

QUALITY
OF
LIFE
BIBLE
STUDY



Habits®

COMPILED BY
S.MCRAE

HABITS

“Quality of Life Series”

LEADER: If ya keep doin’ what your doin’...you’re gonna keep getting’ what you’re gettin’! Everybody believe that?

Is there anybody who’d like to change anything you’re doing to get a different result in any area of your life?

What are some areas most people need help in?

(GIVE TIME FOR ANSWERS.)

IE: diet/exercise/relationships/time management/quiet time

How are we gonna do that?

READER: QUOTE #1

Source ~ <http://www.quotationspage.com/subjects/habits/>

“Habit is habit and not to be flung out of the window by any man, but coaxed downstairs a step at a time.” - Mark Twain 1835-1910 Author

LEADER: A step at a time...

READER: QUOTE #2

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“Habits are formed by the repetition of particular acts. They are strengthened by an increase in the number of repeated acts. Habits are also weakened or broken, and contrary habits are formed by the repetition of contrary acts.” - Mortimer J. Adler 1902-, American Educator, Philosopher

LEADER: So if we choose another action, repeat it often enough, it can replace the one we’ve formed into the habit we wish to be rid of.

LEADER: How did we get this habit to begin with?

Source ~ http://www.cybernation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_habit.html

There is an old saying that, you can’t kill a frog by dropping him into hot water. As you drop him into the hot water, he reacts so quickly that he immediately jumps out unharmed. But if you put him in cold water and gradually warm it up until it is scalding hot, you have him cooked before he knows it. The encroachment of bad habits in our lives is very much like this.

READER: “Four Plants” From the Heidelberg Herald

Source ~ <http://www.higherpraise.org/illustrations/habits.htm>

An elderly teacher, with a pupil by his side, took a walk through a forest. Suddenly he stopped and pointed to four plants close at hand. The first was just beginning to peep above the ground, the second had rooted itself pretty well into the earth, the third was a small shrub, while the fourth was a full-sized tree. The tutor said to his young companion, ‘Pull up the first plant.’ The boy did so eagerly, using only his fingers.

‘Now pull up the second.’ The youth obeyed but found the task more difficult.

‘Do the same with the third,’ he urged. The boy had to use all his strength to uproot it.

‘Now,’ said the instructor, ‘try your hand with the fourth.’ The pupil put his arms around the trunk of the tall tree and couldn’t even shake its leaves. ‘This, my son, is just what happens with our bad habits. When they are young, we can remove them readily; but when they are old, it’s hard to uproot them, though we pray and struggle ever so sincerely.’”

READER: QUOTE #3

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“The chains of habit are generally too weak to be felt, until they are too strong to be broken.” - Samuel Johnson 1709-1784, British Author

READER: QUOTE #4

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“Any act often repeated soon forms a habit; and habit allowed, steady gains in strength. At first it may be but as a spider’s web, easily broken through, but if not resisted it soon binds us with chains of steel.” - Tryon Edwards 1809-1894, American Theologian

READER: QUOTE #5

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“Habits are cobwebs at first; cables at last.” - Chinese Proverb

READER: QUOTE #6

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“Habit is stronger than reason.” - George Santayana 1863-1952, American Philosopher, Poet

READER: QUOTE #7

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“In early childhood you may lay the foundation of poverty or riches, industry of idleness, good or evil, by the habits to which you train your children.” - Lydia Sigourney 1791-1865, American Poet

READER: QUOTE #8

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“You were not born with the habit of brushing your teeth. With persistent action, over a period of time, you developed the habit. Now, I’ll bet you would never consider going a week without brushing.” - Paul R. Scheele American NLP Expert and Human Potential, Author

READER: QUOTE #9

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“There is an invisible garment woven around us from our earliest years; it is made of the way we eat, the way we walk, the way we greet people...” - Jean Giraudoux 1882-1944, French Diplomat, Author

READER: “Unconscious” Sidney J. Harris

Source ~ <http://www.higherpraise.org/illustrations/habits.htm>

It is a commonplace how easily a child of 3 or 4 picks up a foreign language if exposed to it without any formal teaching. Yet we are unwilling to admit that a child of the same age picks up our unconscious attitudes and prejudices without being taught--and often retains these longer than any of his formal education.

READER: QUOTE #10

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“As a twig is bent the tree inclines.” - Virgil 70 - 19 BC, Roman Poet

READER: QUOTE #11

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“Habits change into character.” - Ovid BC 43-18 AD, Roman Poet

READER: QUOTE #12

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“First we form habits, then they form us. Conquer your bad habits, or they’ll eventually conquer you.” - Dr. Rob Gilbert, Motivational Author

READER: QUOTE #13

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“Habit, if not resisted, soon becomes necessity.” - St. Augustine 354-430, Bishop/Theologian

READER: QUOTE #14

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“The more deeply the path is etched, the more it is used, and the more it is used, the more deeply it etched.” - Jo Coudert American Author

READER: QUOTE #15

Source ~ http://www.cybernation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_habit.html

It seems, in fact, as though the second half of a man's life is made up of nothing, but the habits he has accumulated during the first half." - Fyodor Dostoevski 1821-1881 Russian Novelist

READER: "Avoid This Rut" By Frank Clark, Register and Tribune Syndicate.

Source ~ <http://www.higherpraise.org/illustrations/habits.htm>

Years ago when the western U.S. was being settled, roads were often just wagon tracks. These rough trails posed serious problems for those who journeyed on them. On one of these winding paths was posted a sign which read: "Avoid this rut or you'll be in it for the next 25 miles!"

A habit is something you can do without thinking--which is why most of us have so many of them.

READER: "Get Out of Your Rut" #1 By Phil Ware

Source ~ http://www.heartlight.org/two_minute/2min_101696.html

Each school day, I take one of my children to a special class and then on to her own school. As I sit and wait, I see the same children and parents come into the school everyday. They arrive at the same time, acting very much the same way each day.

One dad brings his daughter late nearly every day. At best, they barely beat the tardy bell. Each morning they go through the same routine. Dad gets out quickly. He hurries toward the front door, leaving his young daughter to get her lunch box and books by herself. Taking big, fast, daddy steps, he gruffly barks at her to hurry up. "You don't want to be late," he always scolds. She hurries to catch up. He opens the school door for her and they disappear.

Several things strike me about this scene. I'm convicted by my own tendency to be late and make my children late to their events—seeing it in someone else shames me for my selfishness. This daily display also makes me angry: this little girl has no control over the time she arrives at school. Being late is her dad's fault. She can't drive, she is too little to set the alarm clock. But she starts every morning of school feeling bad about herself—"My daddy is mad at me because we are late. I'm going to be embarrassed again coming into class after everyone else." What a sad way to start school.

I'm sure the dad thinks he is doing something special for his little girl by walking her to class. I'm sure he loves her very much and wants her to have a great day. I'm sure he wants her to be confident and excited about her school work. I'm sure he doesn't know how hurtful his treatment of her is. But he is in a rut—a habit that's so ingrained he doesn't think about its consequences.

LEADER: "Get Out of Your Rut" (Continued)

Source ~ http://www.heartlight.org/two_minute/2min_101696.html

We live so much of our lives on autopilot! We often sit in the same place, eat at the same restaurant, visit with the same people, drive the same way to work, watch the same TV shows, get up at the same time, and even wear the same clothes. Most of this is not bad. Putting unimportant things on autopilot allows us to devote our energy and attention to new things, important projects, and needed creativity. But we must turn off autopilot in our precious relationships.

READER: "Get Out of Your Rut" #2 By Phil Ware

Source ~ http://www.heartlight.org/two_minute/2min_101696.html

One of Garrison Keillor's great lines is that "when you've been married a long time, you fight for entertainment because you already know the outcome." Unfortunately it's true. We get in predictable routines, bad habits, and destructive patterns in our relationships with our spouse, children, parents, and friends. Our loved ones feel taken for granted. We deny it. We genuinely love them. We want what's best for them. It couldn't be true, could it!?

Underneath the surface, we catch ourselves not listening as we should, or expecting them to understand us being "just a little late" again, or reading the paper (or watching TV) pretending to pay attention to them, or using them as the butt of another of our jokes "to liven up a dull party." We've fallen into a bad rut that runs over the ones we most love.

Let's get out of the rut. First, let's notice what we do with our loved ones in our daily routines. We can

check out the patterns and habits and see if you can catch some things we'd like to change. Second, we're going to try to do something new, something fresh, for each of the people we love each month. It won't be extravagant, just out of the routine. Third, we can really listen to them—listen for the mood they're in, find out about their day, say things they need to hear, and don't try to tell them what to do so much as let them know we care what happened.

"A rut is simply a grave without ends on it." So let's get out of that rut!

"The steadfast love the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning!"
Lamentations 3:22-24

READER: QUOTE #16

Source ~ http://www.cybernation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_habit.html

"Incredibly, many people continue their old life-style, their habits even if they feel miserable, lonely, bored, inadequate, or abused. Why? Of course... because habit is an easy place to hide." - Tom Rusk Author

READER: QUOTE #17

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

"It is easier to prevent bad habits than to break them." - Benjamin Franklin 1706-1790, American Scientist, Publisher, Diplomat

READER: QUOTE #18

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

"Feeling sorry for yourself, and your present condition, is not only a waste of energy but the worst habit you could possibly have." - Dale Carnegie 1888-1955, American Author, Trainer

READER: "Driving Nails"

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2/driving_nails.htm

Desiderius Erasmus has said, "A nail is driven out by another nail. Habit is overcome by habit." We should not simply resist "bad habits," we would do better to create good ones.

A teacher who was lecturing on habits told his class that "anything you repeat twenty times is yours forever." From the back of the classroom came a whispered voice, "Mandy. Mandy. Mandy. Mandy..."

What the teacher was trying to say is that any behavior, often repeated, becomes habit. And any habit often repeated, becomes stronger and more powerful. Which is why Dr. E. Stanley Jones was so wise in admonishing us, "Since habits become power, make them work for you and not against you." In other words, drive out the undesirable nail with a good one.

One woman did just that after lamenting to her friend, "I hate being late. It has been a problem for me all of my life."

"Do you really want to change that habit?" her friend asked.

The woman said that she did and her friend responded, "All right. Every time you are late for work or anywhere else, you must give me \$25."

"I would go broke!" came the reply. "But I will do \$10."

It has to be a large enough amount of money for it to hurt," said the friend.

"Believe me, that will hurt," the woman replied. They agreed that the money should be deposited in a jar and used for charity.

In the first week the habitually tardy woman only paid \$10 to her friend. The next week, \$20. The third week none at all. By the fifth week she had built a new habit that changed an irritating pattern which had hindered her all her life. She drove out one nail with another one, and in doing so she found freedom.

Behaviors, as well as attitudes, often repeated, become strong habits. And great freedom is found in replacing that unwanted way of acting or thinking with one you choose. It is an important piece of a whole and happy life.

READER: QUOTE #19

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“Good habits are as easy to form as bad ones.” - Tim McCarver New York Met, Baseball Commentator

READER: QUOTE #20

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“Cultivate only the habits that you are willing should master you.” - Elbert Hubbard 1859-1915, American Author, Publisher

READER: QUOTE #21

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“Man becomes a slave to his constantly repeated acts. What he at first chooses, at last compels.” - Orison Swett Marden 1850-1924, Author, Founder of Success Magazine

READER: QUOTE #22

Source ~ http://www.cybernation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_habit.html

“Your net worth to the world is usually determined by what remains after your bad habits are subtracted from your good ones.” - Benjamin Franklin

READER: Jonah 2:5

Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, Weeds were wrapped around my head.

READER: “Weeds and Habits”

Source ~ <http://www.cfdevotionals.org/devpg01/de010103.htm> (Excerpt)

Have you ever considered how similar weeds are to bad habits? Both weeds and bad habits generally start small. Some weeds spread so quickly on the ground, and some habits infect the heart so quickly, that the original conditions of both are barely recognizable.

Weeds multiply without cultivation. It takes very little work to have a garden of weeds, but a well maintained garden takes time and diligence. It is the same with the heart. If we neglect the condition of our heart and simply do nothing to weed out the sin that so easily infects it, soon we have a heart overgrown with sin.

Both weeds and bad habits are rugged. If they are not cultivated, they still thrive. If we give them a foothold in the soil or in our hearts, they become established and take care of themselves.

There is one weed called a “snow thistle” that produces over 11,000 seeds. So it is with bad habits and sin in the heart. A single bad seed in the heart, if we let it set in, can produce and multiply over and over again.

LEADER: “Weeds and Habits” (Continued)

Source ~ <http://www.cfdevotionals.org/devpg01/de010103.htm> (Excerpt Cont)

Both weeds and bad habits of the heart are destructive. Just as weeds choke out the good things growing in the garden, so also weeds in the heart choke out the newness of life that is there for the believer in Christ. Weeds choke out the nourishment needed for the garden to grow, and sin chokes out the renewal of life that is our reality -- in our hearts -- through Christ.

READER: QUOTE #23

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“Good habits, which bring our lower passions and appetites under automatic control, leave our natures free to explore the larger experiences of life. Too many of us divide and dissipate our energies in debating actions which should be taken for granted.” - Ralph W. Sockman 1889-1970 Religious Leader/Author

READER: QUOTE #24

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“We must make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can...in the

acquisition of a new habit, we must take care to launch ourselves with as strong and decided initiative as possible. Never suffer an exception to occur till the new habit is securely rooted in your life.” - William James 1842-1910, American Psychologist, Professor, Author

READER: QUOTE #25

Source ~ http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_habit.html

“Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.” - Aristotle 384-322 BC Scientist/Philosopher/Author

READER: QUOTE #26

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“Make good habits and they will make you.” - Parks Cousi

READER: QUOTE #27

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“To change a habit, make a conscious decision, then act out the new behavior.” - Maxwell Maltz American Plastic Surgeon

READER: QUOTE #28

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“The unfortunate thing about this world is that the good habits are much easier to give up than the bad ones.” - W. Somerset Maugham 1874-1965, British Novelist, Playwright

READER: QUOTE #29

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“Each year one vicious habit discarded, in time might make the worst of us good.” - Benjamin Franklin

LEADER: So how are we assured we can cultivate and keep the good ones and get rid of the bad?

READER: QUOTE #30

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.” - Aristotle BC 384-322, Greek Philosopher

READER: QUOTE #31

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“The individual who wants to reach the top in business must appreciate the might of the force of habit and must understand that practices are what create habits. He must be quick to break those habits that can break him and hasten to adopt those practices that will become the habits that help him achieve the success he desires.” - J. Paul Getty 1892-1976, American Oil Tycoon, Billionaire

READER: QUOTE #32

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Habit>

“Achieve success in any area of life by identifying the optimum strategies and repeating them until they become habits.” - Charles J. Givens American Businessman, Author, Trainer

READER: “Habits” By Tim Christian Fellowship Devotionals

Source ~ <http://www.cfdevotionals.org/devpg04/de040413.htm>

Habits are formed by repeating individual acts. For example, let’s say you would like to read the Bible every morning before the day starts. Start slowly, and don’t overburden yourself with 15 chapters each day, or you will only get out of bed to do it on the first day. Rather, try reading one chapter each morning. Most months have 31 days, so you might pick a book like Proverbs, or 1 Samuel, which each have 31 chapters. That way, if it is April 13, you know you are on chapter 13. Keeping it simple at the start with any new habit will help you to establish it as a habit. You can always add to what you are doing, but it is the hurdle of getting started that is often hardest to clear.

Once we do something the first time, it becomes easier to repeat again. When something is done frequently, it becomes a habit. The habit becomes spontaneous, and the effort extended becomes less and less noticeable. However, we need to remember that the formation of a habit works for things that are both good and evil. A right habit can be formed by frequency, just as a wrong one can.

There are some parts of life that should be second nature to a Christian. These might be called habits, for a habit is like a second nature. These areas will have their times of struggle, but the desire and habit of the Christian should certainly include: Bible reading and meditation, prayer, fellowship, and visible love to God by obeying His commandments. These are basic habits for the Christian, but they are also aspects of our lives that we have to develop. These habits are not infused into the Christian at conversion, but are part of the process of growth in grace. It is interesting that each one of the four above mentioned encourage and discourage the others. Just as Bible reading will encourage holiness of life and prayer, so also plunging ourselves into sinful habits will discourage our communion with God.

“Begin the Christian race from the cross, and whenever you faint or grow weary, look back to it again.” -- Thomas Adam

READER: “The Habit of Having No Habits” Oswald Chambers – My Utmost For His Highest (Excerpt)
Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/utmost/05/12/>

When we first begin to form a habit, we are fully aware of it. There are times when we are aware of becoming virtuous and godly, but this awareness should only be a stage we quickly pass through as we grow spiritually. If we stop at this stage, we will develop a sense of spiritual pride. The right thing to do with godly habits is to immerse them in the life of the Lord until they become such a spontaneous expression of our lives that we are no longer aware of them. Our spiritual life continually causes us to focus our attention inwardly for the determined purpose of self-examination, because each of us has some qualities we have not yet added to our lives.

READER: Romans 6:14-22

For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

LEADER: “Weeds and Habits” #2

Source ~ <http://www.cfdevotionals.org/devpg01/de010103.htm> (Excerpt)

Through Christ our hearts are made new, and through our walk with Christ, we are becoming more and more conformed to the image of Christ.

READER: Galatians 1:3-4

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

LEADER: “Escape the Corruption” Dr. Grant C. Richison Today’s Word

Source ~ <http://www.crusade.org/word/word824.html> (Excerpt)

It is impossible to escape the pollutions of the world unless you are born again with a divine capacity to orient to God’s values. We hear much today that people cannot get out from under obsessions and compulsions. The Bible says we can. We can escape those foul habits we accumulated over the years. When God puts in us His divine capacity, we can get victory over them if we appropriate the principle to experience.

LEADER: Do you have a thorn in your flesh....a habit you’d like to be rid of?

LEADER: “Not My Thorn” By Michael Harbour

Source ~ http://www.heartlight.org/articles/200207/20020705_thorn.html

Confessing that we have them, that we wrestle with the messengers of the devil, is important. If we think that we are the only ones who are struggling, or hurting, or facing temptations, we tend to isolate ourselves. In our isolation, the thorn digs painfully deep.

So what do we do?

(CALL OUT NUMBERS)

READER: “Not My Thorn” By Michael Harbour

Source ~ http://www.heartlight.org/articles/200207/20020705_thorn.html (Excerpt)

1. FIRST YOU PRAY:

We cannot do spiritual battle with the power of your flesh. To use your own strength alone, is to be ill prepared. You cannot pull yourself up by your bootstraps and win a head-to-head battle with the devil. Throwing ourselves on the mercy, grace, and might of God is the only way!

2. SECOND:

Tell the people who know you and love you about your struggle

You are not alone. Tell people who will hold you accountable, who will pray with you, and who will encourage you. Paul told the Christians, My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. (Galatians 6:1) God meant for us to be open and graceful about our thorns and willing to help others who come to us with their thorns.

3. FINALLY ASK THAT THE THORN BE REMOVED

It would be great if I were never tempted to shipwreck my life. It would be great if my hungry heart always turned to God for satisfaction. However, that does not appear to be the plan of God. Paul prayed three times to the Lord to remove his thorn. The Lord said no. He said, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9) God may grant your request. Or you may be like Paul let God’s grace triumph in you over the pull of the thorn.

READER: “Take the Initiative” By Oswald Chambers – My Utmost for His Highest

Source ~ http://www.heartlight.org/cgi-shl/my_utmost/utm.cgi?0510

“Add to your faith virtue” 2 Peter 1:5

“Add” means there is something we have to do. We are in danger of forgetting that we cannot do what God does, and that God will not do what we can do. We cannot save ourselves nor sanctify ourselves, God does that; but God will not give us good habits, He will not give us character, He will not make us walk aright. We have to do all that ourselves, we have to work out the salvation God has worked in. “Add” means to get into the habit of doing things, and in the initial stages it is difficult. To take the initiative is to make a beginning, to instruct yourself in the way you have to go.

Beware of the tendency of asking the way when you know it perfectly well. Take the initiative, stop hesitating, and take the first step. Be resolute when God speaks, act in faith immediately on what He says, and never revise your decisions. If you hesitate when God tells you to do a thing, you endanger your standing in grace. Take the initiative, take it yourself, take the step with your will now, make it impossible to go back. Burn your bridges behind you - “I will write that letter”; “I will pay that debt.” Make the thing inevitable.

We have to get into the habit of hearkening to God about everything, to form the habit of finding out what God says. If when a crisis comes, we instinctively turn to God, we know that the habit has been formed. We have to take the initiative where we are, not where we are not.

READER: 2 Corinthians 4:10

always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

READER: “The Habit of Enjoying The Disagreeable” By Oswald Chambers – My Utmost For His Highest
Source ~ http://www.heartlight.org/cgi-shl/my_utmmost/utm.cgi?0514 (Excerpt)

We have to form habits to express what God’s grace has done in us. It is not a question of being saved from hell, but of being saved in order to manifest the life of the Son of God in our mortal flesh, and it is the disagreeable things which make us exhibit whether or not we are manifesting His life. Do I manifest the essential sweetness of the Son of God, or the essential irritation of “myself” apart from Him? The only thing that will enable me to enjoy the disagreeable is the keen enthusiasm of letting the life of the Son of God manifest itself in me. No matter how disagreeable a thing may be, say - “Lord, I am delighted to obey Thee in this matter,” and instantly the Son of God will press to the front, and there will be manifested in my human life that which glorifies Jesus.

READER: Romans 12:1

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

LEADER: “Living Sacrifices” By Wil Pounds
Source ~ <http://www.abideinchrist.com/selah/mar27.html> (Excerpt)

We are living sacrifices because God is at work in us now. He is continuing to work in those whom He has brought to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. We are living sacrifices because He is at work in us changing attitudes, destroying destructive habits, forming new ways of thinking that pleases God. God does not start a new work and abandon it. He always finishes what He begins. The only reasonable worship is to join Him in what He is doing.

LEADER: “Worthy of Respect” By Phil ware
Source ~ <http://www.heartlight.org/cgi-shl/todaysverse.cgi?day=19980909> (pronoun change)

May the Lord strengthen us through our Spirit so we may gain better control of our passions, our speech our example and our habits. May He help us put to death the things that would rob us of our spiritual passion and our influence for good to those who do not know Jesus. May our faith be stronger as we try to lovingly treat others and persevere in faith through difficult times.

READER: I Peter 1:14

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,

LEADER: “Do Not Conform” By Dr. Grant C. Richison
Source ~ <http://www.crusade.org/word/word439.html> (Excerpt)

It is not just good advice but a divine directive from heaven.

The words “not conforming” mean do not be shaped by those desires you had formerly. “Conforming” means to fashion or shape one thing like another, to form or mold after something.

LEADER: Who is our model? (Christ)

Can we do it?
ARE WE GONNA KEEP DOIN’ WHAT WE’RE DOIN’?
AND...GETTIN’ WHAT WE’RE GETTIN’?

LEADER: QUOTE #33
Source ~ http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_habit.html

REMEMBER THIS: “How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.” - Annie Dillard Poet/Writer/Professor

COMMENTS IF TIME:

SCHEDULE TEN MINUTES BEFORE CLOSING FOR PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES:

COPY AND DISTRIBUTE THE FOLLOWING PAGES TO YOUR READERS:

READERS

QUOTE #1

“Habit is habit and not to be flung out of the window by any man, but coaxed downstairs a step at a time.” - Mark Twain 1835-1910 Author

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QUOTE #2

“Habits are formed by the repetition of particular acts. They are strengthened by an increase in the number of repeated acts. Habits are also weakened or broken, and contrary habits are formed by the repetition of contrary acts.” - Mortimer J. Adler 1902-, American Educator, Philosopher

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“Four Plants”

An elderly teacher, with a pupil by his side, took a walk through a forest. Suddenly he stopped and pointed to four plants close at hand. The first was just beginning to peep above the ground, the second had rooted itself pretty well into the earth, the third was a small shrub, while the fourth was a full-sized tree. The tutor said to his young companion, ‘Pull up the first plant.’ The boy did so eagerly, using only his fingers.

‘Now pull up the second.’ The youth obeyed but found the task more difficult.

‘Do the same with the third,’ he urged. The boy had to use all his strength to uproot it.

‘Now,’ said the instructor, ‘try your hand with the fourth.’ The pupil put his arms around the trunk of the tall tree and couldn’t even shake its leaves. ‘This, my son, is just what happens with our bad habits. When they are young, we can remove them readily; but when they are old, it’s hard to uproot them, though we pray and struggle ever so sincerely.’”

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QUOTE #3

“The chains of habit are generally too weak to be felt, until they are too strong to be broken.” - Samuel Johnson 1709-1784, British Author

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QUOTE #4

“Any act often repeated soon forms a habit; and habit allowed, steady gains in strength. At first it may be but as a spider’s web, easily broken through, but if not resisted it soon binds us with chains of steel.” - Tryon Edwards 1809-1894, American Theologian

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QUOTE #5

“Habits are cobwebs at first; cables at last.” - Chinese Proverb

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QUOTE #6

“Habit is stronger than reason.” - George Santayana 1863-1952, American Philosopher, Poet

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QUOTE #7

“In early childhood you may lay the foundation of poverty or riches, industry or idleness, good or evil, by the habits to which you train your children.” - Lydia Sigourney 1791-1865, American Poet

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QUOTE #8

“You were not born with the habit of brushing your teeth. With persistent action, over a period of time, you developed the habit. Now, I’ll bet you would never consider going a week without brushing.” - Paul R. Scheele American NLP Expert and Human Potential, Author



QUOTE #9

“There is an invisible garment woven around us from our earliest years; it is made of the way we eat, the way we walk, the way we greet people...” - Jean Giraudoux 1882-1944, French Diplomat, Author



“Unconscious”

It is a commonplace how easily a child of 3 or 4 picks up a foreign language if exposed to it without any formal teaching. Yet we are unwilling to admit that a child of the same age picks up our unconscious attitudes and prejudices without being taught--and often retains these longer than any of his formal education.



QUOTE #10

“As a twig is bent the tree inclines.” - Virgil 70 - 19 BC, Roman Poet



QUOTE #11

“Habits change into character.” - Ovid BC 43-18 AD, Roman Poet



QUOTE #12

“First we form habits, then they form us. Conquer your bad habits, or they’ll eventually conquer you.” - Dr. Rob Gilbert, Motivational Author



QUOTE #13

“Habit, if not resisted, soon becomes necessity.” - St. Augustine 354-430, Bishop/Theologian



QUOTE #14

“The more deeply the path is etched, the more it is used, and the more it is used, the more deeply it etched.” - Jo Coudert American Author



QUOTE #15

It seems, in fact, as though the second half of a man’s life is made up of nothing, but the habits he has accumulated during the first half.” - Fyodor Dostoevski 1821-1881 Russian Novelist



“Avoid This Rut”

Years ago when the western U.S. was being settled, roads were often just wagon tracks. These rough trails posed serious problems for those who journeyed on them. On one of these winding paths was posted a sign which read: “Avoid this rut or you’ll be in it for the next 25 miles!”

A habit is something you can do without thinking--which is why most of us have so many of them.



“Get Out of Your Rut” #1

Each school day, I take one of my children to a special class and then on to her own school. As I sit and wait, I see the same children and parents come into the school everyday. They arrive at the same time, acting very much the same way each day.

One dad brings his daughter late nearly every day. At best, they barely beat the tardy bell. Each morning they go through the same routine. Dad gets out quickly. He hurries toward the front door, leaving his young daughter to get her lunch box and books by herself. Taking big, fast, daddy steps, he gruffly barks at her to hurry up. “You don’t want to be late,” he always scolds. She hurries to catch up. He opens the school door for her and they disappear.

Several things strike me about this scene. I’m convicted by my own tendency to be late and make my children late to their events—seeing it in someone else shames me for my selfishness. This daily display also makes me angry: this little girl has no control over the time she arrives at school. Being late is her dad’s fault. She can’t drive, she is too little to set the alarm clock. But she starts every morning of school feeling bad about herself—“My daddy is mad at me because we are late. I’m going to be embarrassed again coming into class after everyone else.” What a sad way to start school.

I’m sure the dad thinks he is doing something special for his little girl by walking her to class. I’m sure he loves her very much and wants her to have a great day. I’m sure he wants her to be confident and excited about her school work. I’m sure he doesn’t know how hurtful his treatment of her is. But he is in a rut—a habit that’s so ingrained he doesn’t think about its consequences.



“Get Out of Your Rut” (Continued)

We live so much of our lives on autopilot! We often sit in the same place, eat at the same restaurant, visit with the same people, drive the same way to work, watch the same TV shows, get up at the same time, and even wear the same clothes. Most of this is not bad. Putting unimportant things on autopilot allows us to devote our energy and attention to new things, important projects, and needed creativity. But we must turn off autopilot in our precious relationships.



“Get Out of Your Rut” #2

One of Garrison Keillor’s great lines is that “when you’ve been married a long time, you fight for entertainment because you already know the outcome.” Unfortunately it’s true. We get in predictable routines, bad habits, and destructive patterns in our relationships with our spouse, children, parents, and friends. Our loved ones feel taken for granted. We deny it. We genuinely love them. We want what’s best for them. It couldn’t be true, could it!?

Underneath the surface, we catch ourselves not listening as we should, or expecting them to understand us being “just a little late” again, or reading the paper (or watching TV) pretending to pay attention to them, or using them as the butt of another of our jokes “to liven up a dull party.” We’ve fallen into a bad rut that runs over the ones we most love.

Let’s get out of the rut. First, let’s notice what we do with our loved ones in our daily routines. We can check out the patterns and habits and see if you can catch some things we’d like to change. Second, we’re going to try to do something new, something fresh, for each of the people we love each month. It won’t be extravagant, just out of the routine. Third, we can really listen to them—listen for the mood they’re in, find out about their day, say things they need to hear, and don’t try to tell them what to do so much as let them know we care what happened.

“A rut is simply a grave without ends on it.” So let’s get out of that rut!

“The steadfast love the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning!”
Lamentations 3:22-24



QUOTE #16

“Incredibly, many people continue their old life-style, their habits even if they feel miserable, lonely, bored, inadequate, or abused. Why? Of course... because habit is an easy place to hide.” - Tom Rusk Author



QUOTE #17

“It is easier to prevent bad habits than to break them.” - Benjamin Franklin 1706-1790, American Scientist, Publisher, Diplomat



QUOTE #18

“Feeling sorry for yourself, and your present condition, is not only a waste of energy but the worst habit you could possibly have.” - Dale Carnegie 1888-1955, American Author, Trainer



“Driving Nails”

Desiderius Erasmus has said, “A nail is driven out by another nail. Habit is overcome by habit.” We should not simply resist “bad habits,” we would do better to create good ones.

A teacher who was lecturing on habits told his class that “anything you repeat twenty times is yours forever.” From the back of the classroom came a whispered voice, “Mandy. Mandy. Mandy. Mandy...”

What the teacher was trying to say is that any behavior, often repeated, becomes habit. And any habit often repeated, becomes stronger and more powerful. Which is why Dr. E. Stanley Jones was so wise in admonishing us, “Since habits become power, make them work for you and not against you.” In other words, drive out the undesirable nail with a good one.

One woman did just that after lamenting to her friend, “I hate being late. It has been a problem for me all of my life.”

“Do you really want to change that habit?” her friend asked.

The woman said that she did and her friend responded, “All right. Every time you are late for work or anywhere else, you must give me \$25.”

“I would go broke!” came the reply. “But I will do \$10.”

It has to be a large enough amount of money for it to hurt,” said the friend.

“Believe me, that will hurt,” the woman replied. They agreed that the money should be deposited in a jar and used for charity.

In the first week the habitually tardy woman only paid \$10 to her friend. The next week, \$20. The third week none at all. By the fifth week she had built a new habit that changed an irritating pattern which had hindered her all her life. She drove out one nail with another one, and in doing so she found freedom.

Behaviors, as well as attitudes, often repeated, become strong habits. And great freedom is found in replacing that unwanted way of acting or thinking with one you choose. It is an important piece of a whole and happy life.



QUOTE #19

“Good habits are as easy to form as bad ones.” - Tim McCarver New York Met, Baseball Commentator



QUOTE #20

“Cultivate only the habits that you are willing should master you.” - Elbert Hubbard 1859-1915, American Author, Publisher



QUOTE #21

“Man becomes a slave to his constantly repeated acts. What he at first chooses, at last compels.” - Orison Swett Marden 1850-1924, Author, Founder of Success Magazine

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QUOTE #22

“Your net worth to the world is usually determined by what remains after your bad habits are subtracted from your good ones.” - Benjamin Franklin

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Jonah 2:5

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“Weeds and Habits”

Have you ever considered how similar weeds are to bad habits? Both weeds and bad habits generally start small. Some weeds spread so quickly on the ground, and some habits infect the heart so quickly, that the original conditions of both are barely recognizable.

Weeds multiply without cultivation. It takes very little work to have a garden of weeds, but a well maintained garden takes time and diligence. It is the same with the heart. If we neglect the condition of our heart and simply do nothing to weed out the sin that so easily infects it, soon we have a heart overgrown with sin.

Both weeds and bad habits are rugged. If they are not cultivated, they still thrive. If we give them a foothold in the soil or in our hearts, they become established and take care of themselves.

There is one weed called a “snow thistle” that produces over 11,000 seeds. So it is with bad habits and sin in the heart. A single bad seed in the heart, if we let it set in, can produce and multiply over and over again.

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QUOTE #23

“Good habits, which bring our lower passions and appetites under automatic control, leave our natures free to explore the larger experiences of life. Too many of us divide and dissipate our energies in debating actions which should be taken for granted.” - Ralph W. Sockman 1889-1970 Religious Leader/Author

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QUOTE #24

“We must make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can...in the acquisition of a new habit, we must take care to launch ourselves with as strong and decided initiative as possible. Never suffer an exception to occur till the new habit is securely rooted in your life.” - William James 1842-1910, American Psychologist, Professor, Author

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QUOTE #25

“Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.” - Aristotle 384-322 BC Scientist/Philosopher/Author

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QUOTE #26

“Make good habits and they will make you.” - Parks Cousi

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QUOTE #27

“To change a habit, make a conscious decision, then act out the new behavior.” - Maxwell Maltz American Plastic Surgeon

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QUOTE #28

“The unfortunate thing about this world is that the good habits are much easier to give up than the bad ones.”
- W. Somerset Maugham 1874-1965, British Novelist, Playwright

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QUOTE #29

“Each year one vicious habit discarded, in time might make the worst of us good.” - Benjamin Franklin

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QUOTE #30

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.” - Aristotle BC 384-322, Greek Philosopher

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QUOTE #31

“The individual who wants to reach the top in business must appreciate the might of the force of habit and must understand that practices are what create habits. He must be quick to break those habits that can break him and hasten to adopt those practices that will become the habits that help him achieve the success he desires.” - J. Paul Getty 1892-1976, American Oil Tycoon, Billionaire

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QUOTE #32

“Achieve success in any area of life by identifying the optimum strategies and repeating them until they become habits.” - Charles J. Givens American Businessman, Author, Trainer

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“Habits”

Habits are formed by repeating individual acts. For example, let’s say you would like to read the Bible every morning before the day starts. Start slowly, and don’t overburden yourself with 15 chapters each day, or you will only get out of bed to do it on the first day. Rather, try reading one chapter each morning. Most months have 31 days, so you might pick a book like Proverbs, or 1 Samuel, which each have 31 chapters. That way, if it is April 13, you know you are on chapter 13. Keeping it simple at the start with any new habit will help you to establish it as a habit. You can always add to what you are doing, but it is the hurdle of getting started that is often hardest to clear.

Once we do something the first time, it becomes easier to repeat again. When something is done frequently, it becomes a habit. The habit becomes spontaneous, and the effort extended becomes less and less noticeable. However, we need to remember that the formation of a habit works for things that are both good and evil. A right habit can be formed by frequency, just as a wrong one can.

There are some parts of life that should be second nature to a Christian. These might be called habits, for a habit is like a second nature. These areas will have their times of struggle, but the desire and habit of the Christian should certainly include: Bible reading and meditation, prayer, fellowship, and visible love to God by obeying His commandments. These are basic habits for the Christian, but they are also aspects of our lives that we have to develop. These habits are not infused into the Christian at conversion, but are part of the process of growth in grace. It is interesting that each one of the four above mentioned encourage and discourage the others. Just as Bible reading will encourage holiness of life and prayer, so also plunging ourselves into sinful habits will discourage our communion with God.

“Begin the Christian race from the cross, and whenever you faint or grow weary, look back to it again.” -- Thomas Adam

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“The Habit of Having No Habits”

When we first begin to form a habit, we are fully aware of it. There are times when we are aware of becoming virtuous and godly, but this awareness should only be a stage we quickly pass through as we grow spiritually. If we stop at this stage, we will develop a sense of spiritual pride. The right thing to do with godly habits is to immerse them in the life of the Lord until they become such a spontaneous expression of our lives that we are no longer aware of them. Our spiritual life continually causes us to focus our attention inwardly for the determined purpose of self-examination, because each of us has some qualities we have not yet added to our lives.

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Romans 6:14-22

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Galatians 1:3-4

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“Not My Thorn”

1. FIRST YOU PRAY:

We cannot do spiritual battle with the power of your flesh. To use your own strength alone, is to be ill prepared. You cannot pull yourself up by your bootstraps and win a head-to-head battle with the devil. Throwing ourselves on the mercy, grace, and might of God is the only way!

2. SECOND:

Tell the people who know you and love you about your struggle

You are not alone. Tell people who will hold you accountable, who will pray with you, and who will encourage you. Paul told the Christians, My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. (Galatians 6:1) God meant for us to be open and graceful about our thorns and willing to help others who come to us with their thorns.

3. FINALLY ASK THAT THE THORN BE REMOVED

It would be great if I were never tempted to shipwreck my life. It would be great if my hungry heart always turned to God for satisfaction. However, that does not appear to be the plan of God. Paul prayed three times to the Lord to remove his thorn. The Lord said no. He said, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9) God may grant your request. Or you may be like Paul let God’s grace triumph in you over the pull of the thorn.

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“Take the Initiative”

“Add to your faith virtue” 2 Peter 1:5

“Add” means there is something we have to do. We are in danger of forgetting that we cannot do what God does, and that God will not do what we can do. We cannot save ourselves nor sanctify ourselves, God does that; but God will not give us good habits, He will not give us character, He will not make us walk aright. We have to do all that ourselves, we have to work out the salvation God has worked in. “Add” means to get into the habit of doing things, and in the initial stages it is difficult. To take the initiative is to make a beginning, to instruct yourself in the way you have to go.

Beware of the tendency of asking the way when you know it perfectly well. Take the initiative, stop hesitating, and take the first step. Be resolute when God speaks, act in faith immediately on what He says, and never revise your decisions. If you hesitate when God tells you to do a thing, you endanger your standing in grace. Take the initiative, take it yourself, take the step with your will now, make it impossible to go back. Burn your bridges behind you - “I will write that letter”; “I will pay that debt.” Make the thing inevitable.

We have to get into the habit of hearkening to God about everything, to form the habit of finding out what God says. If when a crisis comes, we instinctively turn to God, we know that the habit has been formed. We have to take the initiative where we are, not where we are not.

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2 Corinthians 4:10

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“The Habit of Enjoying The Disagreeable”

We have to form habits to express what God’s grace has done in us. It is not a question of being saved from hell, but of being saved in order to manifest the life of the Son of God in our mortal flesh, and it is the disagreeable things which make us exhibit whether or not we are manifesting His life. Do I manifest the essential sweetness of the Son of God, or the essential irritation of “myself” apart from Him? The only thing that will enable me to enjoy the disagreeable is the keen enthusiasm of letting the life of the Son of God manifest itself in me. No matter how disagreeable a thing may be, say - “Lord, I am delighted to obey Thee in this matter,” and instantly the Son of God will press to the front, and there will be manifested in my human life that which glorifies Jesus.

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Romans 12:1

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I Peter 1:14

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