

# Consistency

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## INTRODUCTION

While consistency has various meanings, Webster offers the following relevant definitions: “agreement or harmony of parts or features to one another or a whole... harmony of conduct or practice with profession.”

Hebrews chapter 13 focuses upon the concept of consistency, affirming that biblical leaders are consistent (v. 7), the biblical God is consistent (v. 8), and biblical truth is consistent (v. 9).

*Hebrews 13:7-9 (NASB95) — 7 Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. 9 Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.*

## VERSE 7: BIBLICAL LEADERS

Referring to the consistency of biblical leaders, the writer of Hebrews says, “Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith” (Heb. 13:7).

*Hebrews 13:7 (NASB95) — 7 Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.*

The Greek word *hēgeomai*, here translated “led,” means “to lead, suppose” (Thomas 2233). BDAG define it as “(1) to be in a supervisory capacity, *lead, guide*; (2) to engage in an intellectual process, *think, consider, regard*.”

Jesus Christ, our ultimate Leader (Matt. 2:5-6), is the Great Shepherd of the sheep (Heb. 13:20).

*Matthew 2:5-6 (NASB95) — 5 They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: 6 ‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, Are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; For out of you shall come forth a **\*Ruler** Who will shepherd My people Israel.’ ”*

*Hebrews 13:20 (NASB95) — 20 Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord,*

In a congregational setting, elders serve in this capacity, providing oversight and guidance (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11).

*Acts 20:28 (NASB95) — 28 “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

*Ephesians 4:11 (NASB95) — 11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,*

In Hebrews chapter 13, the writer urges his readers to remember their leaders, consider their conduct and imitate their faith (v. 7). A few verses later he orders them to obey their leaders (v. 17), and finally, to greet their leaders (v. 24).

*Hebrews 13:7 (NASB95) — 7 Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.*

*Hebrews 13:17 (NASB95) — 17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.*

*Hebrews 13:24 (NASB95) — 24 Greet all of your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you.*

## **VERSE 8: THE BIBLICAL GOD**

Referring to the consistency of the biblical God, the writer of Hebrews says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb. 13:8).

*Hebrews 13:8 (NASB95) — 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

The God of Sacred Scripture does not change (Heb. 1:10-12; James 1:17); in like manner, the gospel message is not vacillating, but fixed and firmly established (Matt. 24:34-35; 2 Cor. 1:19).

*Hebrews 1:10-12 (NASB95) — 10 And, “You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the works of Your hands; 11 They will perish, but You remain; And they all will become old like a garment, 12 And like a mantle You will roll them up; Like a garment they will also be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not come to an end.”*

*James 1:17 (NASB95) — 17 Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.*

*Matthew 24:34-35 (NASB95) — 34 “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 35 “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.*

*2 Corinthians 1:19 (NASB95) — 19 For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silvanus and Timothy—was not yes and no, but is yes in Him.*

## VERSE 9: BIBLICAL TRUTH

Referring to the consistency of biblical truth, the Hebrew writer says, “Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.” In contrast, the doctrines of men are diverse (Heb. 13:9).

*Hebrews 13:9 (NASB95) — 9 Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.*

The Greek word *poikilos*, here translated “varied,” is descriptive of that which is “many colored, diversified or manifold” (Thomas & BDAG). This word is used in both a positive and a negative sense. Jesus healed various diseases (Matt. 4:24) and performed various miracles (Heb. 2:4). Disciples encountered various trials (James 1:2). We must be good stewards of the manifold grace of God (1 Pet. 4:10). However, this word is also figuratively descriptive of persons, especially with reference to devious ways of thinking, words, actions: ambiguous, crafty, sly, deceitful” (BDAG). Sinful individuals are led on by various impulses (2 Tim. 3:6). False teachers promote varied and strange doctrines; human philosophies are as diverse as those who devise them (Heb. 13:9).

*Hebrews 13:9 (NASB95) — 9 Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.*

The doctrines of men are also strange (Heb. 13:9). The Greek word *xenos*, here translated “strange,” is usually defined as “foreign, a foreigner, guest.” It may refer to a stranger (Matt. 25:35, 38, 43, 44). In this context, it describes teaching that is unfamiliar because it is unknown, i.e., it cannot be found in the word of God, and is thus unauthorized (cf. Lev. 10:1-2; Prov. 2:16-19).

*Hebrews 13:9 (NASB95) — 9 Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.*

*Leviticus 10:1-2 (NASB95) — 1 Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. 2 And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.*

*Proverbs 2:16-19 (NASB95) — 16 To deliver you from the strange woman, From the adulteress who flatters with her words; 17 That leaves the companion of her youth And forgets the covenant of her God; 18 For her house sinks down to death And her tracks lead to the dead; 19 None who go to her return again, Nor do they reach the paths of life.*

Accordingly, the doctrines of men are unbeneficial. The Greek word *ōphēleō*, here used in the negative and translated “not benefited,” normally means “to help, benefit, do good” (Thomas 5623). BDAG say it means “to provide assistance” or “to be successful in accomplishing some objective.”

Apart from salvation, wealth profits nothing (Mark 8:35-37).

*Mark 8:35-37 (NASB95) — 35 “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. 36 “For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? 37 “For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*

Apart from the Spirit, the flesh profits nothing (John 6:63).

*John 6:63 (NASB95) — 63 “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.*

Apart from love, sacrifice profits nothing (1 Cor. 13:3).

*1 Corinthians 13:3 (NASB95) — 3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.*

Apart from obedience, the word profits nothing (Heb. 4:1-2).

*Hebrews 4:1-2 (NASB95) — 1 Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.*

Apart from truth, religious devotion profits nothing (Matt. 7:21-23; Gal. 1:6-9).

*Matthew 7:21-23 (NASB95) — 21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ 23 “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’*

*Galatians 1:6-9 (NASB95) — 6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!*