

# 4 Truths about Habits

## Preview

You probably don't think intentionally about the habits you have. You might not even be aware that you have any. But the truth is we all have lots of habits. Take our morning routine, for example: the way we get dressed, comb our hair, brush our teeth, and so on. Even the way we eat can reveal certain habits.

## Praise

Try crossing your arms. Which arm ended up on top of the other arm? Did you think about arranging your arms that way? Probably not. It is just a habit you created, and now you perform it subconsciously. Even something as simple as eating your Oreos is a habit. Or how about this one? A babysitter said she took care of two siblings, and they both ate their lunchtime sandwiches the say way: they lifted off the top piece of bread, ate the filling by scooping it out with their fingers, then they ate the two pieces of bread. Go figure.

## Parable

One day a teacher and his student were hiking through the woods. They came across a tree sprout, newly pushed above the ground. The teacher suggested, "Try pulling up that sprout." With ease, the student bent down and uprooted the sprout. They kept walking until they came across a three-foot-tall seedling. Once again the teacher said, "Try pulling up that seedling." The student again did as the teacher asked, but this time uprooting the seedling took a little more effort. The teacher then led the student to a mature tree, much older and established than the past two. Once again the teacher challenged, "Try pulling this tree out of the ground." With a puzzled face, the student responded, "But that would be impossible!"

Moral of the story: Habits that are short-lived are easier to change/stop/uproot than older habits that have been around a long time.

## Present

### Truth 1: Bad Habits Die Hard

Just as we have seen in this parable, habits can be hard to break, especially long-term, die-hard bad habits that set up like cement in our lives. Why are they so hard to break? Over time they have become a part of who we are, and we do them over and over without thinking. You might be asking yourself, "Then how do I break a long-standing habit?" It takes hard work, but when you are motivated and decide to do it, you can break any habit. And don't neglect the fact that God can help. Ask Him to give you the strength and the wisdom you lack to break that habit. Keep in mind the moral of the tree parable: Uproot bad habits while they're sprouts. You will save yourself a lot of effort, discouragement, and grief.

### Truth 2: Establishing Good Habits Takes Hard Work

We all wish that good habits would just appear like a rabbit jumping out of hat. But the truth is establishing good habits is hard work. Research Fellow Phillippa Lally and her team of researchers at the Economic & Social Research Council found that it takes the average person sixty-six days to create a new habit.

### Truth 3: Habits Lead to Destinations

Depending on what they are, our habits will either make us or break us. "We become what we repeatedly do." – Sean Covey

Some people ruin their lives with the foolish things they do, and then they blame the Lord for it. (See Proverbs 19:3, ESV.)

Do you play a musical instrument or participate in a certain sport? What did you have to do to get good at it? Practice! For football, you condition the muscles with leg presses, leg curls, deadlifts, squats, etc.; for music, you condition the fingers and wrists with scales and etudes. Practice builds habits that will show up while you are playing in the finals or performing the masterpiece. If you want to excel at something, you have to develop the habits you need to succeed. This is why it is so important to develop

good habits while you are younger. When you grow older, bad habits are harder to break and will work against your efforts to get to the desired destination.

#### Truth 4: Habits Help Make Your Dream Reality

What are your dreams? Habits can cause you to realize your dreams or fail to reach those dreams. Maybe one of your dreams is becoming a successful Bible quizzier. Do you think you can become a great Bible quizzier if you don't have a habit of reading your Bible and memorizing the prescribed verses? If this is your dream, start practicing! Maybe you want to become an artist. Do you think if you dab some paint on a canvas every six months or so you will become an artist? No, it will take hard work and creating habits that will help you achieve your goal.

### Practice

We need to develop habits that align with biblical truth and break habits that don't move us in the direction of Christ.

We need to decide every day if we are going to take one more step closer to Christ, stay in the same place, or take a step away from Christ. Our daily habits play a huge part in our daily walk with Christ.

### Pray

God, give us wisdom in choosing the correct habits that will lead us in the direction You want us to go. Give us the strength to break the bad habits we have created and the fortitude to develop good habits, even if they take longer than sixty-six days to learn.

### Plus

Follow the link below for a 66-day habit tracker. We have added ten spaces for ten new habits. Don't feel like you have to have ten; you can do one or two. We just added that number so you have enough space for the new habit you would like to learn.

