

Spiritual Consistency

Spiritual Roller Coster

Either lost or on fire.

Not pride filled highs or woe filled lows.

*Fill in the valleys, and level the mountains and hills.
Straighten the curves, and smooth out the rough places.
Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people
will see it together. The Lord has spoken!"*

—Isaiah 40:4-5 NLT

DESIRE FOR SPIRITUAL CONSISTENCY

Not unique to Christians - Karma / Equilibrium

Consistency amidst change.

We may be moving and changing, but we still need something consistent on which to take our bearing.

Our spiritual consistency is just that - that anchor upon which we take our bearing.

THE EFFECT OF DECISIONS

Decisions - every day that effect out spiritual ride.

Our spiritual consistency is directly related to how we think and the decisions we make.

Changing the way we think

1. TO EFFECT CONSISTENCY WE NEED TO EMBRACE THE CHANGE OF OUR THINKING

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

—Romans 12:2

For, "Who can know the Lord's thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?" But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.

—1 Corinthians 2:16

A logical choice is usually based on comparative data.

Comparative Logic Decisions - we know the two possible outcomes so we steer towards the decision we will make.

Making comparative logical decisions based purely on how we feel - dangerous territory.

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,

4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

—2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NLT)

2. When External Conditions Change the State of Our Soul

Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,

—Matthew 24:12 (NLT)

SPIRITUAL LOWS/ HIGHS

Spiritual lows induced by poor decisions?

Made a bad money decision - it effects your soul

Made a bad relationship decision - it effects your soul

Spiritual lows also brought about by with holding from God:

Is there some little habit, comfort, emotional issue that we have not given up?

Do we hold back on our time? Can't get to a life group because Wednesday evenings are my favorite TV show? Give him 2 hours on a Sunday don't I?

Do we hold back our trust? I have a plan. I can manage quite fine on my own.

Do we hold back on our activity? I am maxed out everywhere I just don't have anything left to give. I must

be able to have something for myself? I mean its just a few hours of letting my hair down.

Do we hold back on our obedience? I know that its not a wise decision to go into debt all the time, but its tough not to have things everyone else does.

Giving less than my absolute best to God is actually an affront to him.

3. Making a decision based completely on the promise of God is called Faith.

Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.

—Hebrews 11:1 (NLT)

4. When you know who you are you will know what to do.

Identity - God gave it to Adam and he made the wrong decision. Jesus got it at baptism and walked in it.

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

—Luke 4:18 - 18

MOMENTS OF DECISION

WHAT WILL THIS DO FOR MY SPIRITUAL CONSISTENCY.

Will it orientate me to christ.

When it comes to questions about our orientation to Christ - THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL ANSWER!

Ask it before.

Asking it before is called wisdom, asking it after is called guilt.

At the moment of decision

...the decisions that will impact your relationship with God,

...that will change your bible reading from boring to the most exciting thing in your life

... the decisions - however small will rock your spiritual world in some way.

What do I say to that hurting friend?

What do I need to pray for, on behalf of my spouse and kids?

What do I do when I don't feel like praying for my spouse and kids?

Do I discipline my teenager for the latest act of minor

rebellion—or wrap loving arms around her and show mercy?

How do I solve that issue with my key client, especially when he won't take my call?

Where should I go to college?

Do I tithe on the gross or on the net?

Should I sign up to volunteer at church, or not?

How do I manage the temptation I feel to engage in stuff I have no business engaging in?

Am I supposed to give money to the person on the street corner holding the sign asking for money, or not?

What should I do with my life?

Do I buy the better house that's just beyond my financial reach but is in the "right" school district, or do I settle for a smaller space that I can easily afford?

Where do I start, in trying to heal decades-old wounds with my dad?

Do I take the promotion at work, knowing it will pull me away from time spent at home?

Should I eat this piece of chocolate cake?

THOSE DECISIONS - HOW DO WE MAKE THE FAITH FILLED DECISIONS? - ONES THAT WILL NEVER INDUCE PRIDE NOR SEND US CRASHING INTO A LOW?

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

—*Philippians 4:8 NLT*

I want that path. I want to be making decisions like those ones. I want to be making decisions that have these results.

There is a way, there is a decision making process that will always lead to financial, moral, relational, emotional, physical, vocational and family purity AND as a result SPIRITUAL CONSISTENCY.

PSALM 119:9-16 NLT

How can a young person stay pure?

By obeying your word.

10

I have tried hard to find you—
don't let me wander from your commands.

11

I have hidden your word in my heart,
that I might not sin against you.

12

I praise you, O Lord;
teach me your decrees.

13

I have recited aloud
all the regulations you have given us.

14

I have rejoiced in your laws
as much as in riches.

15

I will study your commandments
and reflect on your ways.

16

I will delight in your decrees
and not forget your word.

TAKE AWAY

First up, verse 9: by living according to God's Word.

Next, verse 10: by not straying from God's commands.

And then, verse 11: by hiding God's Word in our hearts.

And verse 12: by having a teachable spirit regarding
God's decrees.

Verse 13: by recounting God's laws ... by speaking them aloud again and again.

Verse 14: by rejoicing in following God's statutes, even as one rejoices in great riches.

Verse 15: by meditating on God's precepts ... and by stopping to consider God's ways.

Verse 16: by delighting in God's decrees ... and by refusing to neglect God's Word.