



## MORE CONSISTENCY

Pleasing God more means staying faithful through it all

### SUMMARY

We have become a very goal-oriented society, and, while that isn't a bad thing, we often fail to make the greatest purpose our greatest pursuit. With a myriad of options and opportunities, it is so easy for us to get distracted by and begin to drift towards things that aren't necessarily bad things, but they interfere with or take the place of what should be our greatest desire – to please God. This year, let's determine that our life is going to abound with and increase in those things that our Heavenly takes great delight in.

### REVIEW

We began this series by establishing the theme for our church this year: **MORE AND MORE - DETERMINED TO PLEASE THE LORD MORE IN 2024.**

We want to abound and increase in the things that God takes great delight in. It's a journey marked by **INTENSITY, INTEGRITY, INTERACTION** (with the Father and the family of God), and **INVESTMENT**.

We've found that it is possible for God to be pleased, for us to know what pleases God, and for us to please God with our life.

With that foundation, we began to consider some key elements that need to be in our life if we are going to please God more.

The first element is **MORE TRUST**. Pleasing God more begins with trusting God most.

The second element is **MORE DISCERNMENT**. Pleasing God more means living right in a world that is wrong.

The third element is **MORE OBEDIENCE**. Pleasing God more means obeying God first.

The fourth element is **MORE FEAR**. Pleasing God more means loving God most.

Last week, we found that the fifth element is **MORE WORSHIP**. Our key statement was this: **PLEASING GOD MORE MEANS HONORING GOD FIRST**.

True worship is not focused on our **COMFORT**, our **CONVENIENCE**, or our **CONTENTMENT**; true worship is focused on our **CHANGE** (from the inside and out).

While singing and shouting are a part of worship, surrender and service are the heart of worship. It is us making the choice to do daily with our life what God delights in without **HESITATION**, without **HYPOCRISY**, and without **HOLDING OUT** or **BACK**.

## MESSAGE

This week, we move a little farther forward in the story line of the nation of Israel to find our next key element to living life in a way that pleases God more.

For four hundred and thirty years, the people of God had lived in Egypt and for four hundred of those years, they had labored as slaves. It was a long season that was clearly marked by great **HURT** and even greater **HARDSHIPS**. They had cried out to God for grace, for mercy, and for freedom. but it seemed like no answer ever came.

Have you ever felt like that? Have you found yourself going through something so difficult and it just felt like God was silent in the middle of your struggle and through your storm? I'm talking about a season where hurt and hardship abounded and what you wanted and what you really needed was just a little ray of hope, a beam of sunshine breaking through the dark clouds and shining into your period of darkness. Have you ever been tempted to throw in the towel all because life seemed too hard, God was taking too long, and it just felt like nothing was ever going to change? A time when life was loathsome, when you were lonely, and when it didn't seem like you had anything to look forward to.

That's what the last four hundred years had been like for the nation of Israel, but the reality is that God had heard their every cry, and His response was currently in the works.

Hey! We might not get a say in what God brings us to and what God allows us to go through, but we can certainly trust Him, we can know with certainty that God knows

where we're at, God knows what we're going through, and God is working on His plan to get us through.

You see, for the nation of Israel, a man had been born in Egypt and God had taken him to the backside of the desert where, unbeknownst to him, he was going through some further training and preparation for the mighty task that God was going to call him to. His name was Moses, and God was going to use him to lead his people out of Egyptian bondage. You know what happens.

God calls Moses from out of a burning bush, God sends Moses and Aaron into Egypt so that He could demonstrate His power of the false gods of the Egyptians, and God brings Israel out of Egypt with a mighty hand, God brings them to Mount Sinai where He gives them clear instructions on how they were supposed to live and how they were to worship Him, and God brings them to the land of Canaan, to the land of Promise, to a land that flowed with milk and honey.

God tells Moses to send 12 men, one man from every tribe of Israel, into the land of Canaan, to see that it was all that God had promised and to gain some much-needed information about the land itself and about the inhabitants of the land. In Numbers chapter 13, these twelve men returned to the nation of Israel where they gave two very different reports.

Ten of them said, "The land is good, but the enemies are too great. We must go back."

Two of them said, "The land is good, the enemies are great, but our God is greater, and we must go forward."

Moses intercedes for the nation of Israel, and God pardons their iniquity, but their lack of faith and faithfulness carried great consequences.

Numbers 14:20-38 says, *"And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word: But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it. (Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley.) To morrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea. And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty*

*years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die. And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD. But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still."*

If you're in the habit of marking things in the Word of God, I'd like to draw your attention back to verse 38 where the Bible says, *"But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still."*

For a few moments, I'd like to consider this thought: **MORE CONSISTENCY - PLEASING GOD MORE MEANS STAYING FAITHFUL THROUGH IT ALL.**

Now, while I understand that the phrase *lived still* is specifically referencing their physical state (they were living and breathing as opposed to others who were not), I can't help but think that there is much more to it than that. The emphasis isn't just on the **WHAT**, but also on the **WHY**.

It was their consistency that contributed to their **TENACITY**.

It was their consistency that contributed to their **LONGEVITY**.

It was their consistency that contributed to their **REALITY** (one of great blessing).

The truth of the matter is that...

Inconsistency can put you and your family at risk,

Inconsistency can ruin good fruit (character) that has been produced in your life and the good decisions that you have made in and with your life, and

Inconsistency can rob you of a future that is bright and blessed.

Some of the greatest struggles that we deal with today are inconsistency and "justified" inconsistency. In other words, we aren't just inconsistent about things that really matter, but we have convinced ourselves that it's okay for us to be inconsistent in things that really matter. **IT'S NOT.** The truth is that we have gotten so accustomed to using the phrase "God understands" that we have stopped doing what we should be doing, and we have started doing

things that we should not be doing, just like the nation of Israel, and, if I remember correctly, it was a lack of consistency that invited a lot of unnecessary troubles and trials into their life and eventually took them to a grave of their own making.

We're quick to point out and make a big deal about the inconsistencies that exist in the pulpit (and indeed we should – pastors and preachers ought to be consistent. They should practice what they preach), but, for some reason, it doesn't seem as pertinent to point out the inconsistencies that exist in the pews. Look! When it comes to our faith, if we're honest, there are areas that we all are inconsistent in. The question is this are you **CONCERNED** about your lack of consistency in things that really matter and in areas that God has given clear commands or have you allowed yourself to become **CONTENT** in your lack of consistency and unwilling to change.

One of the greatest helps to the cause of Christ is consistent Christianity. God expects consistent faith and consistent obedience in the lives of His children, and He elevates those who are.

James 4:10 puts it this way, *"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."*

#### 1) They were consistent in their **WORSHIP** of the Lord

Numbers 14:6-9 says, *"And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not."*

Joshua and Caleb realized that true worship of God involved a change in them. They weren't who they used to be which meant that they weren't to do the wrong things that they had done before, and yet, they were witnessing the people around them making the exact same mistakes that they had made before. Someone has correctly said that "I am most consistent in my inconsistencies." While true, it doesn't have to, nor should it remain that way.

True worship is determined to worship God consistently through the problems, through the pressures, through the pain, and all along our path.

Joshua 24:15 says, *"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

#### 2) They were consistent in their **WALK** with and before the Lord

Numbers 14:24 says, *“But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.”*

They learned to **LISTEN** to God’s **INSTRUCTIONS**, they learned to **LONG** for God’s **INTENTION**, and they learned to **LEAN** on God’s **INCREDIBLE STRENGTH**. That’s what following the Lord wholeheartedly is all about.

Numbers 32:11-12 says, *“Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me: Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD.”*

Deuteronomy 1:34-36 says, *“And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and swore, saying, Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I swore to give unto your fathers, Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD.”*

Joshua 14:8-9 says, *“Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God. And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.”*

Joshua 14:14 says, *“Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.”*

### 3) They were consistent in their **WAR** for the Lord

Joshua 14:10-13 says, *“And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.”*

The reality is that very few mountains are being claimed for the Lord and very few mountains are being conquered with the help of the Lord because very few of God’s people have learned how to be consistent through every **SEASON**, through every **STORM**, and through every **STRUGGLE** of life.