

WANTING CONSISTENCY AGAIN

“But the Lord’s plans stand firm forever;

His intentions can never be shaken” (Psalm 33:11).

Three of the major sports leagues are preparing to restart their seasons after shutting down due to COVID-19. The NHL, the NBA and Major League Baseball are all preparing to return soon. The athletes will be returning under different circumstances than what they are used to. For instance, when NHL players return and enter into the “bubble” of one of the two hub cities, they will have to adapt to these new realities:

- Daily testing for the virus,
- Being prohibited from giving handshakes, high fives or fist bumps,
- Not reusing towels,
- After games they can’t use the spa, sauna or steam room to soak sore muscles,
- When they return to the hotel, they must use their elbow or knuckle to push the elevator button,
- Once the doors to the elevator close there is no talking allowed.

The NHL has a 47-page return-to-play document for players and teams to follow. The other professional sport leagues will have their guidelines for players to follow as well.

Most athletes love consistency and routine. Many athletes have certain game day routines they like to follow such as:

- Eating a consistent meal or food on game days,
- Taking a nap on the afternoon of games,
- Getting to the arena by a certain time,
- Hanging out with teammates before the game in the dressing room,
- Going through a consistent pre-game warm up, and
- Consistent routines when the game is over.

Being an athlete in my earlier days I had my share of consistent routines that I did on the day of a game. I have heard some pro athletes comment recently that they are going to find it hard to return to play without being able to do some of the consistent routines they became used to prior to

COVID-19. Some athletes are worried that not being able to prepare in the ways they have consistently been used to may adversely affect their level of play.

Whether we are athletes or not, part of us desires consistency and routine. Prior to COVID-19 we all fell into our daily routines that gave us some level of consistency.

- Routine times to get up and get the kids up,
- Routines in getting breakfast made, lunches made and everyone out the door for work or school,
- Routine ways we would drive to work or school,
- Routines of stopping for coffee on the way,
- Routines of getting together with certain people during the course of that week or month,
- Routines when it came to making supper and getting our kids to sports or activities after supper,
- Routines on the weekends with getting chores done and coming to church on Sundays.

Whether we are single, married with young families or retired we all had our routines that provided some level of consistency to our lives. One thing COVID-19 has done is removed consistency from our daily lives and replaced it with unpredictability and uncertainty. Losing what were once consistent routines in our lives has been hard for many of us through this crisis. How many times have you or somebody you know said, *“I just wish things would return to normal?”* Underlying this statement is our desire for consistency. The reality is even when a vaccine for COVID-19 is available, we will not be returning to our previous normal but rather to a “New Normal”. The consistencies about our life we enjoyed pre-COVID-19 will not be the same after the vaccine.

COVID-19 is a true example of how this fallen world cannot always provide us with the consistency we desire and crave in our lives. Thankfully, we can find consistency when it comes to God. This is a truth that is brought out in Psalm 33. The author of this Psalm is unknown, but the point this writer makes is, because God is consistently faithful and His Word is always dependable, He is worthy of our trust

and praise. This truth is good news for us if we have been finding it hard to cope with the inconsistencies in our life brought on by COVID-19.

Psalm 33: 11 states:

***“But the Lord’s plans stand firm forever;
His intentions can never be shaken”***

This verse reminds us how God is completely consistent and always trustworthy because His character, nature and intentions never change. For any of us who desire consistency in our lives, may we be thankful that we find it in our relationship with God. In this season of inconsistency brought on by COVID-19 may we still consistently:

- Stay close to God throughout,
- Praise Him and worship Him,
- Pray to Him and speak to Him,
- Read His word and remind ourselves of His truths and promises.

As we consistently do all of these things may we find strength and comfort in knowing how blessed we are to have the One true constant in our lives:

The Faithful, Unconditional Love of the Lord Our God

Pro athletes are admitting they will find it hard to change their approaches and ways to prepare as they consistently did before games. It may hurt some players and teams, but I hope it helps the Toronto Maple Leafs. They consistently lose in the first round of the play-offs. Maybe in this year of inconsistencies they will once again win the Stanley Cup that used to be a routine up to 1967. A minister can only hope.

God Bless and Keep Safe

Pastor Dean