Do You Make it a Practice to Drive Well?

Psalm 1:1, 2

Introduction:

1. Many medicines have a warning: “May be habit forming.”
2. Having a habit can be either good or bad depending on whether the habit is good or bad.
   1. Bad.
      1. Foul language,
      2. Bad disposition.
   2. Good habits save time, help to do right.
      1. Button shirt.
      2. Wash hands.
      3. Skating.
      4. Being polite, courteous, grateful.
   3. Habits are first cobwebs, then cables.  Habits are either bobs or sinkers, cork or lead.  They either hold you up or hold you down.
3. Definition: habit.
   1. “A usual manner of behavior.”
   2. “A behavior pattern acquired by frequent repetition.”
4. This is the difference between a Christian and a hypocrite.
   1. A Christian is one whose usual manner of behavior is right twenty-four hours a day.
   2. A hypocrite is someone who is not himself on Sunday.
5. We make our habits, then our habits make us. Let us remember that we are ultimately in control.
6. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO HAD A COLLECTION OF GOOD HABITS.
   1. Jesus.
      1. Worship. Luke 4:16 (“as his habit was on the Sabbath,” Charles B. Williams)
      2. Teaching. Mark 10:1 (“as his custom was,” Wms.)
      3. Doing good. Acts 10:38
      4. Praying. Luke 22:39 (“as he was in the habit of doing,” Wms.)
         1. Jesus came often to this place. Luke 21:37
         2. Judas, when he was ready to betray Jesus, did not bring a railing accusation against Him but, in effect, said, “I know where He prays.” John 18:2
   2. The house of Stephanas.
      1. Paul had baptized them. 1 Corinthians 1:16
      2. They had found Christianity habit forming. 1 Corinthians 16:15
         1. Addict:  “One who has surrendered himself to something habitually or obsessively.”
         2. Two men eating lunch.  First looked into his lunch box:  “Ugh!  Peanut butter sandwiches again.  I hate peanut butter sandwiches.”  Second man:  “Why don’t you tell your wife to quit making peanut butter sandwiches?”  Fist man:  “You leave my wife out of this.  I make my own peanut butter sandwiches.”
7. HABITS WE NEED TO ACQUIRE.
   1. We need more addicts who have the habit of doing God’s will.
   2. Christianity–Warning:  May be habit forming–and it needs to be that way!!!
   3. Habits to acquire.
      1. Studying. Psalms 1:1, 2; 2 Timothy 2:15
      2. Praying. 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 18:1
      3. Letting light shine, not blinking. Matthew 5:16
      4. Doing good. Galatians 6:10; Matthew 25:34-40
      5. Worshiping. Acts 2:42
         1. Some have opposite habit. Hebrews 10:25
         2. Need to break it and form the better one.
      6. Speaking as we should. Colossians 4:6; 1 Peter 3:15
      7. Contentment. Philippians 4:11,12
      8. Teaching children, raising them in nurture and admonition of the Lord. Deuteronomy 6:6, 7
      9. Being soul conscious. John 4:35
      10. Teaching. Acts 5:42; Acts 8:4
      11. Gratitude. Ephesians 5:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18
8. HOW TO ACQUIRE GOOD HABITS. James 1:22 (“keep on obeying this message,” Wms.)
   1. Practice.
      1. Grover Cleveland Alexander, one of the greatest pitchers of all time, got pitching practice during his farm life.  He threw balls, stones, pieces of brick, apples, anything he could find.  He nailed a catcher’s glove to a chicken coop and would throw at it until he could hit it nine times out of ten.  No one knew better than he that back of his amazing pitching was the patient drudgery of pitching at that old catcher’s mitt nailed to a chicken coop ( The 5 Great Rules of Selling , by Percy H. Whiting, page 255).  (Born 1887, died 1950; won 373 games; 1 st season won 28 games; 3 years 30 or more games; 1916 – 33 victories, 16 shutouts – major league record.)
      2. One becomes a good soldier by drill not just reading a book.
      3. Will Rogers said, “A man who wants to learn to speak in public should find an oak stump two feet high, stand on it, and start making speeches.  When the stump is worn level with the ground, you quit” (The 5 Great Rules of Selling , by Percy H. Whiting, page 257).
   2. Suggestions.
      1. Pick out area where improvement is needed and start.
      2. Write your goal.  Be specific.  Keep a record of your progress.
         1. Not just “study the Bible”, but “study thirty minutes a day.”
         2. Bible teachers should not just aim to “be on time”, but “be in the classroom twenty-five minutes before time for class to start.”
            1. “On time is late for leaders.”
            2. A new employee had been late four days.  Foreman, “Don’t you know what time we start to work around here?”  Man, “No sir.  They’re always working when I get here.”
         3. Replace condemning and criticizing by consciously paying at least three compliments each day.
      3. Commit to memory a verse from the Bible on the area you are emphasizing.
         1. Study. Ephesians 3:4
         2. Worshiping. Psalms 122:1
         3. Being soul conscious. John 4:35.
      4. Pray often for help, wisdom, and strength. Matthew 7:7, 8; James 1:5
      5. Do this thing consciously.
         1. This is the way a habit is acquired.
         2. Habit:  “A behavior pattern acquired by frequent repetition.”
      6. When you have made significant improvement in one area, go to another.
      7. Be patient.  We may have spent years developing undesirable habits. We should not be alarmed when we have not changed them all in a few days.
         1. Realize that God will help.
         2. Living the Christian life is a growth process, 2 Peter 3:18
         3. The prayer of the modern American is, “Dear God, I pray for patience, and I want it right now!”
   3. “But that’s not easy!”
      1. Jesus never promised the path of least resistance. Matthew 7:13, 14, 21; Luke 9:23
      2. This is the way of true service to the Lord.
      3. Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; but by many it has been found difficult and not tried.

Conclusion:

1. Need more addicts.
2. Need more volunteers with the habit of doing good.
   1. “Nobody asked me.”
   2. James 4:17 does not say, “To him that is asked to do good and refuses to do it, to him it is sin.”
   3. James 4:17 does say, “Therefore to him that knows to do good, and does not do it, to him it is sin.”
3. Needed–more Christians addicted to the will of God.
   1. Alien sinners:  you need to acquire the habit by obeying the gospel. Hebrews 11:6; Acts 17:30; Romans 10:10; Romans 6:4
   2. Church member–do you have the habit?