

Messenger Of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16).

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Habits

Habits are at first cobwebs, at last cables. – Anonymous

Habit, if not resisted, soon becomes necessity. – Augustine

The chains of habit are generally too small to be felt till they are too strong to be broken.  
– Samuel Johnson

The common theme in each of these quotes is the reality that habits are very powerful. We become slaves to them. And we know too well that they are not easily broken.

It is said that it takes eleven days to make a habit. It seems that while that habit is forming we have some measure of control. But when it is formed, it seems to take up a life of its own. And indeed we do struggle to change it.

William Paley well said that, "A large part of Christian virtue consists in right habits." The very nature of the thought is the realization that some habits can be bad, while others are good.

It is the unfortunate habit of some to drink alcohol at certain times of the day. Perhaps it is one's habit to use certain words of profanity, or even be known to speak evil of others constantly. For some it may mean sitting in front of the television for hours on end in sheer laziness. Eating too much can itself be a bad habit. What a list we can make when it comes to bad habits.

But what are some good habits, particularly where Christians are concerned? Daily Bible reading and meditation would certainly fall into that category. This can be very invaluable when you consider the Psalmist wrote, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Psa. 119:11). Prayer would also be an excellent habit. The more certainly the better, after all Paul wrote, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). Can we also add seeking to edify our dear brethren; "Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing" (1 Thess 5:11).

Dropping the bad habits in favor of good ones is like pulling teeth. There is an old Czechoslovakian Proverb that says, "Habit is a shirt made of iron." It sure feels that way.

Since habits are going to be a part of our lives, we need to learn to form those which replace the bad. If we are going to do something repeatedly, let it be done to the glory of God. Remember that Paul tells us how such can be accomplished. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).