



The Ingredients Necessary To Finish

Long ago, the poet Aesop wrote the famed story of the Tortoise and the Hare. They had a running race. The odds were stacked against the slow tortoise. In the end, it was the tortoise that won. Aesop's words at the end of this story are: "The race is not always to the swift" which sounds similar to Solomon's words in Ecclesiastes 9:11.

The tortoise won because he stayed with it. He pressed on. He shows us that one of the ingredients necessary to finish is Consistency. Spiritual consistency is hard.

Two wonderful texts about consistency.

2 Timothy 4:1-5

Why is doctrine important?

Apostles taught it & early Christians continued

- Early Christians _____ it (Rom 6:17-18)
- They were to teach _____ other (1 Tim 1:3, 10)
- They were _____ it (1 Tim 4:6)
- They were to _____ in it (1 Tim 4:16)
- They were to _____ in it (2 John 9-10)

Why would some not "endure" sound doctrine?

What is meant by the expression "fair weather?"
(i.e. Fair weather golfer, fair weather Christian)

Timothy's duty was to:

- Preach the word always
- Endure hardships that would come
- Complete what you started

In season and out of season is the concept of _____

- Consistent with our _____
- Consistent with our _____
- Consistent with our _____
- Consistent with our _____

What Makes Spiritual Consistency Hard?

- (1) We are not together every day
- (2) We must function in this world
- (3) Our schedules are so packed that they keep us "earth bound"
- (4) We are easily distracted
- (5) It's more convenient to put off the spiritual disciplines for the more pressing needs around
- (6) There are days we don't feel like doing what we should
- (7) Satan gets in the way
- (8) Consistency arises out of conviction and character. It's more than "doing" spiritual things. It is who we are.



Who we are

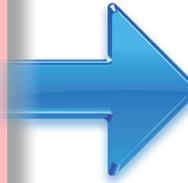
- Is what we are on the inside
- It doesn't change based upon location
- It doesn't change because of who is with us
- It doesn't change because circumstances are not fair
- It doesn't change based upon the day of the week

1 Peter 1:15; John 4:23; Colossians 3:12-17

The Problem of Consistency

- Not doing what you _____ (Mt 23:1-4)
- Failing to do the most important things (Mt 23:23)
- Concerned more about _____ than substance (Mt 23:25-28)
- Seeking praise of _____ more than God (Mt 6:1)
- Critically condemning others while you are just as guilty (Mt 7:1-5)

Inconsistency is most often noticed by those who see us the most:



Family
Co-workers
Friends

1 Timothy 3:2 "above reproach"
1 Timothy 3:7 having a good reputation with those outside the church

What happens when one is found to be "inconsistent?"

1 Corinthians 15:58

At the end of 1 Corinthians 15 Paul leaves five stepping stones about Finishing Strong.

These words will help us in our study.

Be... _____

- Steadfast: _____
- Immovable : _____
- Always abounding : _____
- Knowing : _____

CHRIST DIED AND WAS RAISED:

Here's the proof:

- according to Scriptures (1-4)
- according to witnesses (5-11)

How is it you claim there is no resurrection? (v. 12)

If true:

- Christ not raised (13)
- Our preaching is in vain (14)
- We are liars (15)
- Your faith is worthless (17)
- You are still in your sins (17)
- The dead have perished (18)
- We out to be pitied (19)

What things "MOVE" us?



Why end this section on the resurrection with these words about Finishing Strong?