, not being consistent. You say one thing and you do another. Or you act a certain way in this spot and you act a different way in this spot.

Or you do it this way around these people and you do it a different way around other people.

Number one reason why people give that they don't come to church, they don't want anything to do with God, religion, is because they see inconsistency.

[4 : 26] And you could describe that many different ways. Well, we're going to look at consistency this morning and the importance of that. Galatians chapter 3, beginning in verse 1. I would like to learn just one thing from you.

Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish after beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?

You see it there? It's consistent. You've got to be consistent. You've got to be consistent. Paul said it this way to the church at Colossi in Colossians 2, 6 and 7.

He said, So then, as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thanksgiving.

We'll continue in verse 4. Have you suffered so much for nothing? If it was really for nothing. Does God give you His Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law?

[5 : 50] Or because you believe what you've heard? Consider Abraham. He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.

Understand then that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham.

Does anybody remember the gospel in the Old Testament? Does anybody remember Abraham proclaiming the gospel? Well, actually, here it mentions it was proclaimed to him where it said, All nations will be blessed through you.

Now, it's part of the covenant. And this is mentioned in Genesis chapter 12. And then also it's mentioned in Genesis chapter 18. We had all of these covenants in the Old Testament.

And they were good. And they served a purpose leading up to the ultimate covenant that we would have through Jesus Christ.

[7 : 03] You had, some would call it the Adamic covenant. That's right. The covenant with Adam there in the very beginning.

And then it was Noah. The Noah covenant. Then there was Abraham. And then there was Moses, which is probably the most famous covenant, where he gave the Ten Commandments to Moses. Now, it's going to mention it here in a little bit. Do you realize the Ten Commandments, that you are just that peak, that sharp point of the law, came 430 years after the covenant was made with Abraham.

The covenant with Abraham, that he was going to raise up this nation. And he was going to raise up his seed. And there were going to be as many people as the sand on the shore or the stars in the sky.

That covenant was 430 years before the law actually was delivered to the nation of Israel through the Ten Commandments.

[8 : 21] So anyway, even way back then, the gospel was being given. Verse 9. All that was done. So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse. For it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not conform, does not continue to do everything written in the book of the law.

We mentioned this. It keeps popping up. You want to go the route of the law? You want to fulfill the law as that which is going to justify you?

Have at it. But just realize, not one little misstep is allowed along that path.

It's kind of like being on probation. Okay. We're not going to send you to prison. You're going to be on probation. But you're going to have to do this.

[9 : 31] You're going to have to do this. You're going to have to do this. And you're going to have to do that. And if any of those, if you mess up on any of those things, you're going to prison. It's even worse than that, actually.

Verse 11. Clearly, no one is justified before God by the law because the righteous will live by faith. Habakkuk 2, verse 4. And then it's mentioned here and it's mentioned a couple other times in the New Testament. The righteous will live by faith.

The law is not based on faith. On the contrary, the man who does these things will live by them.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

For it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree. He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus.

[10 : 35] So that by faith, we might receive the promise of the Spirit. That covenant with Abraham mentioned all nations of the earth.

Verse 15. Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case.

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The scripture does not say, and to seeds, meaning many people, but and to your seed, meaning one person who is Christ.

Christ was clearly seen in the Old Testament, clearly prophesied, clearly promised, clearly the one everything was moving toward. Verse 17.

What I mean is this. The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.

[11 : 50] See, so many people ask the question, well, does grace, does the coming of Jesus do away with the law? But the real question is, does the law that came after the promise do away with the promise?

No, the promise was made first. Verse 18. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise.

But God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise. So many things are said about Abraham in the New Testament. Paul said it this way to the church in Rome in Romans 4, 21. He said, Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had the power to do what he promised.

Abraham, 430 years before Moses and the Ten Commandments, the promise was given. Verse 19. What then was the purpose of the law?

[13 : 02] It was added because of transgressions until the seed, not seeds, but the seed, Jesus Christ, until the seed to whom the promise referred, had come.

The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. A mediator, however, does not represent just one party, but God is one.

Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not. For if the law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.

But the scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ.

[14 : 14] That we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. Now that relates right back to what I said last week.

Baptism is about identification. Last week, chapter 2, was the principle of identification. Who are you going to identify with? What t-shirt are you going to put on?

Are you going to put on that OU t-shirt? Are you going to put on that OSU t-shirt? Are you going to put on that Tulsa t-shirt? What t-shirt are you going to put on?

Now sometimes you may just put it on because that's the only one clean. But I'm telling you most of the time if you're like me, you look at that and you think two, three, that's what I, even though it's an OU shirt, still there are times I'm thinking, you know, do I want to walk around today telling everybody I meet that I'm a fan of OU?

[15 : 29] You know, there are just some times that's not who I want to be identified even though that's my favorite team and favorite school and all that. There are just some times it's like, you know, they really don't need to know today.

You know, like I wouldn't wear it here on Sunday morning. You know, they just, that's not the, that's not who I want to identify with when I'm in the pulpit. I want to identify, I want there to be no question, my allegiance is to Jesus Christ.

And so, baptism is about identifying and here it just talks again, how do you identify in verse 27? Because you clothe yourself, you put on the t-shirt that says Jesus Christ.

You're identifying with him. You put on his righteousness. You're covered with his righteousness. Go all the way back to the tabernacle and the, the fence around the tabernacle made of the, the white linen, I believe.

And then you get into the tabernacle proper and all, everything had a purpose. Everything was about identifying the promises to come of Jesus Christ.

[16 : 36] And then you had the temple and we put on the righteousness. It, it talks about the armor of God. You put on the armor of God. What do we, what do we mean when we put on the armor of

God?

We're claiming those truths. We're claiming those promises. Helmet of salvation. The breastplate of righteousness. Girded about the loins with truth.

The sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Quick and powerful. Sharper than any two-edged sword. Piercing even to the dividing and asunder of soul and spirit and the joints and marrow.

And as a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. That's what we mean by putting on Christ. Identifying with him. And then verse 28. There's neither Jew nor Greek.

Slave nor free. Male nor female. For you all are one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

[17 : 43] What a powerful passage there in Romans chapter 3. Let me just mention three things here. You've got an outline. I hope you can follow along and make a couple of notes here.

Three things, I believe, that I've got here about this principle of consistency. How do you embrace, how do you handle this principle of consistency?

Number one, we need to appreciate the difficulty of our rescue. Appreciate the difficulty of your rescue.

how can you live a consistent life? Gratitude. You get really high, you need not forget those that helped you get there.

You need not forget the Lord that has blessed you. There needs to be gratitude. gratitude. Not that you get too high. Think you just got there by yourself.

[18 : 49] When you get too low, how can you keep from getting too low? Gratitude. That's why in the Old Testament there's so much repetition.

Those stories, they're over and over telling the story. Telling the story of how God came through. How God delivered them. How God did this and God did that.

They were reminding themselves of how God has been faithful in the past and that keeps you from getting too low. Helps bring you back up. We need to appreciate the difficulty of our rescue.

When we can keep that in mind, that helps us be consistent. We see this in verse 13. Talks about the scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin.

And then verse 23, before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. I love good movies and some of the best movies I've seen have been about rescue.

[19 : 57] Think of some of those movies of people being rescued that you like. How about Apollo 13? Like that one? Just amazing.

These are true stories. Now, we're really not sure Ed Harris playing Gene Krantz there in Control Center.

We're not actually sure that he said specifically failure is not an option. But that at least identified their mentality and the task that they were with.

And of course, when you make a movie, you've got to dramatize everything. But really, they didn't have to take any creative license, I think, with Apollo 13. I mean, those guys were doomed.

And what made it just so, part of it that made it exciting is because the whole world, obviously United States, but you could basically kind of keep up with what was going on.

[21 : 01] Everybody knew what was going on and everybody knew how serious that was. Then I think of another movie about rescue was Black Hawk Down.

Now, obviously, that didn't turn out as well as Apollo 13, but there was still rescue there and it was just crazy, crazy.

Can't even imagine how difficult that was. And yet, they still were able to get many out. And then Captain Phillips.

This was in 2009, Captain Richard Phillips of the Marsk, I believe that's how you pronounce it, and the Somali pirates had hijacked the ship.

And then the special forces go in and just unbelievably rescue him and the crew and kill the pirates and just like, wow, man, that gets me going.

[22 : 09] Just the impossibility of the rescue and yet it happens. And that's what we need to understand. The power and the penalty of sin and Jesus delivers us from that.

Jesus alone delivers us from that. What the law drives our noses and our faces into the dirt and just rubs us in it.

That's what the law does. And rightfully so, we need to understand how desperate a situation we're in. And then to believe that Jesus Christ can save us from that and deliver us from that. That is power. That helps this idea of consistency. Number two, recognize the foolishness of our own efforts.

The foolishness of your own efforts. We need to see that in verses one through three. He just comes out. He starts the whole thing off. You foolish Galatians.

[23 : 11] Now, I don't know that we want to put a sign out there that says, you foolish Bartlesvillians. What's the word for Bartlesville people?

Say that again. Barshans. I've never heard that in my life. I learned something new today. You foolish Barshans.

And a couple of exclamation points. That's what he was doing here in this letter to them. We need to recognize the foolishness of our own efforts.

I mean, it's one thing to, you know what, I think most people, if you, if they're honest and we can kind of have an honest conversation, I think most people realize they're in bad shape.

Most people can realize, yeah, I've got myself in a fix here. not everybody, but most. But then to come to the point of saying, there's not anything I can do about that.

[24 : 23] I think most people when they get to that, well, and Satan works both sides of the fence, they'll either say, I'm going to pull myself up by the bootstraps.

I'm going to get over this thing. Or they're just going to say, oh my goodness, it's hopeless, I'm never going to be able to overcome this.

And it just depends on the day which side Satan's going to kind of poke on that. We need to recognize the foolishness of our efforts. Paul clearly states this to them.

We need to get our facts straight. Well, here are a couple of things. Follow me with this. How do you recognize foolishness? Well, the first thing you do is define it. What is foolishness?

Everything's being redefined today, isn't it? It's just crazy. We need to define what foolishness is. Proverbs 14.1 gives us a definition.

[25 : 25] The fool says in his heart, there is no God. That's foolishness. It's what the Bible says, and you can interpret that to mean, you know, in general, a fool in the Bible is someone who lives life as if God and God's will were of no consequence.

There is no God. There is no purpose. There is no consequence. We're just here to do whatever we want. That would be a good definition of foolishness.

The second thing we can do here, we can test for it. Now, follow with me here. Paul gives them a test right here in chapter three. He asks them eight questions, and so I'm going to ask you these questions real quick here, and you can say true or false to these.

In verse two, the question is, you become a Christian by following Christ. True or false? false. Verse two, no one can become a Christian by being good.

True or false? No one can become a Christian by being good. True or false? Verse three, the third question that Paul asked them, you stay a Christian by the effort of the Spirit.

[26 : 51] True or false? You stay a Christian by the effort of the Spirit. it. Verse three, now I didn't hear any answers on that one.

I'd say true. Verse three, the fourth question, no one can stay a Christian by their own effort. No one can stay a Christian by their own effort.

Verse five, you are blessed by God because of your faith. You are blessed by God because of your faith. And then number five, verse five again, no one can be blessed by God because of their work. No one can be blessed by God because of their work. Verse five. Well, they're all true. That's not a good way to give a quiz, to have all the answers the same.

But, you know, he'll state it in the negative, he'll state it in the positive, he'll state it in the negative, he'll state it in the positive, and he just keeps pounding them there so that they can identify what is so foolishness about what they're doing.

[28 : 00] I mean, it's one thing to say, you guys are a bunch of fools. I didn't say that, I'm quoting Paul. But it's another thing to say, let me show you where your foolishness lies.

Let me show you where you're getting off track here. And so he goes down in verse two, verse three, and verse five with that. And then the next thing you do about this foolishness, you replace it. You replace your foolishness with the wisdom of God. Good works, you replace that with faith. Effort, you replace your effort with surrender.

You replace your foolishness with wisdom. I said that one already. Verse 11 says, the righteous will live by faith. And then he gives an example of Abraham in verse six.

And then he gives us the history about that in verse eight. Hebrews 12, two says it this way, let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

[29 : 13] That's what we do. Well, number three, then we hold on to the authority of your relationship. relationship. How do you, how do you live a consistent Christian life?

You hold on to the authority of your relationship. That's how you continue, that's how you persevere. There is a relationship, not rules.

Things will happen because of the relationship, but you focus on the relationship. Verses 26 through 29, but I'll focus on 26.

Here in Galatians 3, 26, Paul says, you are all sons. Well, we understand that means you are all sons and daughters.

That's the plural there of everyone. You are children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. I recently read the book Knowing God by J.I.

[30 : 26] Packer, and he brought up something that I had understood this somewhat, but let me just read this paragraph that I thought was so powerful about what he said on this relationship because it's about adoption.

He says, adoption is the highest privilege that the gospel offers, higher even than justification. That justification by which we mean God forgives of the past together with his acceptance for the future is the primary and fundamental blessing of the gospel is not in question.

Justification is the primary blessing because it meets our primary spiritual need. We all stand by nature under God's judgment.

His law condemns us, guilt gnaws at us, makes us restless, miserable, and in our lucid moments afraid. we have no peace in ourselves because we have not peace with our maker.

[31 : 46] And so we need forgiveness of our sins and assurance of a restored relationship with God more than we need anything else in the world. And this is the gospel that offers us before it offers us anything else.

And as justification is the primary blessing, blessing, so it is the fundamental blessing in the sense that everything else in our salvation assumes it and rests upon it, adoption included.

But then he goes on to say, but this is not to say that justification is the highest. He calls it, it is the primary and fundamental blessing, but J.I.

Packer says, this is not to say that justification is the highest blessing of the gospel. Adoption is higher because of the richer relationship with God that it involves.

Justification is a forensic idea conceived in terms of law and viewing God as judge, which all is true.

[33 : 06] Adoption is a family idea conceived in terms of love and viewing God as father. In adoption, God takes us into his family and fellowship and establishes us as his children and heirs.

Closeness, affection, generosity are at the heart of the adoptive relationship. To be right with God, the judge, is a great thing.

But to be loved and cared for by God, the father, is a greater blessing.

family. If we're going to live a consistent Christian life, part of it has to do with holding on to the authority of the relationship that we are a child of God, that we've been adopted through the justification of Jesus Christ.

We now are family with God and that is the strength and the power to overcome and to persevere.

[34 : 32] That is the way you move forward with God consistently. Hitting the speed bumps every now and then and maybe even driving off in the ditch now and then.

Maybe even the bridge goes out now and then. But by his grace we can keep moving forward because he's our father.

He loves you. He cares for you. He will not leave you or forsake you.

Thank you.