

October 29, 2021

Here's Hope  
by Rev. Jerry Rea

### Inconsistent?

Are you in a constant struggle to be consistent in your Christian life? This is what I mean. One day you are really growing and going for Jesus. The next day, you hardly pray, much less feel "spiritual." One day you might be elected a Mother Teresa look-alike. You get affirmation from others and your own spirit. You "feel" like a Christian. Your eyes are focused on the presence of God. In those times it's like you could reach out and touch God. You feel you're really making an impact for God. You can sense your worth as a believer. Then, the next day you feel useless, or worthless, or not worthy of the breath of air that God so faithfully gives. We all try to be faithful, but often wind up inconsistent. Allow me to make a few observations.

Things that are alive change. Trees, for example, go through four seasons. The leaves bud, then the tree turns green, then the leaves fall so much that the beauty is gone and all that remains is a skeleton of limbs. Seasons also change. Our world is alive with variety. In fact the only thing that stays the same is that nothing stays the same. In a normal life cycle in God's awesome universe, there is birth, growth, maturity, and eventually death. Everything starts, runs its cycle, then things change back to the way they were. Animals have a life cycle. The earth constantly whirls around so much that the sun appears to rise and set. Even cells grow, then change and morph into something else. Human beings change. Our outward bodies change, and I think our thinking changes as we "mature." I know I don't think the same way I did as a child. I've seen and grown and matured. My heart has changed. In 2021 I have more sympathy for those who're having hard times. Perhaps it's because I've experienced some hard times. Because I feel with them, I pray more often and with more fervor.

Things that are alive grow. It's not just that we change, we grow. Who has not returned to a boyhood home and seen the once small oak tree now dwarfing the front lawn? Who has not run into a long-time friend and not recognized them because their hair is different (or is gone)? If we're blessed, we grow old. Along life's way we run into obstacles, grow through them, and adjust and grow again. Like an old barn that's been battered by storms, losing its paint, and leaning back, we too grow and lean. Churches grow, and churches decline. It happens. Hands that were once young and strong with powerful grip sometimes become gnarled and misshapened. Children that we remember as laughing and playing have grown up. They are not recognizable because they have grown. They have grown up because they're alive.

Things that are alive are greatly affected by simple cycles. There is the small cycle of eating, sleeping, and resting. Too much sleep, or too much food makes us... adjust. We are greatly affected by our living conditions. We are influenced by those we spend our lives with. Some people that are our friends have been good for us. Some, not so much. In some cycles and environments we thrive, but in others we strive. Because we are alive, we are affected by our

environment. Some plants do poorly in your living room because they do not get the light they need. You're like that. You are affected by life's sunlight or the harshness of your environment. That just means you're alive.

People are alive. They are affected and influenced by all the above. Within the maze of our lives we are constantly growing, adjusting, and changing. It's not so easy to be "consistent." If we are down, it may be because our lives are in a whirlwind, or our spirits are "hungry," or the environment of our friends and family has made us so. So, don't be too hard on yourself for your inconsistency. Things that are alive grow and adjust and grow, and adjust.... The trick is to be like your favorite house plant. Be always leaning toward the light.

Leaning - Jerry Rea