

Good Habits Are Hard to Break

by Bryan Gibson

“Always”, “often”, “constantly”, “continually”, “diligently”, “steadfastly”, “day and night”—have you noticed these words and phrases in the New Testament? Clearly, certain activities of a Christian should be done over and over again. In other words, some things should become a matter of habit. Let’s look at some of these good habits.

Prayer

Luke 5:16 says that Jesus “often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.” In Luke 18:1-8, Jesus teaches a parable, the main point being that “men always ought to pray and not lose heart.” Colossians 4:2 teaches us to “continue earnestly in prayer.” Epaphras, according to Colossians 4:12, was “always laboring fervently...in prayers.” And then, there is the admonition of 1 Thessalonians 5:17: “pray without ceasing.” Obviously, then, prayer must be more than an occasional practice. It must become a habit.

Assembling for Worship

The early Christians “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). In other words, they made a habit out of coming together to worship God. It is said of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 11:26 that “for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people.” While this passage is not specific about the exact frequency with which they met, it does imply that they were coming together on a regular basis. Notice also the statement made in Acts 20:7 about the church in Troas, “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread.” It doesn’t sound like a rare occurrence, does it? When the first day of the week came around, they came together. By following the example of these early Christians, we will never be guilty of violating Hebrews 10:24-25, “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some...”

Studying the Word of God

According to Psalm 1:2, the word of God is something we should meditate on “day and night.” In 2 Timothy 2:15, the apostle Paul urges Timothy to “be diligent” in his study of the Scriptures. The Scriptures provide us with our spiritual nourishment, and unless we partake regularly, we will only get weaker (see 1 Peter 2:1-2; 1 Timothy 4:6).

Doing Good Works

In the qualifications for a “widow indeed” in 1 Timothy 5:9-10, Paul describes a woman who “has diligently followed every good work”—one who made a habit of doing good works. 1 Corinthians 15:58 gives this commandment: “Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord...” Who will receive eternal life, according to Romans 2:7: “those who

by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality.” Let’s make a habit out of doing good works.

Conclusion

When King Darius gave the order to cast Daniel into the den of lions, he made this statement to Daniel, “Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you” (Daniel 6:16). May the same be said of us, that we serve God “continually.”