

7

**Habits
of
Highly
Effective
Christians**

By:

Rev. Raymond Woodward

Fredericton, NB, CANADA

Table of Contents

	Page
1. The Habit of Discipleship	1
2. The Habit of Bible Study	3
3. The Habit of Prayer	8
4. The Habit of Tithing	12
5. The Habit of Fellowship	14
6. The Habit of Holiness	16
7. The Habit of Evangelism	20

The Habit of Discipleship



Understanding Discipleship

1. Mature believers are called disciples.
2. I can't be a disciple without being disciplined.

Physical fitness is not automatic – neither is spiritual fitness. Both take hard work!

3. The mark of a disciple is “bearing my cross” (Luke 14:27).
4. Bearing my cross means “denying my own desires” in order to put God first in my life every day (Luke 9:23).

Five Habits Of A Disciple

To become a disciple, you must develop the habits of a disciple.

"... You have put off the old self with its habits, and have put on the new self ... which God is continually renewing in his own image, to bring you to a full knowledge of himself" (Colossians 3:9-10).

1. Bible Study (John 8:31-32).
2. Prayer (John 15:7-8).
3. Tithing (Luke 14:33; Deuteronomy 14:23).
4. Fellowship (John 13:34-35).
5. Holiness (2 Corinthians 6:17 - 7:1).

What is a habit? (Webster's Dictionary)

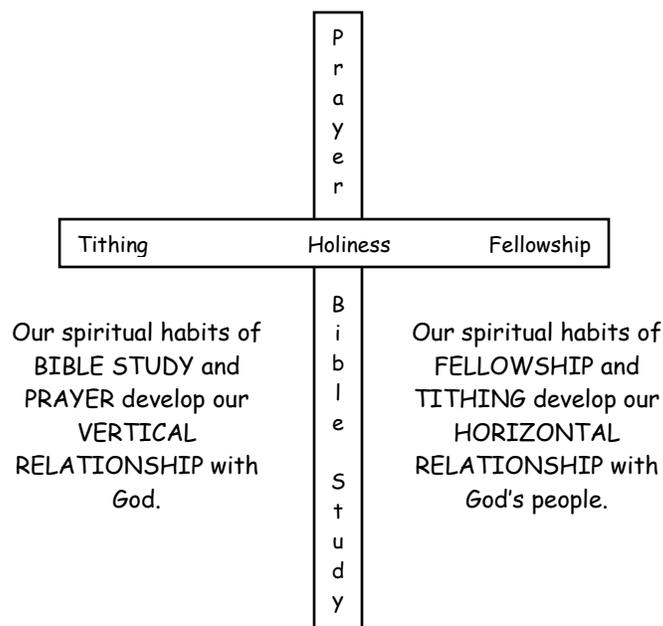
“A continual, often unconscious inclination to do a certain activity, acquired through frequent repetition. An established disposition of the character. A customary practice” (Webster's Dictionary).

To benefit from a habit, you must embrace it voluntarily – it cannot be forced on you!

The Disciple's Cross

"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there" (Galatians 5:24).

"If you want to be my follower you must love me more than . your own life . And you cannot be my disciple if you do not carry your own cross and follow me" (Luke 14:26-27).



"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

"In the past you voluntarily gave your bodies to the service of vice and ... the purposes of evil. So now give yourselves to the service of righteousness - for the purpose of becoming truly good" (Romans 6:19).

If sin develops in my life through the simple repetition of bad habits, righteousness will develop in my life through the simple repetition of good habits!

How to maintain good habits.

1. Desire.

If you start half-heartedly, you'll never succeed. Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right!

2. Decision.

Don't procrastinate. It's much easier to break a bad habit today than it will be later! "Tomorrow" just never comes.

"If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done" (Ecclesiastes 11:4).

3. Declaration.

The power of a promise is awesome, particularly if you have a friend hold you accountable to keep it!

"Let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over each other, studying how we may stir up and stimulate each other to ... helpful deeds and noble activities" (Hebrews 10:24).

"Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

4. Determination.

Never be swayed by the devil's temptation to return to your old habits "just this once." The act of yielding to temptation weakens your will and reinforces your lack of self-control. Remember that it takes 3 weeks to become comfortable with a new habit (doing it daily) and another 3 weeks for it to become a permanent part of your life.

5. Dependence on God.

Rely on God's power to help you establish your new habits. Satan will do all he can to tempt you, cause you to slip, or discourage you. Pray for God's help!

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7).

"For it is God who is at work within you, giving you the will and the power to achieve his purpose" (Philippians 2:13).

The Habit of Bible Study



SIX WAYS TO GET A GRASP ON YOUR BIBLE

"The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

How to Hear God's Word

"Faith comes from hearing the Word of God" (Romans 10:17).

The problem is that we forget 95% of what we hear after 72 hours. We have to work on it!

1. Deal with attitudes that prevent you from hearing God. (See the Parable of the Sower in Luke 8:4-15.)

"Consider carefully how you listen" (Luke 8:18).

- A Closed Mind: Could fear, pride or bitterness be preventing me from hearing God speak?
- A Superficial Mind: Am I only casually listening, or really serious in wanting to hear God speak?
- A Preoccupied Mind: Am I too busy, inattentive or concerned with other things to concentrate on what God has to say?
- A Ready Mind: I really want to hear from God!

2. Take notes on what you hear.

"We must pay more careful attention to what we've heard, so that we do not drift away" (Hebrews 2:1).

3. Act on what you hear.

"Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (James 1:22).

"Whoever ... does not simply listen and then forget, but puts it into practice - that person will be blessed in what he does" (James 1:25).

4. Read God's Word Daily!

"(The Bible) shall be his constant companion. He must read from it every day of his life so that he will learn to respect the Lord his God by obeying all of his commands" (Deuteronomy 17:19).

If I read approximately 15 minutes a day, I can read through the Bible once a year.

Suggestions:

- Read the Bible systematically, not haphazardly.
- Use a Bible without notes so God can speak to you.
- Read from different translations for understanding.
- Read the Bible aloud (quietly to yourself) for focus.
- Underline or highlight key verses for emphasis.
- Choose a reading plan and stick with it.

Use the King James Version for its accuracy, the New Living Translation for its readability, and other versions occasionally for clarity.

How to Study God's Word

"They accepted the message eagerly and studied the Scriptures every day " (Acts 17:11).

"Be a good workman ... know what His Word says and means" (2 Timothy 2:15).

The difference between reading and studying the Bible is simply that you make notes when you study. The two secrets of effective Bible study are:

- 1) Comparing other Scripture verses on the same subject, and
- 2) Using additional study helps to answer background questions.

Study Bible – helps find other Scriptures on same subject.

Parallel Bible – compares two or more Bible translations.

Application Bible – relates the Scriptures to modern life.

Bible Dictionary – gives detailed background information.

Concordance – helps find certain words in the Bible.

Commentary – offers inspirational background material.

Be sure to let your Bible speak to you first, before referring to these resources.

How to Memorize God's Word

"Guard my words as your most precious possession. Write them down, and also keep them deep within your heart" (Proverbs 7:2-3).

1. Pick a verse that speaks to you.
2. Say the reference before and after the verse.
3. Read the verse aloud many times, or record it.
4. Break the verse into natural phrases.
5. Emphasize key words when quoting the verse.
6. Write down the verse and erase one word at a time.
7. Write out the verse on a flash card.
8. Carry some cards with you at all times for review.
9. Display your verses in prominent places.
10. Always memorize the verse perfectly.
11. Put the verse to music – write a song.
12. Get a partner so you can check each other.

Benefits of Memorizing Scripture:

1. It helps me resist temptations.

"I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11).

2. It helps me make wise decisions.

"Your Word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105).

3. It strengthens me when I'm under stress.

"... Your promises to me are my hope. They give me strength in all my troubles; how they refresh and revive me" (Psalm 119:49).

4. It comforts me when I'm sad.

"Your words are what sustain me ...They bring joy to my sorrowing heart and delight me" (Jeremiah 15:16).

5. It helps me witness to unbelievers.

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15).

"Your teachings are worth more to me than thousands of pieces of gold and silver" (Psalm 119:72).

The key to memorizing Scripture (or anything else) is review. Everyone makes a choice to remember things that are important to them.

How to Meditate on God's Word

"(Those) who are always meditating on His Laws ... are like trees along a river bank bearing fruit ... they never wither and whatever they do prospers" (Psalm 1:2-3).

Meditation is focused thinking about a Bible verse in order to discover how I can apply its truth to my own life.

1. Picture it! Imagine the scene in your mind.
2. Pronounce it! Say the verse aloud, each time emphasizing a different word.
3. Paraphrase it! Rewrite the verse in your own words.
4. Personalize it! Replace the pronouns or people in the verse with your own name.
5. Pray it! Turn the verse into a prayer and say it back to God.
6. Probe it! Ask questions like these: Is there a ...

Sin to confess?
Promise to claim?
Attitude to change?
Command to keep?
Example to follow?
Prayer to pray?
Error to avoid?
Truth to believe?
Special blessing to thank God for?

Benefits of Meditating on Scripture:

1. It is the key to becoming like Christ.

" Your life is shaped by your thoughts" (Proverbs 4:23).

"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2).

"As we ... contemplate the Lord's glory, we are being transformed into His likeness " (2 Corinthians 3:18).

2. It is the key to answered prayer.

"If you live your life in Me, and my words live in your hearts, you can ask for whatever you like, and it will come true for you" (John 15:7).

3. It is the key to successful living.

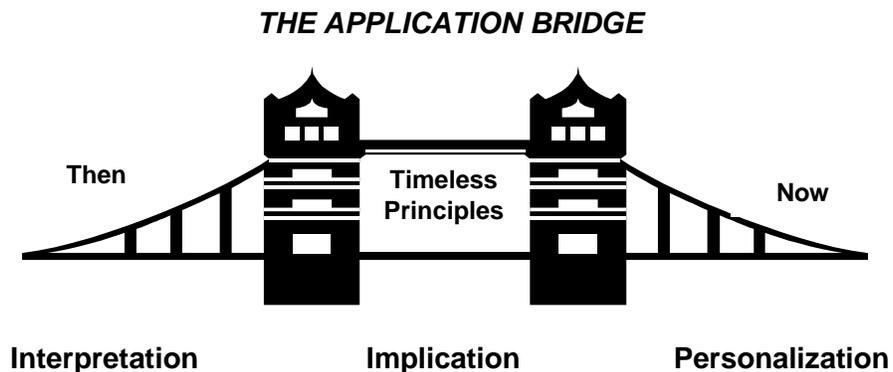
"Meditate on (the Word) day and night, so you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful" (Joshua 1:8).

Worry is simply negative meditation. If you can worry, you already know how to meditate.

How to Apply God's Word

"Do not fool yourselves by just listening to the Word. Instead, put it into practice" (James 1:22).

"Whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19).



Questions to Ask:

1. What did this mean to the original hearers?
2. What is the underlying timeless principle?
3. Where or how could I apply that principle?

An Example:

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Interpretation: The Apostle Paul requested that the Corinthian Christians not eat meat offered to idols so as not to offend weaker believers recently delivered from idol worship, even though they knew the idols had no power.

Implication: Don't do anything that offends a fellow Christian, even if the activity is not sinful

in and of itself.

Personalization: I will not patronize businesses where there are bars, even though drinking alcohol might not be a temptation for me, because my presence could influence a weaker member in our church to go there and fall into sin.

"Now that you know these things - do them. That is the path of blessing" (John 13:17).



"Base your happiness on your hope in Christ. When trials come, endure them patiently; steadfastly maintain the habit of prayer" (Romans 12:12).

God can communicate with us in many ways, but we can only communicate with Him one way – through prayer. That's why it is vital that we establish prayer as a daily habit!

1. Have a specific time for prayer.

Reasons for considering an early morning prayer time:

The example of many Bible characters (Abraham, Job, Jacob, Moses, Hannah, Hezekiah, David, Daniel, and Jesus).

It is logical to begin the day with prayer. The best time to tune your instrument is before you play the concert, not after.

It demonstrates that meeting with God is your first priority. You give Him the first part of your day.

You are likely to be more rested and your mind is less cluttered first thing in the morning.

2. Have a specific place for prayer.

"Jesus left the city and went, as he usually did, to the Mount of Olives ... to pray" (Luke 22:39).

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went to a solitary place where he prayed" (Mark 1:35).

3. Have a specific routine for prayer.

- A Bible

Use an understandable translation.

Use a Bible with readable print.

Use a Bible without distracting study notes.

- A Notebook and Pen

Write down anything the Lord speaks to you about.

Keep a personal prayer list.

Write down thoughts for further Bible study later on.

- Other Helps

Pray in a place where you would be least distracted.

Play soft instrumental music in the background.

Have tissue nearby, if you tend to weep when you pray.

Have a to-do list nearby, if you are a “type A” personality who can’t stop thinking about the day ahead (when a task comes to mind, don’t do it now – write a quick reminder for later, so you can stop thinking about it and get back to prayer!).

Use anything else that will keep you from being distracted.

4. Jesus taught us to have the right attitude in prayer (Matthew 6:5-8).

Be Real

"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men" (Matthew 6:5).

Be Relaxed

"But when you pray go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Matthew 6:6).

Be Revealing

"Don't recite the same prayer over and over as the heathen do, who think prayers are answered only by repeating them again and again. Remember, your Father knows exactly what you need before you ask Him!" (Matthew 6:7-8)

5. Jesus taught us to have the right approach in prayer (Matthew 6:9-15).

"This, then, is how you should pray" (Matthew 6:9).



SIX WAYS TO GET A GRASP ON PRAYER

"Let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up" (Galatians 6:9).

RULE #1: Never judge your prayer time by your feelings!

RULE #2: If you miss a day, don't give up!

1. Praise: I express my love to God.

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name" (Matthew 6:9).

Two Kinds of Praise:

Adoration: praising God for who He is.

Thanksgiving: praising God for what He has done.

"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Be thankful unto him, and bless his name" (Psalm 100:4) .

- A. Remind yourself of the promises found in the various meanings of God's name, and affirm them as you pray.
- B. Remind yourself of all the blessings God has given to you, and express your thanks for them as you pray.

2. Purpose: I commit myself to God's will for my life.

"Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

Pray for God's will to be done ...

- In my family
- In my church
- In my job
- In my ministry
- In my nation
- In my future
- In my neighborhood
- In my city

"Offer yourself as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer" (Romans 12:2).

3. Provision: I ask God to provide for my needs.

"Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11).

What needs can I pray about? All of them!

"God will supply all your needs from his riches in glory because of what Christ Jesus has done for us" (Philippians 4:19).

"You do not have ... because you don't ask God" (James 4:2).

The Key to Successful Praying: Be Specific! Write down your request, along with a promise you are claiming from the Bible, and expect an answer!

"Don't worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Philippians 4:6).

4. Pardon: I ask God to forgive my sins.

"And forgive us our debts" (Matthew 6:12)

Four Steps to Forgiveness:

A. Ask God to reveal my sin.

"Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me, and discover my thoughts. Find out if there is any evil in me" (Psalm 139:23-24).

B. Confess each sin specifically.

"You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up; then God will show mercy to you" (Proverbs 28:13).

C. Make restitution to others when necessary.

"When you remember your brother has something against you ... go at once to make peace with him, then come back and offer your gift to God" (Matthew 5:23-24).

D. By faith, accept God's forgiveness.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins, and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

5. People: I pray for other people.

"...As we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12).

Make a list of people you want to pray for. You might pray for different groups of people on different days of the week (missionaries, family, unsaved friends, church leadership, etc.).

"Pray much for others; plead for God's mercy upon them; give thanks for all he is going to do for them" (1 Timothy 2:1).

6. Protection: I ask for spiritual protection.

"And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:13).

All believers face spiritual battles. Satan wants to defeat you through temptation and fear, but by praying for protection you will have the power to face every situation.

"The Spirit who is in you is more powerful than the spirit who is in those who belong to the world" (1 John 4:4).

7. Praise: I end my prayer the same way I started!

"For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever" (Matthew 6:13).

The Habit of Tithing



"On the first day of each week, set aside some of what you have earned and give it as an offering. The amount depends on how much the Lord has helped you earn" (1 Corinthians 16:2).

My Giving Reveals My Spiritual Maturity!

"Just as you excel in everything else ... in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness ... see that you also excel in the grace of giving" (2 Corinthians 8:7).

Did You Know... ?

The Bible talks more about giving than it does about either heaven or hell?
Over half of the parables Jesus told have to do with the subject of money?
There are more promises in the Bible related to giving than to any other subject?
Your giving is very important to God – and to your spiritual life?

You can give without loving but you cannot love without giving!

Why God Wants Me to Give (7 Benefits)

1. Giving makes me more like the Lord.

"God so loved the world that He gave his only Son" (John 3:16).

2. Giving draws me closer to God.

"Where your treasure is, there your heart is also" (Matthew 6:21).

3. Giving is the antidote to materialism.

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to be generous and willing to share. In this way they may take hold of the life that is truly Life!" (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

4. Giving strengthens my faith.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding ... Honor the Lord by giving him the first part of your income, and he will fill your barns to overflowing" (Proverbs 3:5,9).

"Give and it will be given to you ... for with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you" (Luke 6:38).

5. Giving is an investment for eternity.

"... Give happily to those in need, and always be ready to share whatever God has given you. By doing this, you will be storing up real treasure for yourselves in heaven - it is the only safe investment for eternity" (1 Timothy 6:18-19).

6. Giving blesses me in return.

"A generous man himself will be blessed" (Proverbs 22:9).

"A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed" (Proverbs 11:25).

"Good will come to him who is generous" (Psalm 112:5).

7. Giving makes me happy.

"(Jesus said) ... There is more happiness in giving than in receiving" (Acts 20:35).

WHAT IS TITHING?

- The word "tithe" means "a tenth part."
- A "tithe" is giving 10% of my income.
- An "offering" is anything I give above my tithe.

Why Should I Tithe? (7 REASONS)

- 1. Because God commands it (Leviticus 27:30).**
- 2. Tithing shows that God has first place in my life (Deuteronomy 14:23).**
- 3. Tithing reminds me that all I have is from God (Deuteronomy 8:18).**
- 4. It expresses my gratitude for what I have been given (Psalm 116:12; Deuteronomy 16:17).**

5. Refusing to tithe is actually like stealing from God (Malachi 3:8-10).

6. Tithing gives God an opportunity to bless me (Malachi 3:10).

Only in your tithing does God say, "Test Me! Let Me bless you and prove Myself to you!"

7. Tithing proves that I really love God (John 14:15; 2 Corinthians 8:7-8).

What Should I Tithe?

The first part of what I earn, not the left-overs (Proverbs 3:9-10).

Where Should I Tithe?

Where I worship and get fed spiritually (Malachi 3:10).

When Should I Tithe?

When I go to worship each week (1 Corinthians 16:2).

How Should I Tithe?

- Willingly (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- Joyfully (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- Generously (2 Corinthians 8:3).
- Expectantly (2 Corinthians 9:6).

Tithing is not an equal amount from everyone, but an equal proportion from everyone. God's system is absolutely fair!



"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage each other" (Hebrews 10:25).

1. I need a church family to help me grow spiritually.

"You are a member of God's very own family ... and you belong in God's household with every other Christian" (Ephesians 2:19).

"So in Christ, we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others!" (Romans 12:5).

2. I need encouragement to help me grow spiritually.

"Let us think of one another and how we can encourage each other to love and do good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24).

"Two are better off than one ... If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone and falls, it's just too bad, because there is no one to help him ... Two men can resist an attack that would defeat one man alone. A rope made of three cords is hard to break" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12).

3. I need accountability to help me grow spiritually.

"Every day ... keep encouraging one another so that none of you is hardened by the glamour of sin" (Hebrews 3:13).

"Brothers, if someone is trapped in some sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently ... Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:1-2).

4. There is great spiritual power in unity.

"For wherever two or three have come together in my name, I am there, right among them!" (Matthew 18:20).

"Whenever two of you on earth agree about anything you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven" (Matthew 18:19).

5. God has given me gifts to bless my church family.

"God has given you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other" (1 Peter 4:10).

"Together you form the body of Christ and each one of you is a necessary part of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27).

There are nearly 60 "one another" commands in the New Testament that you cannot obey unless you are faithful to a local church!

Serve one another	Galatians 5:13
Accept one another	Romans 15:7
Forgive one another	Colossians 3:13
Greet one another	Romans 16:16
Bear one another's burdens	Galatians 6:2
Be devoted to one another	Romans 12:10
Honor one another	Romans 12:10
Teach one another	Romans 15:14
Submit to one another	Ephesians 5:21
Encourage one another	1 Thessalonians 5:11

"(They met) day after day, in the Temple courts and from house to house" (Acts 5:42).

The main purpose of all of our services and groups is to build bridges to the unsaved of our community. We firmly believe in having “church for the unchurched.”

“If any of you has a hundred sheep, and one of them gets lost, what will you do? Won't you leave the ninety-nine in the field and go look for the lost sheep until you find it?” (Luke 15:4).

The Habit of Holiness



Real Christianity is about life change, not just about religion. The central “habit” of the Disciple’s Cross is the habit of holiness which indicates that a real change has taken place in a believer’s life. In addition to glorifying God, holiness has the effect of testifying to others around us. It is possible to keep the “rules” on the habits of Bible study, prayer, tithing and fellowship through sheer human effort. However, the habit of holiness (especially its inner aspects) can only be maintained through the enabling of God’s Spirit.

The Bible teaches that holiness must first affect our inward attitude, and then our outward actions and appearance.

1. Personal holiness is essential in maintaining the salvation of a believer.

"Try to live in peace with all people, and try to live free from sin. Anyone whose life is not holy will never see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

"But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God – who chose you to be his children – is holy. For he himself has said, ‘You must be holy because I am holy’" (1 Peter 1:15-16).

2. Holiness involves both the negative concept of separation and the positive concept of dedication.

"The Lord also says, ‘Leave them and stay away! Don't touch anything that isn't clean. Then I will welcome you and be your Father. You will be my sons and my daughters, as surely as I am God, the All-Powerful.’ My friends, God has made us these promises. So we should stay away from everything that keeps our bodies and spirits from being clean. We should honor God and try to be completely like him" (2 Corinthians 6:17 - 7:1).

"And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask?" (Romans 12:1)

3. We are motivated to live holy lives not merely by enforced rules, but by our love for God.

“This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3).

“And how can we be sure that we belong to him? By obeying his commandments. If someone says, ‘I belong to God,’ but doesn’t obey God’s commandments, that person is a liar and does not live in the truth. But those who obey God’s word really do love him. That is the way to know whether or not we live in him” (1 John 2:3-5).

4. Our righteous works are not the MEANS of us receiving salvation, but they should be the result of us receiving salvation!

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-10).

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us ... and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works” (Titus 3:5-8).

5. The Bible teaches that a genuine Christian will exhibit a noticeable external witness when “internal holiness” is present in the heart.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

“Dear brothers and sisters, what’s the use of saying you have faith if you don’t prove it by your actions? That kind of faith can’t save anyone ... it isn’t enough just to have faith. Faith that doesn’t show itself by good deeds is no faith at all – it is dead and useless ... ‘I can’t see your faith if you don’t have good deeds, but I will show you my faith through my good deeds’ ... So you see, we are made right with God by what we do, not by faith alone” (James 2:14-24).

6. There are different levels of maturity in God’s family, and each member is loved at their present stage.

“If our faith is strong, we should be patient with the Lord’s followers whose faith is weak. We should try to please them instead of ourselves. We should think of their good and try to help them” (Romans 15:1-2).

“(Jesus said) It will be terrible for people who cause even one of my little followers to sin. Those people would be better off thrown into the deepest part of the ocean with a heavy stone tied around their necks!” (Matthew 18:6).

7. The more mature I become in my lifestyle of holiness, the more God can use me.

"But God's truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: `The Lord knows those who are his,' and `Those who claim they belong to the Lord must turn away from all wickedness'. some utensils are made of gold and silver, and some are made of wood and clay. The expensive utensils are used for special occasions, and the cheap ones are for everyday use. If you keep yourself pure, you will be a utensil God can use for his purpose. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work" (2 Timothy 2:19-21).

8. Even if I do not feel personally convicted about a holiness standard, I still need to submit to the spiritual leaders God has placed in my life.

"Obey your spiritual leaders and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they know they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this joyfully and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit" (Hebrews 13:17).

As our society moves further away from God, they also move further away from holiness principles. Even some church groups have now decided to conveniently ignore the Bible's call for a "lifestyle change" in every believer. But just because immodesty and immorality are accepted by society – or by religion – doesn't change God's opinion!

Holiness for Mature Christians

Here are some important areas of life today in which we must apply the principles of holiness:

- **Attitude (*Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 4:31-32*).**

We must put away all evil attitudes including hatred, wrath, jealousy, bitterness, pride, prejudice, vengeance, discord and rebellion. The fruit of the Spirit (kindness, love, patience, self-control, etc.) must manifest itself in our attitudes. We must learn to forgive, to be obedient to authority, to be thankful, not to let anything offend us, and not to be a busybody in the lives of others.

- **Thought (*Proverbs 23:7, Matthew 15:18-20, 2 Corinthians 10:5, Philippians 4:8*).**

We are what we think and we become what we allow our minds to dwell upon. Evil thoughts defile us. We must think on true, pure and noble things, while casting out thoughts that stem from evil lusts and attitudes. We are to take captive every thought in obedience to Christ.

- **Sight (*Psalms 101:3, 119:37, Matthew 6:22-23*).**

We must guard our eyes as the gate of the soul and the primary source of input for the mind. We should choose reading material with care so that we do not saturate our minds with vulgarity, sensuality and sin. Because of the violence, illicit sex, sinfulness, bad language and vanity that dominate television, movies and the internet, we must severely limit our exposure to such media.

- **Speech (*James 1:26, 3:1-12, 4:11, 5:12*).**

We should avoid gossiping, backbiting, slander, causing division, swearing by an oath, complaining, taking the Lord's name in vain, criticizing, cursing, lying, idle words and suggestive or filthy speech.

- **Body (*1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:12, 6:19-20*).**

Since the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, we avoid anything that would harm or defile the body, including anything that would cause intoxication or addiction. In light of the biblically described evils of alcoholic beverages, we must abstain from them. In view of the overwhelming evidence that tobacco and hallucinogenic drugs are defiling and harmful, we must not use them.

- **Sex (*1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Colossians 3:5*).**

The Bible condemns all sexual relationships and activity outside of marriage between one man and one woman, and opposes lustful thoughts and actions.

- **Fellowship (*1 Cor. 5:9-6:8, 15:33, 2 Cor. 6:14, Matthew 18:15-18*).**

Although we should associate with unbelievers, we must not identify ourselves too closely with sinful activities or lifestyles. We should have no fellowship with those who call themselves Christians but continually indulge in sinful activities. We are not to become partnered with unbelievers in relationships such as marriage.

- **Life (*Exodus 20:13, Matthew 5:44, Acts 15:29*).**

In view of the sanctity of human life, Christians must not participate in violence or taking of human life. This includes abortion, euthanasia, murder and suicide.

- **Honesty (*Mark 10:19*).**

Christians must reject all forms of dishonesty. This would include lying, stealing, defrauding, refusal to pay debts, extortion, bribery, and all types of cheating.

- **Amusement (*1 Thessalonians 5:22, 1 John 2:15*).**

Because of the sinfulness of the world today and because of the biblical warnings against loving the world, we must carefully and maturely regulate our music, sports, activities and amusements. We must avoid excessively worldly atmospheres and appearances. Some activities are inherently worldly by their very nature, such as gambling, dancing and astrology, and must therefore be rejected outright.

- **Hair (*1 Corinthians 11:13-15*).**

The Bible teaches that men should have short hair and that women should have long uncut hair. God desires us to do this both to maintain a distinction between the sexes and to illustrate our obedience to Him with the only physical characteristic that men and women have the power to change – our hair.

- **Appearance (*Deuteronomy 22:5, 1 Timothy 2:9, 1 Peter 3:1-6*).**

The Bible establishes several principles in relation to our apparel and adornment. These include sex distinction in clothing, modesty of clothing, moderation in the cost of clothing, and avoidance of jewelry and cosmetics that serve only as ornamentation for the body. Specifically, God's Word teaches that garments for either sex must not expose the torso or leg above the knee, nor should they draw attention to the form of the body. The Bible also specifically teaches that only men may wear garments that "gird up the loins" (i.e. pants, which show a separation between the thighs), and that it is an abomination to God for a woman to wear this type of clothing. Applying these principles to modern culture, we must avoid dresses on men and pants on women, shorts on either sex, clothing that immodestly exposes the body (i.e. sleeveless or tight garments), and very expensive or extravagant attire. We must also avoid non-functional jewelry and colored cosmetics (makeup) that serve only to draw attention to the features of the body. Since modern fashion has strayed so far from Biblical principles, we can no longer rely on society's definition of "modesty" to govern our appearance.

Because men and women were created differently, the Bible places emphasis on their unique "problem areas" in its holiness commandments. Women are instructed to APPEAR a certain way so that men are not tempted, while men are instructed to ACT a certain way so that women are not tempted.

The Heart of Evangelism



Jesus' Mission on Earth

"God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that anyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16, LB).

"God was in Christ, restoring the world to himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19, LB).

1. Shining (passive witness).

"I have come as a Light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer wander in the darkness" (John 12:46, LB).

2. Seeking (active witness).

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10, NIV).

3. Speaking (direct testimony).

"This is why I was born and came into the world: to tell people the truth" (John 18:37, NCV).

4. Sharing (indirect testimony).

"I came to give life – life in all its fullness" (John 10:10, NCV).

Why Jesus' Mission Should Matter to Me

1. If I want to be like Jesus, My Life Mission must include His Life Mission.

"In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world" (John 17:18, TM).

"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21, NIV).

2. Jesus expects me to continue His Mission.

"You are to go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere" (Mark 16:15, LB).

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NIV).

3. Sharing the Gospel is my responsibility.

"You must warn them so they may live. If you don't speak out to warn the wicked to stop their evil ways, they will die in their sin. But I will hold you responsible for their death" (Ezekiel 3:18, NCV).

"Telling the Good News is my duty - something I must do. And how terrible it will be for me if I do not tell the Good News" (1 Corinthians 9:16, NCV).

4. Sharing the Gospel is my privilege.

"And God has given us the privilege of urging everyone to come into his favor and be reconciled to him... This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others. We are Christ's ambassadors" (2 Corinthians 5:18, LB)

I am proud of the Good News, because it is the power God uses to save everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16, NCV).

5. I'm grateful for what God has done for me.

"Remember that in the past you were without Christ . You had no hope, and you did not know God" (Ephesians 2:12, NCV).

"For Christ's love compels us" (2 Corinthians 5:14, NIV).

6. People are lost without Jesus Christ.

"Only Jesus has the power to save! His name is the only one in all the world that can save anyone" (Acts 4:12, CEV).

"Anyone who calls on the Lord will be saved. But before people can ask the Lord for help, they must believe in him; and before they can believe in him, they must hear about him; and for them to hear about the Lord, someone must tell them" (Romans 10:13-14, NCV).

7. God wants everyone to be saved.

"God wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4, NIV).

"God does not want anyone to be lost, but he wants all people to change their hearts and lives" (2 Peter 2:9, NCV).

8. God's timetable for history hinges around the church completing our mission.

"The Good News about God's kingdom will be preached in all the world, to every nation. Then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14, NCV).

"Jesus said to them, `You don't need to know the time of those events that only the Father controls. But the Holy Spirit will come upon you and give you power. Then you will tell everyone about me'" (Acts 1:6-8, CEV).

9. I will be rewarded by the Lord in eternity.

"Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and the Master you are serving is Christ" (Colossians 3:24, NLT).

"Those who turn many to righteousness will shine like stars forever" (Daniel 12:3, NLT).

10. I will rejoice in eternity when I see people I have won to the Lord with me in heaven.

"Jesus said, `In the same way there is more happiness in heaven because of one sinner who turns to God than over ninety-nine good people who don't need to'" (Luke 15:7, CEV).

"What gives us hope and joy, and what is our proud reward and crown? It is you! Yes, you will bring us much joy as we stand together before our Lord Jesus when he comes back again" (1 Thessalonians 2:19, NLT).

Knowing how important my mission is to the Lord, what should my response be?

“I want to carry out the mission I received from the Lord Jesus – the mission of testifying to the Good News” (Acts 20:24, NCV).

What We Believe About Evangelism

1. Evangelism should be Personality-oriented.

Christians are to be good news before they share the good news.

When we are “real” people, it puts others at ease and lets them know that our Christianity is real also.

There are many different styles of evangelism:

- **Confrontational Style – Peter in Acts 2.**
Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction (2 Timothy 4:2).
- **Intellectual Style – Paul in Acts 17.**
We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).
- **Testimonial Style – Blind Man in John 9.**
We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us (1 John 1:3).
- **Interpersonal Style – Matthew in Luke 5.**
I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some (1 Corinthians 9:22).
- **Invitational Style – Woman at the Well in John 4.**
Then the master told his servant, Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full (Luke 14:23).
- **Serving Style – Dorcas in Acts 9.**
In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

2. Evangelism should be People-oriented.

When we show a genuine interest in others, they will eventually want to know why!

An evangelistic “event” tends to rush people, but an evangelistic “process” is patient with people.

3. Evangelism should be Team-oriented.

A person’s coming to God is like a chain with many links; we don’t have to be every link, just

one link!

We need to intentionally become partners with other Christians, linking our abilities to lead people to God.

4. Evangelism should be Eternity-oriented.

Evangelism is the primary reason that the church is on planet earth – nothing else is as important to God.

If one soul is worth more than the entire world, then any person we meet is incredibly valuable to God.

Why is one soul so important? Read the book of Acts!

In Acts 3 it was one lame man at the Temple Gate.

In Acts 8 it was one anonymous Ethiopian Treasurer.

In Acts 9 it was one Pharisee named Saul.

In Acts 9 it was one coat-maker named Dorcas.

In Acts 10 it was one Roman Centurion named Cornelius.

In Acts 14 it was one anonymous crippled man.

In Acts 16 it was one seller of cloth named Lydia.

In Acts 16 it was one anonymous Philippian jailer.

In Acts 18 it was one ruler of the synagogue named Crispus.

In Acts 18 it was one eloquent preacher named Apollos.

You never know just who you might be witnessing to!

Twelve keys to being an effective witness.

1. Recognize your personal style.

Your “shape” not only determines your ministry in the church, it also influences your mission in the world! Don’t feel guilty about styles you don’t naturally use, and don’t judge others who don’t do it like you do it!

A “right brain” witness emphasizes personal experience, while a “left brain” witness emphasizes facts and scripture. We need both kinds of testimonies! Remember that Jesus never used the same approach twice!

2. Think through what you will say (Colossians 4:6; Proverbs 16:23).

3. Show love (1 Corinthians 13:1).

People don't care how much we know until they know how much we care!

4. Be positive and pleasant (Proverbs 16:21; Proverbs 12:25).

5. Never use put-downs (Colossians 4:5-6).

Don't ever expect an unbeliever to act like a believer until they become a believer!

6. Tell stories and give examples (Matthew 13:34).
7. Lighten up (Luke 7:34).
8. Be natural - don't try to sound "Spiritual" (1 Corinthians 2:1; Titus 2:8).
9. Be vulnerable and authentic (2 Corinthians 6:11; Philippians 1:27).
10. Memorize some key Bible verses (2 Timothy 2:15).
11. Keep it simple (2 Corinthians 11:3).
12. Ask God to help you use the right words (1 Thessalonians 1:5; Ephesians 6:19).