

CONSISTENT THINKING

Part 1 of Confident Living

John 14:1-3. The Cornerstone Church, May 9, 2021

Today, we're starting a new teaching series called Consistent Living.

We'll focus on ten spiritual practices that help us stay strong through the storms of life. God has resources to get us through the hard times.

This is going to be helpful whether you're new to the Christian faith or a veteran follower of Jesus.

I got the idea for this teaching series from David Jeremiah and his book and DVD series called Living with Confidence in a Chaotic World.

Let's pray as we begin: *Lord, your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Give us grace to receive your truth, and strength to apply it to our lives; through Jesus Christ, Amen.*

Let's look at the first spiritual practice: CONSISTENT THINKING. Confident living begins with aligning our thoughts with our faith; making our thinking consistent with what we believe.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE ONE: COGNITIVE DISCIPLINE

In March, Kim and I spent a week in the mountains of Virginia. I noticed something about the trees that cover the hillsides. The higher up you go, the smaller and more bent over the trees get. Winter storms batter the trees and the higher up the mountain the worse the beating gets. The trees are gnarled and scarred by ice and wind. But those trees are survivors. They've held up under great pressure.

It's the same with all of us. Everyone experiences stressful life-situations, but we don't all cope in the same way. Some stay strong in the storms of life. Others are blown away.

The difference is in our minds or hearts. Most of life's battles are won or lost in the mind, or what the Bible calls the heart. A simple example:

When we think we can't, we probably won't.
When we think we can, we probably will.

The principle is this:

**When we store truth in the heart,
we can stay strong in the storm.**

Jesus knew this, so when the time of his crucifixion drew near and his disciples began to feel very anxious, he said this in John 14:1-3.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. 2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Jesus said, "*Do not let your hearts be troubled.*" He urged the disciples to align their thoughts with their faith in him. Then he told them HOW - **three truths to store in their hearts.**

THREE TRUTHS TO ALIGN OUR THOUGHTS

TRUTH #1 - JESUS IS TRUSTWORTHY.

Jesus said to them "*You believe in God; believe also in me.*"

Here, Jesus tells them that he is God. The rest of the Bible explains that Jesus is God made visible, God in human flesh and blood. Jesus said,

(John 14:9b) Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.

If Jesus is God, then he is worthy of the same trust or faith as God: "*Believe also in me*". The disciples could trust Jesus to do what God does. Such as what?

Psalms 46 is one example of what the disciples trusted God to do. And we can trust him for this today.

1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

7 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

10a He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;

Jesus says to us, "*Do not let your hearts be troubled*" because he is the God who can be trusted.

TRUTH #2 - JESUS BRINGS US HOME TO GOD.

The conversation in John 14 took place after the Last Supper. The disciples knew Jesus was about to leave them and they were anxious and afraid.

To help calm his disciples' fears, Jesus told them what he would achieve the next day on the cross. "*My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?*"

To get the full meaning of this statement, we have to know how first-century Israeli families lived.

The extended family lived together in a compound or *insula* made up of a cluster of buildings around a central courtyard. Grandparents, cousins, uncles, and aunts. When a son got engaged, he spent the time until the wedding building rooms in the compound. When it was ready, he returned to get the bride for the wedding celebration and then they moved into the family compound (<https://www.thatttheworldmayknow.com/nogreaterlove>).

How did Jesus prepare a place for his disciples? He went to the cross. That's how he brought them and us home to God.

At the cross, Jesus removed everything that keeps us from God; our sin and guilt, as well as death and the devil, were all defeated at the cross.

(1 Peter 3:18) Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, **to bring you to God.**

(Romans 5:1) Since we have been made right with God through faith, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ

Jesus says to us, "*Do not let your hearts be troubled*" because, at the cross, he brought us home to God.

TRUTH #3 - JESUS TAKES US TO THE THRONE OF GRACE.

Jesus told his disciples:

(John 14:3) If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Last weekend, I was at the hardware store looking for a gas can. The store was huge and I couldn't find what I was looking for. Of course, I didn't ask for help, but Kim did. The store employee didn't give us directions. Instead, he said, "Follow me." And he took us to the gas cans.

Essentially, that's what Jesus promised his disciples. Yes, he was going to the cross to die. But that was not the end of the story. He promised to return and he promised to take them to God.

We know that Jesus kept the first part of the promise, **"I will come back"**?

- He came back from the grave and spent 40 days with his disciples (Acts 1:3).
- He came back on Pentecost to pour out his Spirit on the disciples (Acts 2:33)
- He will come back again to rule on the earth (Acts 2:34).

Therefore, we're confident that Jesus has kept the second part of the promise, **"and take you to be with me"**. Where is Jesus right now? At the right hand of God (Acts 1:3). Where are we? Listen.

(Ephesians 2:6) God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus ...

(Hebrews 4:16) Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Jesus says to us, "Do not let your hearts be troubled" because Jesus takes us to God's throne of grace.

PEACE IN THE STORM

On Thursday, I conducted a funeral. I was a bit stressed. My hands were shaking with adrenaline and my brain was in a fog. That's when I re-discovered something we all know from experience: Telling yourself to calm down, doesn't work and may even make things worse.

On the other hand, **the spiritual practice of consistent thinking** does work.

**When we store truth in the heart,
we can stay strong in the storm.**

I de-stressed by aligning my thinking with my faith. I believe the Holy Spirit helps preachers. I prayed and asked for his help. And I experienced a strong peace.

Pastor Craig Groeschel wrote *Winning the War for Your Mind*. The main point of the whole book is very simple:

Change your thinking, change your life.

Inconsistent thinking leads to fear, anxiety and stress. Consistent thinking leads to peace and strength. The way to use truth to shape our thoughts is ...

Write it—Pray it—Confess it—Until you believe it and live it

This week, go to FamousGod.com. Scroll down just a bit to "Teaching Notes". You can access the notes for today's teaching. Then, start with the three truths we found in John 14:

- Jesus is the God who can be trusted. He will never let me down. He will never leave me. He is my refuge and strength.
- Jesus has brought us home to God. I am accepted by God. He is for me. He loves me and takes care of me as a good Father cares for his kids.
- Jesus takes me to God's throne of grace. I can always ask God for help, mercy, and grace. He hears and answers all my prayers so I stay strong in the storms of life.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the truth you have revealed in the Bible. Holy Spirit, help us to apply today's teaching in our lives. Amen.

The Blessing

The God of love and peace will be with you all.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Sunday, May 9, 2021

Welcome and Prayer - Band

Songs - 2

Prayer for Mothers - Shawn

Dismiss Kids - Shawn

Bible Reading - Janie - Romans 8:1-17

Song - 1

Teaching - Peter

Apostles Creed - Peter

Holy Communion - Peter

Song - 1

Updates - Peter

- Connect cards
- High school seniors recognition - May 16
- Sign up for updates

Blessing - Peter