



[Teacher's Note: Prepare a "consistency illustration" beforehand. You will need a box of *Hot Tamales* and *Mike and Ikes* (bonus if you get the "all red" box so you don't have to separate the other colors). Put both candies in the same clear container (Ziplock bag, mason jar, etc.) and save the boxes for display during your teaching. At the beginning of the message, you will ask a few students to pick a candy and eat it. Since both candies are red, they will have no idea which one they are eating.]

Today, we're going to answer the question of why consistency is crucial in the life of a Christian. But first, I need a few volunteers. Does anyone in the room like *Mike and Ikes*? [Hold up the empty box.] Does anyone in the room like *Hot Tamales*? [Hold up the empty box.]

[Teacher's Note: Choose two to four volunteers who are not allergic to red food dyes or any other ingredients in *Mike and Ikes* and *Hot Tamales*. Invite them on stage and reveal the container of red candies that you prepared beforehand.]

Here's a fun fact about these candies: they are both red! I've mixed them together for a little experiment. [Teacher's Note: Explain to the volunteers and audience that each student will choose one candy to eat. They will tell the audience which candy they got. Repeat the process several times. At the end, ask each student to summarize their experience in five words or less. Answers will vary but the main point of the illustration is that inconsistency is frustrating.]

So, we see here that inconsistency can be frustrating and confusing. Even though both candies look the same, you have no idea what flavor you will get until you taste it. Some find that exciting while others think it's stressful. Either way, inconsistency means that something or someone cannot be trusted. We're going to look at the importance of consistency in the life of a follower of Jesus. Let's pray before we jump in. [Pray.]

Consistency is crucial. It affects so many things in our everyday life; many things we may not even think about. It's confusing and frustrating when things are not consistent. You think you're getting one thing, but then you get something completely different, just like the *Hot Tamales* vs. *Mike and Ikes*.

Here's another example: how many of you prefer Starbucks over Dunkin' Donuts? [Teacher's Note: Insert coffee shops or restaurants that fit your context. Here's my story for an example.] I used to be on Team Dunkin', but the consistency of the drinks in stores across the United States is lacking. In a previous job, I traveled a lot. I would get coffee or tea at Dunkin' stores all over the country. I could order an iced coffee in one airport and order the same drink at another store and both drinks would taste completely different. One time, I think I got a drink that was half raspberry syrup and half tea when I asked for a half and half raspberry tea. It tasted like cough medicine! I've switched to Team Starbucks because I can trust their consistency. Anytime I order a drink, I know exactly what I'm getting. It will taste the same no matter where I am. Consistency matters.

Dictionary.com defines consistency as this: "*steadfast adherence to the same principles, course, form, etc... the condition of cohering or holding together and retaining form; solidity or firmness.*"

Steadfast, principles, course, holding together, firmness - these are all words that are used throughout Scripture to describe our faith and conduct as believers. Check out these verses to see what I mean.

1 Corinth. 15:58 - Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain (NASB).

Psalms 119:15 - I will meditate on your precepts (also known as principles) and fix my eyes on your ways (ESV).

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