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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Community Group Discussion

- In this series we've looked at building habits of Bible study, prayer, service, fellowship and worship. Have you tried adding these disciplines to your life? If so, which one(s)? How's it going?
- Look at the graph of **Desire**, **Effort** and **Action** (see Sermon Summary). Does it make sense? Tell your experience—successful or "*not-so-much*"—of trying to add a habit to your life recently. Were you above or below the **Line of Action**? Were you *far* or *slightly* above/below that line?

Tell about a habit you've given up trying to develop. Does this graph give you courage to try again?

- Look at Pastor Doug's four "aids to habit-formation" (see Sermon Summary). Which of those have you not yet tried?

Reflect on that experience, applying insights from the relationship between desire, effort, and action.

Which one of those four aids do you think would most help you move forward? How can we help?

- Finally, review Pastor Doug's three suggestions for what to do when we slip up spiritually. Which of those have been **most lacking** when you've slipped up in the practice of spiritual disciplines?

Considering the relationship between desire, effort, and action, what's the solution for your problem—developing a greater desire for change, or choosing an action which requires less effort?

How could focusing on "making God smile" help?



Application-Challenge



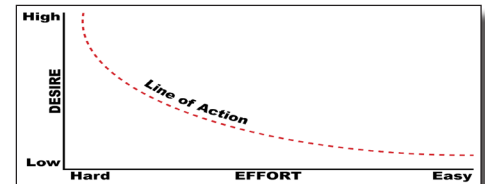
- Make a vow to God to grow in your love for God and others by cultivating the habits of Bible study, prayer, serving, fellowship, and worship.
- Fill out a "recipe card" for each habit you want to establish, find an accountability partner who can help you, and begin today!

Sermon Summary

Today's message marks the end of a seven part series that we have entitled, "Growing God's Way." The question we have tried to answer in this series is this: How do we become more like Christ? First, Jesus said, "You must be born again." Salvation sets the needed spiritual foundation. To grow in Christ, to become more like him, we must imitate his lifestyle, practicing the spiritual disciplines he practiced: Bible study, prayer, service, fellowship, and worship. It is one thing to identify the habits of a disciple, it is another to make them a regular part of your life. So what I want to talk about is how to establish these habits, and keep them going for a lifetime! Research by Dr. B.J. Fogg indicates that to establish a habit, three factors are important: Habits are formed when we combine desire, effort and a "prompt" (a reminder to do our desired behavior). Where these three elements are present, habits are established. Let's apply this to the habit of spiritual disciplines.

Desire—You will never establish a new habit if you don't desire it. So the question we all need to settle is this: "Do I really want to change?" Do I want to become the person that God has created me to be? Do I want to be more loving, more patient, more forgiving and less critical of others? (Matthew 22:37-39). Do I want the smile of God upon my life? Without the desire to change, without the "want to", a new habit will never get off the ground.

Effort—The second important factor in trying to build a new habit is the amount of initial effort required to establish the habit. The more effort required, the less likely something will get done. With high motivation (desire), you can do anything, but when your level of desire is low the effort required to start the habit must also be low or else success is very unlikely.



Prompt—Finally, we need a reminder of some kind. Let's illustrate this with the habit of Bible study. Let's assume that your desire to spend time daily in God's word is rather high—you know that you need to change. Since we are more likely to do something if it is easy, we'll want to begin with a small, easy challenge. So you might begin with a five minute Bible reading challenge. "I'm going to begin by reading my Bible for five minutes every morning!" That seems attainable, doesn't it? It's way better than zero minutes each morning. We can always increase it later, but let's start with something that is doable. With high desire and low effort required, the likelihood of establishing the habit is good. But to help raise the success rate even higher we need a good prompt. So, to remind me of my commitment to spend time daily in God's Word, I could leave my Bible next to the coffee maker! That is my prompt. So now, rather than check the internet while drinking my coffee, I read my Bible. Habit = Desire + Effort + Prompt. It's helpful to make a "recipe card" for each habit that you hope to establish. For the habit of Bible study, it could look like this:

And, as you close your Bible, envision God's smile! Thank him for his love for you. Ask Him to express his life and his love through you today. In this series we have talked about five habits. We can make a recipe card for the other habits as well.

Let me suggest some additional aids to habit-formation.

[1] Begin today! Don't delay. You don't slide into a new good habit! It begins with a firm decision.

[2] Make a vow. Throughout the scriptures men and women of faith have made vows to God to support their spiritual commitment. There is something powerful about announcing your intentions. Here are several vows people in the Bible made: Genesis 28:20-22; 31:13; Numbers 21:2; Judges 11:30-31; 1 Samuel 1:1; 1 Samuel 1:24; Psalm 132:2-5; Jonah 1:16 & 2:9; Proverbs 31:1-2; Acts 18:18; Acts 21:23-26.

I've found it to be particularly powerful if you will put your commitment in writing.

[3] Double up. Get a partner who will support and encourage you. It may be your husband or wife or a friend here at church. But find someone who can help hold you accountable—not in a legalistic, condemning way—but in an encouraging "I want to help you do what you really want to do" way. In your Community Group ask each other: "How is everyone doing in our spiritual habits? (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

[4] Rely on God. Satan will do all that he can to discourage you, to dissuade you, to cause you to slip up. So pray, and ask God to help you as you seek to develop these important habits (Philippians 2:13).

What happens when I slip up? Let's say I miss a day, two days, a week, maybe even a month practicing my habits. What do I do?

[A] Talk to God about it. Ask him to strengthen you and to increase your desire to change and build new habits.

[B] Talk to your accountability partner about it. Ask them to pray for you. Maybe prayer and Bible study is something that you could do together.

[C] Start again. Proverbs 24:16 says: "A righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, but the wicked stumble in time of calamity." Everyone falls; the main difference between a righteous person and a wicked one is that the righteous keep getting back up and giving it another shot!

Recipe for Bible Study		
After I...	I will...	To reinforce this habit...
Wake up and make coffee	Read my Bible for five minutes	😊
Prompt: Bible by coffee maker		

Recipe for Bible Study	
My Vow to God	
"Father, by your grace, beginning today, I commit myself to developing the habits of Bible study, prayer, serving, giving and fellowship. Help me to establish these habits that I might become more like your Son."	
Doug Humphrey February 23, 2020	

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) is a simple way to study any passage. We can use it to review all five of these spiritual disciplines...

Monday—Psalm 19:7-11

Tuesday—Proverbs 15:8 & 29

Wednesday—Mark 10:42-45

Thursday—1 Corinthians 1:9

Friday—Psalm 63:1-9

Saturday—***In preparation for worshipping your risen Lord tomorrow with your church family,*** study Hebrews 11:23–27.

Need blank copies for doing more
"Five Question Bible Study"?
e-mail: Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) is it found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text?