

“A Word to Live By”
January 3, 2016
Lynn Haven United Methodist Church

Introduction

Many people, especially at the beginning of the new year, are looking to improve their lives. They search bookstores and internet sites for self-help books and personal development plans to help them. But, the guide for improving their lives is easy to find. Second Timothy 3:16 says, “Everything in the Scriptures is God’s Word. All of it is useful for teaching and helping people and for correcting them and showing them how to live.” Instead of looking in the Self-Help sections of our society, we need to turn to the GOD-Help section: His Word. Instead of complicated concepts and steps, only one idea is needed: consistency. The God-Help section reveals that consistency is vital to successful Christian living. Christians should exhibit consistency in the areas of obedience, relationships, and disciplines.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think about New Year’s resolutions? Why have you failed/succeeded in the past?
2. Consistent obedience means we don’t just “talk the talk,” we “walk the walk.” However, when it comes to following God’s commandments, many Christians employ the “pick and choose” method. Why do you think Christians do this?
3. The Bible says conviction results when we act or speak in a way that is contrary to God’s will. In response to feeling conviction, we can rationalize our behavior, justify our behavior or change our behavior. Think about a time when you felt convicted about something and discuss how you responded to it. What were the results of your response?
4. “Friends love through all kinds of weather, and families stick together in all kinds of trouble.” (Proverbs 17:17 Message). What are the characteristics of a friend or family member who is consistent? What are some obstacles we must overcome to be consistent in our relationships?
5. Success in any endeavor requires consistent practice and training. Read Matthew 16:24. By definition, a *disciple* is a *disciplined* person. Why is it important to be disciplined in our Christian walk?
6. Included in the UMC’s membership vows is the question: “Will you faithfully participate in this congregation’s ministries through your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness?” Discuss each discipline and how hard it is to be consistent in that area. What steps that can be taken to be consistent in that area?

Conclusion

Here is a great New Year’s resolution: be consistent. The “God-Help Section” suggests that in order to be faithful to Christ, we must exhibit consistency in our obedience to God’s commands, in our relationships with others, and in our practice of the spiritual disciplines. If we seek to consistently honor God with our lives, the Lord will consistently bless us with His power and presence.