

## **Living And Working Consistently**

**By Jim Langley**

Here is a question I believe we all need to ask ourselves: "Do I live my life consistently?" Many people - especially men - have a tendency to compartmentalize their lives, which leads to different behavior patterns in each facet of their lives, personally and professionally.

For instance, in the workplace we may be very consistent and predictable in following standards of practice and behavior that conform to an accepted business model. Our professional relationships will usually follow a code of ethics for our particular profession. When we deal with family matters, however, we may handle those relational situations quite differently. In our social dealings we might exhibit very different forms of behavior to fit the norms for each group. And if we attend church, our involvement there may take on another look altogether. So another question we need to ask is, "Who are we really?"

As followers of Christ, do we live our lives consistently - or do our actions seem like we use an on-and-off switch? Doug Spada and Dave Scott, co-authors of Monday Morning Atheist, contend we can easily fall into the trap of becoming a totally different person once we leave the sanctuary. This book asks the reader to imagine God at work in all aspects of their business, seeking to bring about peace, power and purpose in our work life.

This is a good suggestion, but in my opinion, it only scratches the surface of a much deeper issue. We need to allow God into every facet of our lives, 24/7, striving to be the same person whether we are at work, in our home, at a community activity, shopping in a store, or wherever we happen to be. This is what Jesus did, and we would be wise to do the same.

When Jesus said, "But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes ' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil" (Matthew 5:37), one of the things He was telling His followers was to be consistent - do not say one thing and then proceed to do something different.

But you might be thinking, "Being consistent is difficult!" And that is true. But as believers, we have the power to do so - if we are willing to appropriate it. The Holy Spirit is present in us, and all we need to do is simply let Him take control of our lives instead of trying to do it in our own strength, which often is very weak. Again, admittedly this is much easier said than done. We have a tendency to become so consumed in whatever tasks we are doing that we often fail to look beyond them to allow God through His Spirit to get involved in our circumstances.

Oswald Chambers addresses this subject frequently in his devotional, My Utmost for His Highest. This literary work has become a mainstay of my devotional life for the past 25 years. The daily reading each morning reminds me where the true source of power lies. As Jesus declared to His followers, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Later the

apostle Paul expanded on this idea, stating, "I can do everything through Jesus Christ who gives me strength"(Philippians 4:13).

These truths help me to remain more consistent in all facets of my life, rather than to slip in and out of my Christianity. In leading our families, our business endeavors and in society, God wants us to stay on track and become "salt and light" to those God places in our path. Being consistent in our lives - through the power of Jesus - will make this possible.

*© 2015, all rights reserved. Jim Langley has been an agent and chartered life underwriter (CLU) with New York Life since 1983 and an active member of CBMC of Santa Barbara, California, U.S.A. since 1987.*

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### **Reflection/Discussion Questions**

1. Do you think being consistent in every aspect of our lives is possible - or even realistic? Why or why not?
2. What do you think are some of the greatest obstacles to achieving a consistent life?
3. If you were to evaluate your life, both professionally and personally, how consistent do you think you are in living out the values that are important to you?
4. When Jesus says, "Apart from me you can do nothing," what do you think He is saying? Do you believe this? Explain your answer.

If you would like to look at or discuss other portions of the Bible that relate to this topic, consider the following brief sampling of passages:

Proverbs 4:5-6; Psalm 20:7; John 16:12-15; James 3:11-18; 1 John 1:5-9