

Excel



How is life treating you? That's an interesting question. Frequently in our encounter with others the first words are, "How are you doing" and the response usually is "Fine" or "I am doing well". That is an appropriate response and probably the one we were expecting and the questioned person knew that we expected it. However, the truth be known for most if not all, things aren't going as well as they would like them to be nor are they willing to reveal that to you nor are you craving to hear of their afflictions.

If you are the one that is suffering, you should know that better is possible and that John 10:10 states that Jesus will provide the abundant life that we are all looking for, although maybe not precisely what we are looking for. We all have elements of our life that require our attention and often one or more of them aren't functioning as well as we would like them to. The components of most people's lives are, "Financial", "Relational", "Physical", "Career" and "Spiritual", each of these aspects have their own challenges and overcoming those difficulties always requires an ongoing effort. So while you need to commit to redress the specific issue, you must work consistently to achieve results. That's the "Consistency Effect", Small things consistently over time lead to big things. Small (Negative or Positive) deposits consistently over time lead to bigger things, one way or the other.

David Bach talks about the "Latte Factor", in that example he says that things appear less expensive than they really are, and this is an elegant example of consistency. The "Latte Factor" talks about how small can become very large. The average latte costs \$3.50 but if you took that money you spent every day and invested it into a mutual fund with a 6% interest rate after 30 years you would have \$106,000.00. which says that the latte didn't cost you the \$3.50 you spent for it but really was more like the \$106,000.00 that you could have had. That displays the power of consistency.

There is a problem with this concept and it is that going without the latte for 30 years is probably life changing and that is understandable. No matter what improvement you choose to make there will be life changing consequences and you may already know that you are not that strong to be making those changes. That is usually the phenomenon though that when there is an area needing improvement, it is also an area of our personal weakness and that weakness will eventually cripple all of our improvement efforts. The truth is we all have weaknesses and we tend to compensate for or hide them but often never make an effort to dismiss them. The good news here is that God wants to help, we know that because He said so, in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 where Paul the icon of the Christian Church confesses that he has a "Thorn in the Flesh", the big thing here is not Paul's vulnerability, rather it's God's pledge of Grace and His Strength that will overcome Paul's weakness, as well as Paul's acceptance of his weakness and his reliance on God's ability to overcome that weakness.

What Paul says at the end of the 2 Corinthians passage is "when I am weak then I am strong. Strength in weakness is counter intuitive and almost results in an oxymoron. You know, like "Bittersweet", "Growing Smaller", "Passive Aggressive", "Weirdly Normal" but it isn't, because what Paul is really saying is that through complete reliance on God's strength my weaknesses are isolated and no longer influence my actions and activities.

This is not as difficult nor as easy as it appears but it is a mind changer and as explained above requires first "Commitment" to get you to the "Starting Line", but then "Consistency" to keep you on track towards the "Finish Line". Reliance on Gods "Consistency" will ensure that yours will hold up all the way to the end.

The Bible is littered with examples of God's power to reinforce our consistency. In Genesis 6:8 and following, God assigns Noah the responsibility of building an ark and while the Bible account doesn't mention Noah having any objections, I'm sure you could think of some. Building An Ark That Big? A Boat That Isn't Even Near Any Body Of Water? Are You Crazy? I Don't Even Know How To Build A Boat!! Genesis 6:22 says, "*Noah did everything just as God commanded him.*" Imagine that God overcame all those objections as well as the ridicule of those living around Noah and worked with Noah to build a huge boat that would ultimately bring the world to a brand new start. In Exodus 3:10 God sends Moses to the head of the most powerful country in the known world to tell him that he should free the Israelites so that they can leave and go to a better place. Moses had plenty of reasons why he wasn't the man God should send. He exclaimed that he was "Mr. Nobody" but God wasn't having any of that and reminded him that He would accompany him throughout the whole episode. Moses then played the "Rejection" card, saying maybe the Israelites will reject him but God had that covered and explained how he should deal with any rejection and showed him many signs and wonders. Moses wasn't through, then he played the "Speech Impediment" card but God reminded him that it was He who gave him the tongue and vocabulary that he had. In the end Moses said what many say today, "Why don't you send someone else?" At this point God was distressed but not defeated and offered Moses's brother Aaron for reinforcement. That seemed to turn the tide and Moses was committed to the task but his consistently turning to God in all the afore mentioned weaknesses brought the undertaking to completion 40 years later. Jericho was impregnable, Joshua was perplexed, the first encounter with hostile forces in the promised land and it looked hopeless. The angel of the Lord came to deliver a message, and it's interesting that the angel didn't take sides, that message was that God was about to defeat this hostile force and basically all the Israelites needed to do is watch and do what they're told. The Israelites in all their weaknesses witnessed the fall of Jericho and the beginning of a 700-year habitation of the Promised Land, it was a rollercoaster ride to say the least, but when they "Consistently" turned to God for strength and direction there were "Mountain Top" experiences but when they didn't the lows were mighty low and while God never punished them for turning away from Him but their choices did.

It's interesting that in each instance God spoke directly to the individual in one way or another and while you might say, "God doesn't do that today", I believe that you are wrong in that assessment. If you read the Biblical Account of each incident you will see that each individual was "Earnestly Seeking" God even before their encounter and even in their objections God knew they were the right person for the job. So the bottom line is that, "If you want to be the right person for the job" or "If you just want to repair some aspect of your life", start the process by "Earnestly Seeking" God and His consistency with the understanding that two things will happen, the repair work will get done but you may find yourself in God's workforce as well.