

THE **7** POWERFUL HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE CHRISTIANS

Discover the Godly Habits that Transform
Ordinary People Into Extraordinary Christians

JOSHUA E. INFANTADO

The Seven Powerful Habits of Highly Effective Christians

Discover the Godly Habits
that Transform Ordinary
People to Extraordinary
Christians

J o s h u a E. I n f a n t a d o

The Seven Powerful Habits of Highly Effective Christians®

Adobe® Acrobat® eBook Reader® format

Copyright ©2017 by Joshua Infantado

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Unless otherwise stated, Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New King James Version.

Sold from the Philippines

Dedication

*To all those who endeavor to be a highly effective Christian and want to
build an intimate relationship with God,*

*To all those who want to live a life worthy of the high calling God has
given them,*

*And to all those who want to hear the words of our Savior on that
fateful day, "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy
of the Lord!"*

Acknowledgement

Words are not enough to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the people who made this project possible. This book is an expression of my thankfulness to those who made a positive impact in my life.

Thank you so much to my wife who always believes in me. Her undying support and love motivate me every waking moment of my existence.

Most importantly, all glory and honor belong to our great God and Father who continuously pours down His love and grace towards us.

The Seven Most Powerful Habits of Highly Effective Christians

Contents	Page
Introduction.	<u>vii</u>
Habit no. 1: The Habit of Praying	<u>1</u>
Habit no. 2 The Habit of Studying the Bible	<u>8</u>
Habit no. 3: The Habit of Fasting	<u>17</u>
Habit no. 4: The Habit of Overcoming Sin	<u>24</u>
Habit no. 5: The Habit of Attending Church	<u>35</u>
Habit no. 6: The Habit of Developing the Fruit of the Holy Spirit	<u>44</u>
Habit no. 7: The Habit of Preaching the Gospel.	<u>53</u>
Final Words: Develop the Habits of Highly Effective Christians	<u>60</u>
About the Author	<u>64</u>
Check out my other eBook	<u>66</u>

Introduction

Awakening the Power of Godly Habits in You

Discover the Godly Habits that
Transform Ordinary People to
Extraordinary Christians

Introduction

Awakening the Power of Godly Habits in You

On August 15, 1989, Stephen R. Covey published his book entitled, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. It is a business and self-help book that has sold more than 25 million copies in 40 languages worldwide. In addition to that, about 1.5 million copies of its audio version were sold, which led *Time* magazine to include it to their list of “The 25 Most Influential Business Management Books.”

The book covers seven approaches to helping individuals achieve success in their lives. There’s no doubt that the book provides helpful lessons and insights that we can apply.

Undeniably, we all want to become highly effective in all the things that we do. However, do we also want to become effective and successful in our *Christian calling*? What are the important habits that we should have as a Christian and servant of God? Do we really need to develop the habit that will lead us to God’s kingdom? After all, most Christians think that *all* we need to do is just believe Christ and accept Him in their lives.

These questions, along with Covey’s book, had inspired me to write, *The 7 Most Powerful Habits of Highly Effective Christians*. As wonderful the book of Covey is, it **LACKS** the *spiritual* dimension that we all need to have. We may be successful in the physical realm of this life, but we must also be spiritually successful.

Physical success is *nothing* without spiritual success. Jesus Christ very well understood this and taught us, **“FOR WHAT WILL IT PROFIT A MAN IF HE GAINS THE WHOLE WORLD, AND LOSES HIS OWN SOUL?”** (Mark 8:36).

This book is designed to help you know the POWERFUL and Life-changing habits that will make you a better Christian. The benefits of these habits have **both** spiritual and physical implications. Each chapter is packed with lessons that, if

applied, will lead to a more fulfilling and blessed life.

After reading this book, you will have a better idea of what it takes to become a **TRUE** Christian. Not just a Christian in thoughts and words, but a Christian of **ACTION**! Developing the seven habits mentioned in this book will equip us with the right mindset and heart to obey God *completely*.

Why habits?

A habit is something that we regularly practiced. It is something that is deeply ingrained in our subconscious mind that we don't need to anymore question why we do it. It is AUTOMATIC. It is an instinct, reflex, and natural process.

What you are right now are the summation of your past and current habits. Now, think about it: what if you will develop the godly habits mentioned in this book? Imagine the ENORMOUS and positive difference it will make in your life!

Let me share with you this popular quote about habits:

*"Watch your thoughts, they become words;
watch your words, they become actions;
watch your actions, they become **habits**;
watch your habits, they become character;
watch your character, for it becomes your destiny."*

I'm not sure who came up with this quote, but the thought is amazingly accurate! In the midst of who we are, we find our habits building our character. The type of character you develop during this lifetime will determine your destiny!

Habits can either be your foe or friend. It can either break you or make you. Whether you like it or not, you develop habits. So if you are all going to have a habit, why not make it godly?

Being part of the Kingdom of God is **never** an accident. You won't wake up one morning and find yourself staring at the face of God! It takes great sacrifice to be part of the God's Kingdom.

It takes **GODLY HABITS** to be part of the kingdom of God!

So let me ask these questions: do your habits today bring you closer to God's kingdom? Do your habits make you a better or worse Christian? Do your habits help you become a man or woman after God's own heart?

The questions are yours to answer, but this one thing is true; *your habit will determine your destiny.* It is not the big good works that we do once in a while that make us God's children. It is actually the small things that we do every day, consistently.

We may fail every once in a while, but we must not fail to have godly habits!

Take advantage of this book

Habits are indescribably important. This book will help you develop the seven crucial habits that will help you become a better Christian. I hope you don't just read this book, but also apply the lessons you learn in your life.

It is not an accident that this book is now in your possession. *Your quest for a godlier life leads you to this book.* God has a divine PURPOSE for you, and He wants you to grow your faith and develop the godly character that will make you His child.

So don't throw away this book. Read it from cover to cover. And it is my sincerest hope that this book will help you with your Christian walk!

Habit no. 1

The Habit of Praying

The Habit of Praying

Prayer is among the most powerful spiritual tools that a Christian can use in his journey toward the Kingdom of God. No person can claim that they are a Christian without developing the habit of prayer.

There is POWER in prayer and effective Christians know this very fact. If you want to be an effective Christian, you need to develop the habit of prayer.

What is the power of prayer?

Prayer is a divine weapon that we can always use to win our spiritual battle. We can read from the Scripture the different powers of prayer and how it changed the lives of many men and women in the Bible. Here are some of them:

- The power to bring a dead person back to life (I Kings 17:21-22; John 11:41-44).
- The power to heal the sick (James 5:13-15).
- The power to experience divine protection (Psalm 25, 71, and 91; II Chronicles 20:6-12; Ezra 8:21-23).
- The power to conceive a child (Genesis 21:1-3; Genesis 25:21; Genesis 30:22-24; I Samuel 1:11-18).
- The power to stop the rain (James 5:17).
- The power to be forgiven of sin (I John 1:9; Mark 11:25).
- The power to make the sun stand still (Joshua 10:12-14).
- The power to attain blessings (I Chronicles 4:10).
- The power to obtain wisdom (James 1:5).
- The power to bring fire down from heaven (I Kings 18:30-38).

These are the POWERS OF PRAYER. However, we need to realize that the source of its power is *not* us. Prayers are not powerful because we are smart, rich, beautiful, or strong. Prayers are actually powerful because of GOD!

When we pray, we are tapping into the power of God. It is He who grants our prayers and it is through His divine will and purpose that our prayers are granted.

How should we pray?

We now know that we all need to pray and not faint (Luke 18:1). The next question we need to ask is, *how*. Thankfully, the same question came in the minds of the Apostles. They asked Christ: “Lord, teach us to pray...” (Luke 11:1).

Christ responded with what we now know as the *Model Prayer*. In this prayer, Christ gave us an outline how we ought to pray to God. Take note; this prayer is not the exact words that we should **REPETITIVELY** utter. For God does not want us to use vain repetitions (Matthew 6:7). This prayer is rather a model and guide to help us know what to pray for.

So let us take a look at the Model Prayer of Christ and learn how to pray. These are some of the high points that we need to take note of.

- **We don’t pray to impress other people.** Prayer is an intimate conversation between God and us. Jesus warns us not to “pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that [we] may be seen by men” (Matthew 6:5). Clearly, if our intent is to please other men rather than God, then we are praying in vain.
- **Do not use vain repetition** (Matthew 6:7).
- **Our prayers should be addressed to God the Father** (Matthew 6:9). This means we don’t pray to any dead saints and people. They are all dead and God is the only living God that we should pray to.
- **Our prayers should start with praise to God and thanksgiving** (Matthew 6:9). This helps us to set our minds to the great privilege that we have to talk to the Supreme Ruler of the vast universe.
- **We ought to habitually pray for God’s kingdom to be established here on earth** (Matthew 6:10). This world desperately needs a Savior and only Christ’s second coming can bring the utopia we all have been dreaming of. That’s why we must continually pray for God’s Kingdom to come and save

this dying world once and for all.

- **We need to ask for God's will to be done in our lives** (Matthew 6:10). God's will is perfect and as Christians, we need to constantly strive to know His will and to have the heart to obey Him.
- **We pray for God's physical and spiritual blessings** (Matthew 6:11). We need to realize that God is the only TRUE Source of blessings and we are all dependent on Him.
- **Ask for forgiveness of our sins** (Matthew 6:12). We are sinners and God's mercy is enough for us to be forgiven. However, we need to realize that there are conditions for God's forgiveness. Before we can earn God's forgiveness, we must first forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15).
- **We need to pray for God's divine help to overcome sin** (Matthew 6:13). Let us *not* commit the mistake of believing that we can overcome sin by ourselves. We need God's help.
- **We need to pray for God's protection** (Matthew 6:13). Our enemy, the devil, is so powerful and there is nothing in his mind but to destroy God's people. As powerful as he is, he is **POWERLESS** against God and through prayer, we can be protected from his evil schemes.
- **We need to end our prayer with praises again** (Matthew 6:13). Acknowledging God that He alone has the power to grant our requests is vital. This enables us to develop the right attitude and mindset when praying.

These are some of the important points we need to remember when praying.

Here's an incredible truth about prayer: when we habitually pray, it changes the way we think. As we make prayer our habit, it brings us closer to God and we transform both our hearts and mind to become more like Jesus Christ.

As you say your prayer, you will soon discover that it can change everything, including *yourself*. Prayer is not just a way

to communicate with God. It is also a way to develop a healthy relationship with Him.

How to develop the habit of prayer

There's no doubt: prayer does not come naturally. It is something that we all need to strive for. If we are not careful, our initial enthusiasm and motivation may eventually die down. For this reason, I would like to share with you some tips that we can use to develop the habit of prayer.

Pray before everything else. The Bible shows us that most of God's servants are morning people. They always make it a point to pray in the morning. Psalms 88:13 tells us, "But to You I have cried out, O LORD, and in the morning my prayer comes before You."

It is very easy to forget to pray to God because of our busy schedule. Instead of saying "I have a lot of things to do that I don't have time to pray," we must say, "I have a lot of things to do that I need to pray."

Praying in the morning shows our PRIORITY in life. Before seeking earthly things, we need to seek God's kingdom first (Matthew 6:33), and we can do that through prayer.

Before you get out of bed, we need to bring our hands together and bend our knees. Pray before anything else and this will set the tone for the rest of the day.

Never eat your meal without praying. We have been taught when we are still young that we need to pray before eating our meal. However, as we grow older, we tend to forget this fundamental habit. Make it a point that you don't eat your meal unless you say a prayer.

Since eating a meal is already a habit, we can have a better chance of developing the habit of prayer when we do it together with eating.

Avoid distractions. When we pray, we need to focus on God. We need to give our 100% attention to God. Distractions

come in different forms. This may include our smartphones, television, books, and even sleepiness.

If you really want to develop the habit of prayer, you need to eliminate all possible distractions. When you do that, you can concentrate more on God and your prayer.

Seek the support of others. Having the support of your family, spouse, and friends can have a significant impact on your prayer life. We tend to gain more motivation when we do something together. If you have prayer partners or groups, then it would be easier for you to establish a more consistent prayer habit.

Keep a prayer journal. Saying a prayer is good, but sometimes it is better to write down your prayers. This is very useful since you can actually read what you prayed for. Remember the story of King Hezekiah? When he received the letter of his enemy, he spread it before God and prayed for protection.

Though not a letter of threat, we can still write our prayers to God and spread it before His throne of grace. There are times that we tend to be more sincere with our prayers when we actually write it down.

Do a 30-day challenge. There's no doubt that developing a habit of prayer can be challenging. You can gain motivation by having a method to measure your progress. In this case, starting a 30-day prayer challenge can help you develop a short-term goal for long-term changes.

Set a new goal of praying. When you hit that goal, increase the level of difficulty. For example, from 5 minutes of prayer in one week, you can increase it to 10 minutes until you hit your goal. The important thing is that you gain progress. Though slowly, at least it is steady and sure.

Have a prayerful attitude. The Bible tells us to pray without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:16-18). However, this does not mean that we should pray without a pause. It only means that we should have a prayerful attitude. God is interested in what we

have to say. God is interested even about the smallest details in our lives.

The best thing about prayer is that we can always do it, anytime, anywhere. We can pray silently whenever we have the opportunity. When we see someone in need, we can pray in our thoughts. When we achieve success in life, we can pray and thank God. When we encounter problems, we can simply pray and place it in God's hands.

Pray as often as you could. It does not have to be long. It can be as sweet as a three-word sentence.

Developing a habit of prayer is crucial when it comes to developing an intimate relationship with God. It is the *highest privilege* given to man that he can come before the throne of the God of this entire universe. It is so powerful that it can entirely change our lives.

You can develop the habit of prayer

In a world full of distractions, developing a consistent and faithful habit of prayer can be difficult, but it is NOT impossible. God grants us the ability to talk to Him and we don't even have to set an appointment. With this in mind, it is crucial that we are able to take advantage of this wonderful gift from God.

There is an endless list of things to pray for. We can NEVER run out of things that we can bring up and share to God.

The only problem is, "Are we willing to put in the time and energy to pray to God?"

You can develop the habit of prayer. Don't let Satan, anyone or even yourself deceive you that you can't do it. Our salvation depends on the type of relationship we have with God and it is important that we strengthen that relationship with prayer.

There are a lot of benefits that you can reap from praying. It will ultimately change your life not just today, but also during the life to come!



Habit no. 2

The Habit of Studying the Bible

The Habit of Studying the Bible

The Bible was written thousands of years ago and yet, it is a timeless book that contains the answers to all life's fundamental questions. The Bible is known to be the best-selling book of all time. It has been translated into virtually all the major languages in the world. Billions of copies have been produced and it has been distributed to every corner of the globe.

As this might be the case, the Bible is also the most controversial and misunderstood book. For most people, they barely open their Bible. Most Bibles are just sitting in a forgotten place in their homes collecting dust. However, if you really want to become a highly effective Christian, you need to read the word of God.

If prayer is about you talking to God, then Bible study is letting God talking to you. Therefore, if we are going to establish a strong and intimate relationship with God, Bible study is an indispensable element in our Christian walk.

What is the Bible?

The word Bible literally means a collection of books. Though it was written by men, *the real Author of the Bible is God*. We can read in II Timothy 3:16-17:

“All Scripture is given by *inspiration of God*, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

The Greek word for ‘inspiration’ here means “God-breathed.” The written words in your Bible are actually breathed out from God. *It is the very mind of God*. The Bible is the revealed word of God and it is through this book that we are able to know the road to eternal life.

Why Study the Bible?

Many people assume that the Bible is simply a great literary work by some obscure group of individuals. They believe that it is nothing but a collection of fables, fallacies, and legends. As hard as skeptics may try to attack the Bible, it does not change anything. The Bible remains to be the Word of God.

So why study the Bible? After all, it was written thousands of years ago? Is it still relevant for us, Christians, today? The answer is a resounding **YES!**

If there is one book that should remain in your library, it should be the Bible. If there is one book that you should read from cover to cover, then it should be the Bible.

God's love is so great that He does not leave us clueless to how to live this life. He gave us the Bible as an instruction manual. It is the most excellent book that can show us how to live a more fulfilling, blessed, and holy life. Above all, the Bible teaches us how to live a pleasing life today for us to be part of God's family in the future.

The Bible is the *Book of books!* We don't have to experiment and see what works and what's not. God has already revealed to us how to live this life. God's way of life is perfect and you cannot improve something that's already perfect.

Make no mistake about it; you can never be a genuine Christian without habitually reading the Bible. Sure, there are "Christians" who profess to be one, but their words are not enough to prove their claim. It is through studying the Bible and applying its principles that we can truly be called the sons and daughters of God!

Studying the Bible is not just a request or something we just do when we feel like it. Studying God's word is a **COMMAND!** Jesus Christ tells us, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by EVERY WORD that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

The Bible is the foundation of all truths. The chaos and mess that we see right now in our society are the direct results

of forgetting what the Bible say about how we should live our lives. People throw away God and His word and simply do as they please or do the things that seem to be right in their own eyes.

When we lose our sight to Biblical truths, we will all lose our way. We simply can't live this life without the guidance of God.

Therefore, if you really want to know the will and purpose of God for your life, you need to READ the Bible. If you want to know how to live this life, no other book can teach you that. It is only the living word of God that will completely transform you.

How to Study the Bible?

Now that we know how important it is for us to study the Bible, the question now is, "How to study the Bible?" While millions of people are reading the Bible, it is undeniable that not all have the ability to comprehend it.

Some people have a hard time understanding the Bible that they give up trying and think that it is beyond comprehension. Perhaps, you are one of them and you want to know more about the Bible.

Understanding the Bible is crucial for every Christian. A true understanding of the Bible is needed to know the will and purpose of God and to develop a closer relationship with Him.

For this reason, let us take a look at some of the keys that will help us understand the Bible correctly.

Pray for God's inspiration and guidance – before you even open your Bible and study it, you need to pray for understanding and this understanding MUST come from God. Bear in mind that God is the author of the Bible and if there's only one Being who can explain it to us, it is God. Never commit the mistake of thinking that you can understand the Bible on your own. You need God's divine guidance.

Be humble in learning God's word – there's no doubt that our pride may get in the way when we read and study the word of

God. This is a big problem for all of us, Bible students. Pride, prejudice, and bias can really cloud our minds and prevent ourselves from truly understanding the Bible.

Thus, we must be humble enough to let go of long-held beliefs and traditions when confronted with God's truth. If you have the humility and open mind when studying God's word, you already have some of the ingredients needed to improve your spiritual understanding.

Remember that the Bible is the inspired word of God – we cannot accept a part of the Bible and dismiss the rest. We must take the Bible as a *whole*. If we acknowledge that the Bible is *literally* God's word, then we can readily accept the corrections, lessons, and doctrines that we derive from it.

Let the Bible interpret itself – skeptics are quick to find fault in God's divine word. While it is true that there are parts of the Bible that are hard to understand and confusing - and may even seem contradictory – we can have the *STRONGEST confidence* that it can be explained.

We need to let the Bible interpret itself. In this case, it is helpful to start with CLEAR biblical passages to shed light on those passages that might be difficult to understand. Remember this important principle: *scriptural passages do not contradict each other, but rather they complement each other.*

Know the context of the passage – taking scripture out of context is one of the most common mistakes Bible students commit. To learn the true intent of the Bible, it must be taken within the context. This means reading the verses before and after it, and even reading the whole chapter and using other verses to support a claim.

Know the historical background of a certain passage – sometimes, taking into consideration the historical context of a passage will shed more light on a topic.

Know the original words used – if you want to know the meaning of a particular word in the Bible, you need to know the original words used. The original Bible manuscripts are

dominantly written in Hebrew and Greek languages. The most popular dictionary that you can use is the *Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries*.

Rightly divide the word – the Apostle Paul admonished Timothy to rightly divide the word of God (II Timothy 2:15). Dividing the word means studying the Bible by topics. It is helpful to concentrate on one topic at a time rather than jumping from one topic to another.

Read the whole Bible – again, if there's one book that you should read from cover to cover, it must be the Bible. There a lot of ways to read the Bible within a year. You can find some helpful resources to accomplish this on the Internet.

Compare different translations – there are different versions of the Bible and methods of translating it. There are three ways the Bible can be translated. This can be a literal rendering of each word, thought-for-thought translation, and paraphrasing.

It is very important that you start reading the Bible using a translation that uses a literal rendering. This is the purest translation and example of this is the New and Old King James Versions. The other types of translations can be used to easily understand a portion of the Bible.

Use Bible study aids – there are a lot of helpful Bible study aids that you can use. Bible commentaries, books, dictionaries, concordance, lexicons, maps, and devotionals are useful in pointing out different aspects of a particular topic. However, you need to remember that they are just guides or aids written by men. So there is always the chance that they can be wrong.

These are just some of the important keys you need to remember when studying the Bible. When you keep these in mind, you will have a better chance of comprehending the Bible in such a way that God intended it to be.

How to develop a consistent habit of studying the Bible

Studying the Bible is not a one-time event. There are a lot to learn

from the Bible that even a lifetime is not enough to FULLY comprehend everything. Personally, the more I learn things in the Bible, the more I realize how little I know!

The Bible is like a goldmine. There are a lot of gold nuggets hidden within its pages. Some can readily be found while others need to be dug deeper. We need to explore the Bible to truly appreciate the lessons we need to learn.

This is the main reason that we need to develop the habit of reading the Bible. Not just when we feel like it, but in a consistent manner. We need to set our priorities right and reading God's word is part of seeking **FIRST** God's Kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33).

We can't expect ourselves to grow spiritually without reading God's word. Therefore, it is imperative that we invest enough time in meditating upon the Bible.

So how can we really develop the habit of studying the Bible?

First, **we need to create a schedule**. Ideally, we need to read the Bible as often as we can. However, with a vague concept of when you should read the Bible, you might quickly forget or lose track of your progress. For this reason, you need to create a schedule and *stick to it*.

The perfect time to read the Bible is in the morning together with your prayer. Usually, we are most energetic, fresh, and alert during our waking moments. The best way to spend this time is to read God's word.

Perhaps, you can read your Bible while you are having your morning coffee. In addition to this, it is advisable that we read and meditate on the word of God before we sleep. This is an effective way to "sandwich" our lives in God's word.

Next, **you need to find a right place to study the Bible**. Like in prayer, you need to decrease the distractions around you when you read the scripture. We can let the Holy Spirit inspire us more when we give 100% of our focus in studying the Bible. Ideally, a

room dedicated to God is the perfect place. Sometimes, there can be a lot of distractions even in our bedroom.

In the aim of developing this godly habit, you can **seek the help of others**. This can be your spouse, brothers, sisters, family members, relatives, and church friends. Having someone to encourage us or hold us accountable can strongly motivate us to persist in our Bible Study habit.

Use a daily Bible reading plan or guide. Usually, this will give a structure on how you can spend each Bible reading session. There are a lot of guides and plans readily available on the Internet today. You will be surprised how these resources can help you in establishing the habit of Bible Study.

Finally, ***be consistent***. Some psychologists agree that for a habit to form, you need at least 21 to 28 days. Some people would even need up to 60 days. Whatever the case, the point is clear: consistency is crucial. When you start compromising with your schedule, you will soon find yourself farther and farther from your goal.

When you feel like giving up, remember your ***reason*** you started on this noble Christian endeavor. Sometimes, we just have to look back and be reminded of why we are doing something. Most of the time when we do this, we find the additional strength to carry on.

Apply what you learned

The main aim of studying the Bible is to learn God's principle in living this life. We want to know how we can be pleasing to God and fulfill His will and purpose.

We are ***not*** studying the Bible just to obtain academic knowledge. All the things that we learn will boil to NOTHING if we don't apply them. We are not Christians because of the things that we know, but how much of that Biblical knowledge we are using in our daily lives.

Studying the Bible and establishing the habit of consistently reading it is no doubt difficult. This is especially true when you

are just starting.

Don't lose heart.

Never give up because God sees the heart and our desire to learn. We might fail from time to time, but the important thing is we don't give up.

There's no better time to start reading the Bible than TODAY. Decide to read the Bible and make it a habit. Above all, start applying what you learned in your life. With this, you can now become a highly effective Christian!

Habit no. 3

The Habit of Fasting

The Habit of Fasting

Fasting. If you have done this before, the word itself may elicit some discomfort in your mind. In its simplest term, fasting is abstaining or reduction of food or fluid intake. Some people fast for a few hours to days and even weeks.

There are different reasons people fast. Others fast to lose weight, deal with medical conditions, and even protest from an oppressive government. No matter what the reason is, fasting – the biblical fasting – is something not popular in Christianity today.

Though it is the most neglected Christian practice, fasting is a powerful tool that can instantly bring us closer to God. The Bible has much to say about fasting and why it should be part of our Christian walk. Let us now discover why this often-neglected spiritual tool can make us highly effective Christians.

What is fasting?

Fasting is going without food and drink. This is evident as we let the Bible define it. Esther 4:16 tells us:

“Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; *neither eat nor drink* for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!”

The word fast here came from the Hebrew word *tsum*, meaning to cover the mouth. In the New Testament, Fast came from the Greek word *nesteuo*, meaning to abstain from food.

The longest fast recorded was done by Jesus, Moses, and possibly Elijah. They were able to fast for forty days and forty nights. Obviously, this type of fast includes supernatural help as ordinary people today won't be able to do this.

How long and often should we fast?

There is one particular day when we are commanded by God to fast. It is during the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27), also called as The Fast (Acts 27:9). The fast that we do on the Day of Atonement lasts from sunset to sunset or 24 hours.

In this particular period of time, let me add a side note. Some people dismiss that the Day of Atonement is just an Old Testament practice and it is done away with after the death of Christ. However, there's no Biblical evidence supporting that claim. As a matter of fact, Paul – the Apostle to the Gentiles – continued to observe this day even many years after Christ's death.

From the example of the Day of Atonement, we can conclude that a normal fast is suggested to last for a day. However, on other occasions when you choose to fast, it can be done part of a day or more than a day. It depends upon your purpose.

When it comes to the question of the frequency of our fast, it is really a personal choice. But it is *highly suggested* to fast at least once a month. Healthy individuals can even tolerate fasting twice a month.

It is recommended that you consult with your doctor when you fast especially if you have a pre-existing medical condition. From there, you can decide how often you should fast.

Are we commanded to fast?

We have already seen that we are commanded to fast on the Day of Atonement. But are we also commanded to fast on other days of the year?

It is worth noting that Christ expects His followers to fast. When asked by the disciples of John why Christ's disciples do not fast, Christ answered with a short parable and responded:

“But the days will come when the bridegroom (referring to Himself) will be taken away from them, and *then they will fast*”
(Matthew 9:15).

When Christ explained to His disciples how to fast, He clearly said, “WHEN you fast” (Matthew 6:16-17), He didn’t say, “If you fast.” This clearly tells us that Jesus/Yashua is telling us that we need to fast.

When we think about it, we all fast. When we go to sleep, we go on without food and drink for several hours. That’s why we call it “breakfast.” However, this type of fasting is done out of necessity. The kind of fasting that God expects from us is a *deliberate choice*. Fasting for our spiritual growth does not come naturally. It should be a choice. Therefore, since God commanded us to fast, then we need to choose to do it.

How should we fast?

Do you know that we can be fasting, and yet God will not acknowledge it? There is a right way and wrong way of fasting. If we are to harness the power of fasting, we need to know what the Bible really say about the proper way of fasting.

We can fast and still not be pleasing to God. There are plenty of ways that we can fast in vain. The Bible clearly talks about how we should properly fast.

First, let us take a look at what Christ said about how we should fast. Let’s read Matthew 6:16:

“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, *with a sad countenance*. For they disfigure their faces that **THEY MAY APPEAR TO MEN TO BE FASTING**. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, *so that you do not appear to men to be fasting*, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

From this verse we can conclude the following:

- We must not fast to impress other people.
- Fasting is a way to get closer to God and NOT a way to look more righteous than others.

- We must fast in such a way that people will not be able to know we are fasting. It is not something that we should shout out to the world.
- The reward of our fast comes from God and not from men.

The Prophet Isaiah has something to say about fasting as well. In Isaiah 58, the people asked why God did not recognize their fast. God revealed the answer in verse 3 and 4:

“In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure,
And exploit all your laborers.
Indeed you fast for strife and debate,
And to strike with the fist of wickedness.

Isaiah was telling us that fasting is **NOTHING** if our actions don’t reflect God’s will for our lives. We can fast all we want and yet, if we don’t do what God tells us to do, we will be fasting in futility.

The Israelites at that time fast, but they are still indulging in their pleasure, lust, and sin. In this case, the Israelites didn’t completely abandon their rebellious attitude and idolatrous worship. Thus, it is possible that even if we fast, we are still sinning.

Isaiah added that they continued to exploit their laborers! How true is this for us Christians today?! We might be very diligent in our Christian duties such as prayer and fasting and yet, we lack good works. We are unforgiving to those who have indebted or have wronged us. Instead of forgiving, we “strive with the fist of wickedness.”

Notice as well their wrong attitude toward fasting. *Their primary motive is to bend God to their will!* They fasted so that God will grant them divine favor and when they did not receive it, they murmur and complain to God! They thought that they could “buy” God’s divine favor by fasting!

So how should we fast in a proper manner? Isaiah continued:

Is it a fast that I have chosen,
 A day for a man to afflict his soul?
 Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush,
 And to spread out sackcloth and ashes?
 Would you call this a fast,
 And an acceptable day to the Lord?

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen:
 To loose the bonds of wickedness,
 To undo the heavy burdens,
 To let the oppressed go free,
 And that you break every yoke?
 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
 And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out;
 When you see the naked, that you cover him,
 And not hide yourself from your own flesh? (Isaiah 58:5-7)

These verses can be a mouthful and so let me break it down for you. From these verses we can conclude:

- Fasting involves afflicting our soul. Like what we have already mentioned, we fast by going without food and drink.
- Spreading sackcloth and ashes is a symbol of humility. We need to fast with a *humble* attitude. Fasting helps us to recognize that we are nothing, that we are **COMPLETELY** reliant on God.
- Without food and drink, we get weak and eventually die. Since God is the Source of all blessings, including food and drink, we need to rely on Him for our daily sustenance.
- The pain and discomfort that we feel during our fast don't give us the "right" to God's mercy and favor. God will answer our prayers because He is loving, patient, and kind.
- Fasting is primarily done to know God's will and purpose in our lives. It is done to gain understanding, wisdom, and guidance from God. Along with fasting, we need to ensure that we have the *willing heart* to obey whatever God has revealed to us.

Fasting can only be meaningful when we couple it with righteous

acts. The Prophet Isaiah listed some of the examples we need to do before, during, and after fasting. He said that we should let loose the bonds of wickedness, let go of the oppressed, feed the hungry, and clothe the naked. In short, we must fast and at the same time, not forget our Christian duties to one another.

Christ and Isaiah both concluded in the same voice. They said that if we are to fast in the proper way, God, who sees us fasting in secret “will reward [us] openly” (Matthew 6:18). Then our “light shall *break forth like the morning*, [our] *healing* shall spring forth speedily, and [our] righteousness shall go before [us]; the glory of the Lord shall be [our] *rear guard*. Then [we] shall call, and *the Lord will answer*; [we] shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’” (Isaiah 58:8-9).

So fast in the proper way and with the right attitude. Though it may be difficult, the physical and spiritual rewards are great! It will be all worth it!

Develop the habit of fasting

The primary purpose of fasting is to worship God, deny and humble ourselves, draw closer to Him, grow spiritually, and seek His will for our lives. Fasting is a powerful spiritual tool that we should take advantage of as Christians. It is something that we must do on a regular basis.

Devote at least one day in a month for a 24-hour fasting. You can also fast more often than that. Of course, the frequency of your fast depends upon your medical condition as well. But let it not be an excuse for us to forsake this powerful habit of a successful Christian. Let us not forget what God has said through the Apostle Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (II Corinthians 12:9).

With these in mind, I hope you will find time to fast and cultivate the powerful benefits of this amazing spiritual tool. As you form the habit of fasting, you will become a more effective Christian.

Habit no. 4

The Habit of Overcoming Sin

The Habit of Overcoming Sin

Sin is a big word in the world of Christianity. It is the very reason that we find so much suffering in this world, both in a personal and global level. Christians are called to change – to overcome sin and live a righteous life. If we are to become effective Christians, it is our duty to reject sin, in all its forms, and become more like God and less like us.

In this chapter, let us take a look at what sin is, why it is important to overcome sin, and how we can develop the habit of overcoming sin.

What is sin?

Before we can overcome sin, we have to know its definition. If we are to really know the truth about sin, we need to go to the source of all knowledge and wisdom, the *Bible*. We should not rely on any encyclopedia, book, or even ourselves.

One of the saddest things that happened to men and even Christian is that *they have become a **god** of themselves*. They thought that they could define what sin is and live their lives according to their definition.

Let us first take a look at the Greek word for sin. It came from the Greek word hamartano. It literally means to miss the mark,

- to err,
- to be mistaken,
- to miss or wander from the path of uprightness and honor,
- to do or go wrong,
- to wander from the law of God, or
- to violate God's law.

So from these definitions alone, we can see that sin has something to do with breaking God's law. This is supported by

what the Apostle John said in I John 3:4:

“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.” The King James Version puts it this way, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: *for sin is the transgression of the law.*”

Webster Dictionary defines transgress as “the act of passing over or beyond any law or rule of moral duty; the violation of a law or known principle of rectitude; breach of command.”

In short, the transgression of the law means wickedness and lawlessness.

However, it is not just what we do that makes us sin. It is also what we **DON'T** do. James said:

“Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” (James 4:17).

So in any given situation where you know the right thing to do, and yet you didn't do it, then you have already committed a sin. We should not live as a hermit who decides to live in the mountains and seclude ourselves from the civilization for the purpose of avoiding sin. That's now how to be a Christian.

Being a Christian is more than just avoiding sin. Christianity means grabbing every opportunity to do good.

Finally, there is one more definition of sin that we need to take heed.

“... for whatever is not from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23).

Our faith represents our belief, creed, and doctrine. If you are doing something that is not of faith, then you are sinning. For example, celebrating pagan holidays is not of faith. The first-century Christians don't celebrate pagan holidays, and yet we see the majority of Christians today celebrating holidays that have pagan origins.

Another example is doing something against your

conscience. There are instances that the Bible is not clear on a particular issue. If you think that something is a sin, it is safer to assume it is really a sin rather than violating your conscience.

These are the main biblical definition of sin. Knowing the meaning of sin helps you overcome it. Just like in the battlefield; the best way to defeat your enemy is to *know* your enemy.

Why should we overcome sin?

Sin is the direct disobedience to the commandments of God. If we break God's commandments, we are sinning. But what is so bad about sin anyway and why should we overcome sin?

Let me share seven reasons we need to overcome sin.

Reason no. 1: Sin ultimately leads to death

The reason is plain and simple: sin ultimately leads to death. The Bible reveals that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

We are all sinners. That's a given fact. Since we are all sinners, we must face the consequences of our actions. What is the penalty for sin?

"For the wages of sin is DEATH, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Reason no. 2: Sin led to the death of Jesus/Yahshua

Sin is so horrible that it will result in death. Since we cannot save ourselves from sin, it took the life of Christ to redeem us from the penalty of sin which is DEATH! So instead of us dying, Christ died for every single human being who ever lived!

Can you now see how horrible sin is? Sin is so unimaginably horrible, abominable, and repulsive that *it took the life of a God to purchase us back from death.*

Reason no. 3: Sin leads to suffering and pain

Sin leads to suffering and pain. God created a perfect world, and when sin entered humanity, this world has become chaotic, messy, and far from being a paradise it once has been.

We have seen the negative effects of sin. Sin leads to selfishness, greed, lust, strife, war, poverty, and all the negative things you can think of. What's more, it will not only harm the individual committing it, but also the people around him/her.

Reason no. 4: Sin has a lasting effect

Sin has its negative consequences in the past, present, and future! Remember the sin of Abraham when he took Sarah's handmaid, Hagar? He committed this sin thousands of years ago and yet, we can still see its negative effects. Abraham's descendants are in a constant war and strife with each other.

Reason no. 5: Sin separates us from God

Sin also separates us from God. It can lead us away from Him. Isaiah 59:1-2 tells us:

“Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your **INIQUITIES** have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”

Reason no. 6: Sin begets sin

We can read a lot of Biblical stories where a small sin led to bigger sins. Think about the adultery of King David. Instead of repenting of his sins, he committed another by murdering Uriah, the Hittite, just to cover his adulterous act.

Sin is no different today. When you break one of God’s Ten Commandments, you are also in danger of breaking the other nine. If you steal, you are also coveting – making you guilty of breaking commandments no. 8 and 10.

Once you committed a sin, it is a slippery road. You won’t notice it for a while but you are sinking deeper and deeper into the trap sin has set.

Reason no. 7: God hates sin

God commands us to avoid sin not because He doesn't want us to have fun. On the contrary, He perfectly knows that all sin will lead to pain. Most people thought of God as Someone who is against our freedom. But nothing can be farther than the truth!

God loves us and He hates anything that can hurt us. That's why the Bible tells us:

"The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the fraudulent mouth, do I hate" (Proverbs 8:13).

The problem with sin is it appeals to our human nature. It seems to be so nice and beautiful on the outside, but actually, it is **ugly and rotten** on the inside. Once we entertain temptation, dwell on it, and finally give in, we will suffer its dire consequences.

When we come to think about it, sin is a choice. NEVER ever think that you can escape the penalties of sin. No matter how small a sin is, it comes with a negative effect.

Sin is appealing because of the pleasure it gives. However, these pleasures, without fail, are just temporary. Are you willing to exchange your eternal salvation for temporary pleasures? Are you ready to trade a minute of worldly and sinful pleasures for a life that never ends?

At the end of the day, no matter how hard we try, we will sin. But this does not mean that we should not do our best in overcoming it. The point is, we need to grow spiritually, day by day, in our Christian walk.

We need to overcome sin because God wants us to live a happier and more blessed life. Sin deprives us of the incredible benefits of following God. So next time you are tempted to sin, remember God's reward and promises to those who faithfully obey Him.

How to overcome sin?

When we accept the call of God, we are expected to change our ways. To overcome sin means to repent of it. The Greek word for repentance is *metanoia*, which literally means, to change. As we repent of our sins, we need to change our old evil ways and start living a righteous life.

We already know why we need to overcome sin, but how exactly can we do that? Thankfully, the Bible tells us how. If we are going to overcome sin, we need to read what the Bible says about the subject. So let me share with you some points to remember when overcoming sin.

Point no. 1: Identify the sin

We need to specify the sin that we want to overcome. We must identify the ROOT CAUSE and start from there. It is the very first thing we must do. We cannot stop sinning if we don't know that we are sinning in the first place. Thus, it is very crucial that you know what sin is.

Sometimes, we have secret sins that we don't even know. *We need to ask God to reveal it to us.* If we do ask God, be prepared. Seeing our sins can make us uncomfortable. If we acknowledge our sins, then we are on our way to overcoming sins.

Point no. 2: Avoid the cause of sin

The best way to overcome sin is to withdraw from temptation. Avoiding the triggers of your sin can go a long way. The more you get closer to temptation, the stronger is its pull. The Bible tells us, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).

If you think that standing in front of the magazine stand tempts you to buy pornographic materials, then by all means, avoid that place. If you think that your friends cause you to gossip, then by all means avoid them. When confronted with sin, we must run the opposite way – not toward it! (Amos 5:14-15; II Timothy 2:22; I Thessalonians 5:22).

The point is, no matter how strong you think you might be, you will eventually fail when you are constantly exposed to temptations.

Point no. 3: Have the will to overcome the sin

Identifying the sin is easy, but having the willingness and willpower to overcome sin is more difficult. For one, change can be very painful especially when the sin is deeply ingrained in our lives.

Talk is cheap. Even if we tell ourselves that we want to overcome a sin over and over again, that's **useless** unless you have the will to really do it. Changing our sinful habits does *not* come naturally. It is a conscious effort that we all need to do. Therefore, if you want to be successful in overcoming sin, then you must make a commitment to do so.

Point no. 4: Remember the deadly consequences of sin

One of the best ways to develop the willingness to overcome sin is to know its **NEGATIVE** effects. Sometimes, we get too *short-sighted* and only focus on the fleeting pleasures sin has to offer. However, we know that at the end of the day, sin has its negative effects that far **OUTWEIGH** the initial pleasure it can give!

Think about it: sin has its *short-term*, *long-term*, and *eternal* consequences. At the final analysis, sinning is not worth it. It is better to endure for a moment and be deprived of the pleasures of sin than to suffer its deadly consequences in the future.

Point no. 5: Set your mind on the reward of overcoming sin

You also need to identify the rewards of overcoming sin. If we endure and overcome sin, God will grant us eternal life, membership to His family, rulership in His Kingdom, and joy that never ends!

Now, are you willing to exchange those rewards for a brief moment of sinful pleasure?

Keeping God's reward in mind will help us to be motivated and inspired to persevere in our quest to overcome sin.

Point no. 6: Humility is needed to overcome sin

You can never overcome sin if you are full of pride. Proud people can't sincerely say "sorry." They are the ones who don't see the need to identify their sins, overcome it, and ask for forgiveness.

Humility enables us to have a teachable attitude. We need to recognize our GREAT dependence on God and the realization that we are nothing unless God grants us repentance. Without humility, we cannot let God control our lives and mold us according to his will and purpose.

Point no. 7: Replace sinful habits with righteous habits

You don't eliminate habits; you only replace it. If we are going to overcome sinful habits, we must replace it with righteous habits. It is the most effective way to overcome sin.

When I was in college, I got addicted to playing demonic computer games. One day, I decided to quit, but I wasn't successful in doing so. I still found myself playing computer games with my friends. So what I did was I talked to my friends and made a commitment not just to stop playing computer games but also replace it with a good habit. That good habit is playing basketball. So instead of playing computer games during our free time, we agreed to play basketball. Over time, we forgot about computer games and eventually love to play Basketball more.

This is just one of the many examples of replacing sinful habits with righteous habits. Be creative and learn how to do this as well.

Point no. 8: Seek godly counsel

Overcoming sin does not have to be a one-man battle. We can always obtain the help of our church leaders, ministers, and pastors. God has given them wisdom and they can certainly give you sound advice on how to overcome sin. Since they know you,

they can give you a more specific and personalized step-by-step solution to your problem.

Your spouse, family, and church friends can help as well. Find someone whom you trust and you know who live a godly life. More often than not, they also have gone through the same process of overcoming sin and they can give you valuable insights.

Point no. 9: Ask God's help

We need to realize that we cannot overcome sin by ourselves. We can only do our best, but most often than not, our best is not sufficient. WE NEED GOD'S HELP.

Through prayer and fasting, we can become more spiritually strong in conquering sin. However, these can also be not enough. There is one thing we must all have as Christians to fully tap into the Power of God, which is the Holy Spirit.

If we have the Holy Spirit in us, we gain extra power from God to overcome sin. It is through the Holy Spirit that we are able to be stirred from within and develop the VEHEMENT zeal to avoid sin and stay away from sinning.

The Holy Spirit only comes through the process of baptism. We need first to recognize our sins, repent of them, accept Christ's sacrifice, be baptized by God's minister, and let hands be laid upon us. This complete process helps us to be granted with God's Holy Spirit.

Point no. 10: Never give up

There are sins that we can quickly overcome, while others can be more difficult. The important thing is that we don't give up. If we are constantly struggling to overcome a sin, it means that we are still Christians who are alive and kicking. The greatest tragedy that may happen is when we stop overcoming and we just let sin consume and destroy us.

We may stumble from time to time in our Christian walk, but we must never give up. It is not about how many times we fall, but *how many times we get up*. So persevere and continue in our Christian walk.

Develop the habit of overcoming sin

Overcoming sin is a lifetime endeavor. As long as we are humans, sin is bound to happen. But this does not give us a license to continue sinning. God sent Jesus/Yahshua to pay the penalty of our sins and we must not waste that.

God is merciful, but at the same time, just. He knows our hearts and He can see its every intent. He is gracious enough to forgive our sins and fair enough to deliver judgment to those who don't exert the effort in overcoming sin.

Like how the saying goes, "Just do your best in overcoming sin, and God will do the rest!" Develop the habit of overcoming sin and eventually, you will become a highly effective Christian.

Habit no. 5

The Habit of Attending Church

The Habit of Attending Church

More and more people stop attending church. This is a sad trend that seems to continue for many years to come. There are a lot of big church buildings that are now almost empty to the point that they just stop existing. Whatever the reason behind this trend, we know that it leads to a lot of negative consequences.

How about you? Do you still find time attending church services on a regular basis? Do you see the need to assemble with like-minded individuals and become more active in doing God's work? Or do you find things that are more appealing to do on weekends?

Whatever your answer to these questions, it doesn't change the fact that God expects His people to congregate at least once every week. Attending church services play a vital role in our Christian lives. If you want to become an effective Christian, you need to develop the habit of attending church.

What is a church?

Before we can attend a "church," we need to define it first accurately. Of course, we might already have our preconceived idea what a church is. For some, the concept of the church seems to be old-fashioned and antiquated. Even the word itself may make people feel uncomfortable.

On the other hand, some people think that a church is like those in the countryside with crosses on top of its roof or it could be those humongous European medieval cathedrals whose images are popular around the world. Others would automatically equate church with any place that is built for a place of worship.

Here's how Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a church: "A building that is used for Christian religious service."

Do any of these accurately reflect what the Bible teaches

about the meaning of a church? What does the Bible say about this important and yet, often misunderstood term?

We need to know the truth if we want to correctly understand what a church is and how we must respond to God's calling.

The word church comes from the Greek word *ekklesia* which means "a calling out." When the word church used in the New Testament, it invariably refers to a *group or assembly of people* and never to a building or a place.

The church refers to a group of individuals who are "called out" to live a life different to the world. God called these people for a special purpose, and that is to train them of becoming a true Christian – followers of Christ and God the Father.

Notice what the Apostle Paul has to say about the church:

"Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. *Likewise greet the church that is in their house*" (Romans 16:3-5).

If the church is a building, then it doesn't make sense for Paul to say, "Greet the "building" that is in their house." With this being said, a church is not a cold and lifeless concrete building, but rather it is a body of warm and living people who have dedicated their lives to God. A building with no worshiper is nothing but a structure in a biblical sense.

Why attend church services?

There is a sad trend today and it is the decline of church attendance. In this fast-paced world, it seems that our time is so limited and people think that their weekends are too valuable to be spent in church. Some people take advantage of their weekends as a time to rest and sleep. Some would rather use it to do the things they can't do during weekdays.

No matter what the excuse and reasoning of people may have to skip church services, there is no denying how it can

negatively affect the spiritual growth of a Christian. So why do we need to attend church services? Is it really necessary for us, Christians, to make it a weekly habit?

Here are some reasons that you need to attend to church services:

God commands us to join church services.

While most people attend church services on Sundays, I do it on Saturdays as what the Bible reveals. One of the Ten Commandments is to “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Genesis 20:8). It is not enough to rest on the Sabbath day but we also need to gather as a “holy convocation” (Leviticus 23:3). God makes it very clear that He commands us to attend church services.

Purposely not attending church services is a sin.

God makes it plain and simple that we need to attend church services. This is not a request, but a COMMAND. Therefore, not attending church services is paramount to breaking God’s commandments and that means we are sinning. Of course, there are situations beyond our control that may prevent us from coming to Sabbath services. In those cases, God understands that.

Sabbath services help us to know more about God.

One of the reasons that God wants us to keep the Sabbath and attend His church services is to help us remember that He is our Creator. The Sabbath commandment points us back to the recreation week mentioned in Genesis 1. In church services, we are taught who God is and what He expects from us.

Attending church services shows our priorities in life.

If you consider God as your top priority (and it should be according to Matthew 6:33), you will spend time with Him. No matter how busy your life is, you will give time to those things you value the most. So if you value God, then you will surely attend church services.

Jesus kept the Sabbath.

Luke 14:6 tells us, “And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, AS HIS CUSTOM WAS, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read.” It was the *custom* of Christ to go into the synagogue, a place of worship, every Sabbath. Custom means a habit, tradition, and established practice. So if Christ did it, why shouldn’t we?

Attending church services makes us spiritually strong.

When we assemble with like-minded Christians, we learn from each other. We motivate, inspire, and love each other better. Compare that to just staying at home. We are spiritually stronger when we are together and united. Hebrews 10:25 strongly urges us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves but rather exhort one another.

Attending church services is essential to strengthen our faith.

The Bible reveals that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). During Sabbath services, you get to hear God’s messages through His servants. If you make it a habit to hearing God’s word, then you will undoubtedly increase and strengthen your faith.

Not attending church increases your chance of straying away from the path of righteousness.

If you stop attending church services, there is a bigger chance that your conscience will be seared with hot iron. Initially, you feel guilty about not going to church, but eventually you will feel no guilt anymore. This is a dangerous path for Christians to take. Those who stop attending church will likely fall into one of Satan’s traps. Nature teaches us that if you don’t stay with the herd, you will most likely be a prey to the lion.

Attending church is a form of worship to God.

We go to church not just to fellowship with one another and hear God’s word, but also to worship Him. God is excited every time we sing hymns and praises to Him. We sing to God not because He needs it, but singing godly music helps us appreciate the love, kindness, mercy, and justice of God.

Church services help the Body of Christ to function effectively.

When we are baptized, we become part of Christ's Body. Attending church services gives us an opportunity to use our spiritual gifts and to learn how to serve one another as what Christ has shown us. As an organized group of Christians, we can do mightier work through God's blessings.

These are just some of the important reasons why we need to attend church services. Of course, it goes without saying that attending church services is more than just being present. You need to take advantage of every opportunity to grow spiritually as a Christian.

Don't just come to church services whenever you feel like it. Attending church services is an integral part of being a Christian. It must be one of the top priorities when we plan our schedules for the week. Yes, there is always some of those things that we thought would be better to do on Saturdays (or Sunday for most people), but these reasons should compel you that attending church is still the BEST way to spend your weekend.

Why people leave their church?

Over the years since I became part of the Church of God, I have seen people come and go. There is no doubt the true Church of God is not immune to division. However, when I try to examine why people leave the Church, most of them, if not all, leave for the wrong reasons. I can think of many invalid reasons that had caused many people to make the wrong decision.

Let me share with you what I think are five stupid reasons people leave the Church.

1. They leave the Church because someone offends them

This is the most common reason I can see why people leave the church. When brethren are offended and their feelings were hurt by his brother or sister in faith, they would rather leave the church rather than be reconciled with each other.

There is no doubt that the Church of God is composed of

imperfect people. No matter what happens, there will come a time when people will act in a way that you would be offended. However, the Bible tells us;

“Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love” (Ephesians 4:2).

We can’t do so much about what people do, but we can control how we react to it. So instead of leaving the Church just because someone hurt your feeling, remember to be patient and seek counsel.

2. They leave the church because they don’t like the leaders

Some individuals will look into the people who hold a position, rather than looking at the office they hold. Again, people will always be people. They are imperfect humans. Just because you don’t like the leaders who hold the position doesn’t mean that you should leave the Church. No matter who holds the office of a certain position, the ultimate Head of the Church is Jesus Christ.

“And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy” (Colossians 1:18).

3. They leave the church because it’s not fun

It is sad to note that there are growing feelings over the past years that being a Christian is boring, lifeless and will only take the fun out of life. This satanic mindset is something that has caused many people, especially the younger ones, to leave the Church.

Jesus Christ said: *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (John 10:10).*

Being a Christian means living life to the fullest. When you stay within the Church, you are educated on how to live this life in such a way that it will yield more blessings and happiness.

However, if you leave the Church, you are preventing God to make a difference in your life. This will eventually lead to sadness and frustration.

4. *People leave the Church because they made a mistake*

Adam and Eve made a mistake when they ate of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. Instead of approaching God and ask for forgiveness, they made another mistake of hiding from God. Most of us are not that different from our first parents. Most people who made a big mistake in their lives would rather leave the Church because of shame, guilt, and fear.

It is true that sin can separate us from God. But this does not mean that it should be left that way. Instead of hiding from God by leaving the Church, we need to ask for forgiveness and be reconciled to Him.

"For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything" (1 John 3:20).

5. *People leave the Church because they want "freedom"*

People think that the Church is just there to restrict and confine them within a set of moral rules. They believe that to stay in the Church is being a slave while to leave is being freed.

Actually, there are only two choices; it is either being a servant of God or a servant of Satan. The right choice should be obvious by now, but Satan is sagacious and cunning who will offer his way of life wrapped in a very attractive trappings. Don't be deceived; the way of Satan will lead to enslavement rather than freedom. But God's way of life will lead to life and real freedom!

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1).

Don't leave the Church for the wrong reasons. Instead, stay close to God and let Him take care of your concerns. We need to remember that God's way of life always works.

If you let anyone or anything comes between you and God, then you are making the biggest mistake of your life. ***Leaving the Church is never an option.*** Staying close to God while keeping the faith is the *only* option.

“Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live”(Deuteronomy 30:19)!

Will you develop the habit of attending church?

Attending church is vital to our spiritual health. The more we stay close to the Body of Christ, the safer we are from the evil schemes of the devil.

God commanded us to congregate together at least once every week during His Sabbaths for us to stay spiritually stronger. This is the main reason that part of being an effective Christian means that we must have the habit of attending church.

If we regularly go to Sabbath services, we are not just helping ourselves, but others as well. It is one way God is teaching us to be our brother's keeper. If you really want to become a highly effective Christian, then you must stay close to God, Jesus Christ, and the Church.

Habit no. 6

The Habit of Developing the Fruit of the Holy Spirit

The Habit of Developing the Fruit of the Holy Spirit

There is a popular teaching today that fatally hurts the spiritual growth of every Christian. Because of this doctrine, Christians stop being an effective servant of God. Preachers, evangelists, and pastors adamantly teach that we can be saved by just believing and accepting Christ in our hearts.

However, this teaching is *deeply* flawed. It cheapens and insults the tremendous sacrifice Jesus Christ has done for all of us. Most importantly, it obscures the real meaning of our Christian calling and what it truly means to become a man or woman after God's own heart.

To combat this pervasive belief, we need to cultivate the habit of developing the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Holy Spirit comes as a package and a single entity. We cannot just concentrate on producing one aspect and disregard the other.

Thus, in this chapter, *the sixth habit of being an effective Christian is to develop the fruit of the Holy Spirit*. Let us explore the different aspects of this fruit and strive hard to translate the lessons from this chapter into our own lives.

Why should we bear fruit?

Is belief in God the Father and Jesus Christ enough to be counted as a Christian? Is accepting Christ in our lives and praying the sinner's prayer sufficient for us to be saved? Are good works still necessary for us to be counted worthy to be called sons and daughters of God?

We need to ponder and answer these questions with all honesty. Most importantly, we must dig into the Bible to know the answer according to God and not just according to any man. Here are some of the important reasons we need to bear fruit.

FIRST, FAITH IS NOT ENOUGH.

James clearly tells us, “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?... Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (James 2:14, 16, 18).

Faith is tremendously important to please God (Hebrews 11:6). However, it must be a **LIVING** faith – a faith that positively changes who we are.

Faith is more than just a belief.

Faith is the substance that motivates and inspires us to live our lives according to the will of God. If our faith stops in just being a belief, we are no better than demons who also believe and tremble. Thus, faith must be accompanied by works (James 3:17).

SECOND, CHRIST COMMANDED THAT WE MUST BEAR MUCH FRUIT.

In John 15:2, 8, 16 Jesus said, “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit **HE TAKES AWAY**; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit... By this My Father is glorified, **that you bear much fruit**; so you will be My disciples... you did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that **you should go and bear fruit...**”

God desires that we must be fruitful – to produce not just some but *a lot of fruits*.

THIRD, BEARING FRUITS GLORIFIES GOD.

We already read in John 15:8 that God is well pleased when we bear fruits. In fact, it glorifies Him. Part of worshiping and honoring God is to bear much fruit.

If we keep on sinning, we are putting shame in God’s name. However, if we strive to show fruits, people will see our works and the positive impact we have in our community that they will begin to understand that God is our primary motivation behind our actions. As a result, people will then glorify God because of our good works (Matthew 5:16).

FOURTH, BEARING FRUITS MAKES US A DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST.

We are Christians because we are followers of Christ. In John 15:8, we read: "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

You see, when we bear fruits, God is not just glorified, but we also prove to God that we are truly Christ's disciples. It is so easy to profess to be a Christian. What's difficult is to prove to be one. To achieve this, we must bear fruit so we can be worthy to be called real and genuine Christians.

FIFTH, GOD WILL REWARD US ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS.

In this point in time, let me make myself clear: we cannot earn our salvation. No amount of good works can buy us the reward of God. Salvation is and will always be a free gift from God.

On the other hand, it is equally true that God will not give salvation to those people who are stubborn and will not change their ways. We are to produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit for God to see us as worthy to be part of His Kingdom.

Having said this, there are many passages in the Bible that tell us that we will be rewarded according to our works. These verses include Romans 2:6, Colossians 3:23-24, Galatians 6:9, Matthew 25:14-30, Luke 19:11-27, and Revelation 22:12, just to name a few.

Bearing fruits helps us to grow spiritually. In a parable in Luke 13:6-9, we read that a tree that does not bear fruit should be cut down. A healthy tree bears many fruits. In the same way, a healthy Christian also bears a lot of good fruits. If we are just contented in having spiritually weak muscles, we will soon become lethargic, sluggish, lazy, sick, and eventually, die.

God expects us to be fruitful not just for His own pleasure, but He wants us to be fruitful because it is good for us. God loves us and He knows that bearing much fruit helps us to have a more fulfilling, happier, and blessed life.

What is the Fruit of the Holy Spirit?

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is listed in Galatians 5:22-23. After enumerating the works of the flesh (verses 18-21), the Apostle Paul gave us a comprehensive list of what the Holy Spirit can do if we let it in us. Paul wanted to make a contrast between what our flesh and the Holy Spirit can do. Notice that our flesh is naturally inclined to do evil. However, once we receive the Holy Spirit, we can now have the Help that we need to survive our Christian walk.

Galatians 5:22-23 tells us, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” Christ said that by our fruits, we will be known (Matthew 7:20). If we are truly a follower of Christ, we must bear these fruits. ***It must be CLEARLY evident in our thoughts, words, and actions.***

Therefore, you are a true and genuine Christian if you have love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Now, notice that the Apostle Paul used the word “fruit” – a singular word. Paul was telling us that we cannot just pick any of these aspects of the Holy Spirit and disregard the rest. We cannot say that it is okay that I am not patient as long as I am faithful. No, all of the aspects of the Holy Spirit’s fruit build on each other.

We must also realize that the fruit of the Holy Spirit is the **very character of God**. Christ instructed us to aim for perfection (Matthew 5:48). Of course, as long as we are in the flesh, we can never be perfect and blameless before God. Yet, God wants us to aim for perfection – to develop His very character. This is how HIGH God’s standard is!

We must work hard to develop the fruit of the Holy Spirit because only then we can truly become effective Christians.

We need to ask ourselves how much of the Holy Spirit’s fruit have I already developed? Have I grown to be more **like God** and less like me?

How much *love* do I have in me? Do I really love my neighbor as myself? Do I exhibit the very characteristics of love mentioned in I Corinthians 13?

Am I *joyful*? Does my happiness depend on the things that are happening to me? Am I joyful every time I fall into various trials (James 1:2)? Do I serve God and others with gladness (Psalm 100:2)?

Does *peace* reign in my heart? Does my peace come from loving God's law (Psalms 119:165)? Do I have peace because I realize how I was justified through faith (Romans 5:1)?

Am I *patient* with my brothers and sisters or am I easily get offended and frustrated? Do I wait on God and for His will to be done in my life or am I too impatient that I want things to go my way?

Am I *kind* to one another? Do I have the disposition to see the kindness of others rather than their faults? Do I have mildness in my temper, calmness of spirit, and the nature to treat all with kindness and politeness?

Am I *good* to everyone and not just to those whom I consider friends? Do I actively look for opportunities to do good to others? Am I only good when people are good to me or do I rather overlook offenses?

Am I *faithful*? If Christ returns here on earth, will He find me faithful (Luke 18:8)? Am I faithful to God? Am I faithful to my promises and true to my words? Do other people see me as a trustworthy person?

Am I *meek and gentle*? Do I seek peace with men rather than getting even with them? Am I patient when people do me wrong? Do I get easily offended by small or great insults?

Do I have *self-control*? Can I bring my every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (II Corinthians 10:5)? How much strength or ascendancy do I have over my sinful and carnal desires? Do I easily give into temptation or do I have the power to overcome it?

These are just some of the questions you need to answer with all honesty. When we answer these questions, we must not compare ourselves to others. We need to evaluate ourselves and see how much fruit we have really bore. When we compare our present selves to ourselves a year ago, are we spiritually growing or *dying*?

As we examine ourselves, I hope we can see that we are casting away the works of the flesh and focusing on bearing good fruit. We need to continually grow in the grace and knowledge of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

How to produce the Fruit of the Holy Spirit?

God and Jesus Christ commands and expects us to bear good fruit and not just any ordinary fruit, but the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We know from Galatians 5:22-23 that the fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control. Now that we know all these, we must understand how we can produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

It is worth noting that it is called the fruit of the Holy Spirit and ***not*** the fruit of ourselves. Left by ourselves, we can only be effective in doing the works of the flesh. Though we can produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit in some degrees, it will never be enough.

The first thing that we must realize is that we need the Holy Spirit for us to produce its fruit. This leads us to another question. How do we receive the Holy Spirit? The Apostle Peter clearly tells us, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall RECEIVE the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 3:28). In addition to this, we also need hands to be laid upon us (Acts 8:17).

We must sincerely recognize that we are sinners and we are nothing apart from God. We need to confess our sins and genuinely repent of them. After that, we must be baptized by a minister of God and let hands be laid upon us. This is the way we receive the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit can do marvelous things in us. It is the power of God that enables us to change our ways. In fact, we can never overcome our sins and develop godly character without the help of the Holy Spirit.

The second point we need to consider is that when we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, in effect, we are abiding in Christ. We read in John 15:1, 4-5:

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser... *Abide in Me*, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; **FOR WITHOUT ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING.**”

From these verses, it is very clear that we are nothing without God and Christ. Notice, in order for us to bear fruit, *we must be attached to the vine!* The closer we are to God and Christ, the more fruits we can bear. We need the spiritual nutrition that we get from God and we can only obtain that if we abide in Christ.

If we stay stubborn and think that we can bear fruit by ourselves, fatal consequences await us. As John 15:6 tells us, “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and *throw them into the fire, and they are burned.*” This is a frightening thought that we must all consider.

The bottom line is this: if we want to bear fruit, we must stay close to God and Jesus. There’s NO other way.

Finally, there is one special way that we can abide in Christ. We can achieve this by staying close to the “Body of Christ.” Notice I Corinthians 12:12-14, 27.

“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body*—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many... **NOW YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST, and members individually.**”

The church is there to nourish us with spiritual food. Through the messages that we hear every Sabbath service, the teachings we read, and the advice we receive from our brethren, we can have the necessary wisdom to bear more fruit. As iron sharpens iron, we also spiritually grow when we are surrounded by like-minded people.

Commit to bear the Fruit of the Holy Spirit

Bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit is a life-long process. *Success does not come overnight* and perfection will never be achieved while we are still in the flesh. However, this does not mean that we must not strive to produce the different aspects of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

God commands and expects us to manifest the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We will be judge by the fruits that we bear. So let us pray to God that He will give us an extra measure of the Holy Spirit and let it richly dwell in us. When we are full of the Holy Spirit, it will inevitably translate in the way we think, talk, and act.

Commit to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We should not wait until we just feel like it or we don't have any other choice. The best time to do make this commitment is *now*. When we do, we will soon become effective Christians who are willing to do whatever it takes to be pleasing in the sight of God.

Habit no. 7

The Habit of Preaching the Gospel

The Habit of Preaching the Gospel

Before Christ ascended into heaven, He gave an *earth-shaking* and profound mission for the Church He founded. The words used were simple and yet, Jesus commanded the most important and essential work on the face of the planet. He said:

“Go into all the world and PREACH THE GOSPEL to *every* creature” (Mark 16:15).

As Christians, followers of Jesus Christ’s footsteps, we need to earnestly and zealously carry out the command of our Master and that is to preach the Gospel to every creature and “make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19).

Therefore, if we really want to be called effective Christians, it is our duty to proclaim the Good News this world desperately needs to hear. We need to develop the habit of preaching the Gospel.

What is the Gospel?

As we look into our world filled with satanic deception, it is not surprising that we see different kinds of Gospels. We hear of the gnostic gospels, infancy gospels, the prosperity gospel, the once-saved-always-saved gospel, gospel of Eve, gospel of Peter, and the list just goes on and on.

In order for us to be effective in preaching the Gospel, we need to KNOW first what it is. If we want to know the answer, we need to take a look at the Bible.

We read in Mark 1:14 and Luke 4:43:

“Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the **GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**”

*“I must preach the **kingdom of God**... because for this purpose I have been sent.”*

Jesus Christ came to this earth to preach the same Gospel that had been preached all throughout the century – the Gospel of the Kingdom of God! The central message of Christ is not His birth, not His suffering, and not His death. Yet, we too often hear of churches today only focusing their messages on the life and death of Jesus Christ and failing to recognize that there is a *more* important message to preach and that is the message of HOPE!

The Christian world is blinded. They are either focused on a baby and helpless Jesus wrapped in a manger or a marred and dead Christ on the cross! The world failed to set their mind to the LIVING, POWERFUL, and DIVINE Christ who is now sitting at the right hand of the Father. The Bible plainly tells us that there is still hope for this *hopeless* world and Christ will one day return and usher in the COMING Kingdom of God!

A message to this dying world

If you are given a chance to get a message across this sick, dying world, what would it be? In this world full of *moral decay*, hatred, greed, strife, suffering, and pain, there is no doubt that many people long for good news.

In a global scale, millions are dying because of natural calamities, famines, wars, violent crimes, poverty, hunger, accidents, diseases, and the list just goes on and on. *We know that things will get worse before they get better.* Darker days are still looming around with man's capability to self-destruct. Life here on earth is getting more dangerous with each passing day. So what is the hope in all of these?

The hope lies in the message that each of us, Christians, should bear. It is the hope that one day, God will directly step into the affairs of men and establish His Kingdom here on earth through His Son, Jesus Christ.

What is the answer to today's problems and suffering?

The answer to that question should be clear to us by now. More than 2,000 years ago, Jesus walked here on Earth to preach

the good news of the coming Kingdom of God. Today, we are commissioned by Jesus to preach the Gospel throughout the world (Luke 9:1-6). This is the guiding principle that steadily motivates the effort of the Church in putting significant resources in spreading the Gospel.

My friend, God gave us His word, and He revealed to us His truth. *What are we doing with the truth God gave us?* God never intended that we would just keep the truth. We are NOT to bury the truth God gave us like the man who buried his talent in the ground.

It is time to look into ourselves and see how we are doing in preaching the Gospel in a personal level.

Treat preaching as your daily spiritual food

If there is one Person, who has walked this earth and has preached the Gospel in the most efficient manner, it would be Jesus Christ. What made Jesus as an effective preacher of the Gospel? What was His motivation? What were His drive and passion?

Let us read John 4:31-34:

"In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."

But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?" Jesus said to them, "*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.*"

We can see from these verses that one of the sole purposes of Jesus' existence as a human is to do His Father's work. He is so **CONSUMED** with the desire of preaching the Gospel that it becomes His food.

Christ considers the Father's work as His food, His daily sustenance, that if He failed to do God's work, then like a man who does not eat, He will become hungry, weak, and eventually die! Christ gets His daily sustenance and nourishment by doing the work of God on a regular basis!

How about us brethren? Do we consider preaching the Gospel of God as our daily food? That when we don't preach it, we will die spiritually?

We know how important food is, right? We spend the majority of our daily budget on food. We are aware when we don't eat on a regular basis, we will become malnourished. Our health will worsen, and we die eventually.

The same with preaching the gospel. We need to make sure that we do it on a daily basis. We need to realize that we will die without it. We must be busy doing our Father's business, and that is to bring more sons and daughters in His family.

Support the work of the Church

My friend, **LET US NOT COMMIT THE MISTAKE THAT PREACHING THE GOSPEL IS ONLY THE WORK OF THE MINISTERS.** This is the work of the Church, and *you* belong to that Church.

Let us read, Verse Matthew 24:45-47.

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ***Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so DOING.*** Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.

Blessing has already been pronounced to those who will do the work of the Church. When Jesus will finally return here on earth, will He find us faithful and still preaching the Gospel? *Or will we be too busy doing our own business that we forget what matters MOST during this lifetime?*

The effort of the Church is as strong as its members. If each of us is doing the work, then the effort of the Church will be more substantial. We will be more efficient if we do our part. Remember what Mark 16:15 tells us? It says, go into **ALL** the world and preach the Good News to *everyone*. This may sound so difficult and even impossible. Nevertheless, God expects us to do our part no matter how tough preaching the Gospel may be.

So how can you preach the gospel as an individual?

Make the people be aware of the wonderful world tomorrow. Be the light of the world! Be a responsible representative of God and an ambassador of His Kingdom. There are many ways that you can spread the Gospel. All you need is actively find and grab every opportunity to share what we believe. Our Life should be filled with the passion of sharing the Gospel. Let us make this our *magnificent obsession!*

Pray for God to bless our effort

Preaching the gospel is the greatest work on the face of the planet. You are privileged and honored to be called in this lifetime and be part of this work. But we cannot do this all alone. This is a very challenging mission that Jesus gave us. Yet, we cannot raise our hands and give up telling ourselves that this could not be done.

But “We live by faith and not by sight.” We might waiver when we look at our physical circumstances, but God is faithful who would supply all our needs in order to fulfill our God-given mission. We are on *God’s side* and we could be confident that we will succeed with His help.

Let’s read to I Corinthians 3:5-7.

“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, **but God gave the increase**. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.”

We are nothing without God’s help... that is the reality. We are to plant the seed, but it is only God who gives the increase.

We know that it takes a miracle for every person to see the truth and accept it. It is not our job to convert people; it is God’s will and prerogative. He is the one who gives the increase. We are just here to preach the gospel and tend to those people who will answer the call.

Make preaching the Gospel your habit

We are living in a dangerous world. The financial crisis that is plaguing most of the world's economy and the ever growing problems that we face challenge us, the Church, to preach the Gospel with more **ZEAL, INTENSITY, PASSION, AND MOST OF ALL, LOVE FOR THE WORK.**

We are not called here in the Body of Christ to be passive – to just come and go, to be just bench warmer. Do we just sit back, relax, and expect others to do the job? What do you do in between Sabbaths? *What do you do?* We must be fueled with the zeal and passion of preaching the Gospel.

NO matter what I tell you, I know these are nothing until we keep them in our hearts and put it into practice. Let this message not be in vain, but rather inspires us to do the work.

I would like to close this chapter with I Corinthians 9:16. It says:

“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, **WOE IS UNTO ME**, if I preach *not* the gospel!”

At the end of all this, we must ask ourselves; are we doing our part in preaching the Gospel? Is part of our inner being? If not, we can say the same thing to ourselves. Woe unto us if we do not do our part! Woe unto us, my friend, woe unto us.

I cannot overemphasize this statement enough. We must have an honest examination of our priorities and see if we are living up to the expectation of Jesus Christ.

We have a lot of work to do. We must never grow weary of doing God's work because, in due time, He will reward us according to our deeds. May we find the motivation and zeal to carry on with this mission and together let us preach the Gospel throughout the world!

Final Words

**Develop the Powerful
Habits of Highly
Effective Christians**

Develop the Powerful Habits of Highly Effective Christians

Your life consists of the small decisions you make every day. Your life is defined as how you spend your time. As a Christian, what should be our life about? At the end of our lives, when we finally lie down on our death bed, can we really have the confidence to say that we have done our part and fought the good fight? At the end of it all, what really matters in our life?

As we come to the last chapter of this book, it is worth reviewing the seven habits of a highly effective Christian. These are the following:

- The Habit of Praying
- The Habit of Studying the Bible
- The Habit of Fasting
- The Habit of Overcoming Sin
- The Habit of Attending Church
- The Habit of Developing the Fruit of the Holy Spirit
- The Habit of Preaching the Gospel

Now, I'm not saying that these are all the habits of effective Christians. I even love to see you add more to this list. However, I am sure that these habits are the most fundamental and powerful concepts that you should have in your life.

As you can see, all these habits are action verbs. Being an effective Christian is not something we achieve when we comfortably lie down on our couch and aimlessly flicker through the channels of our TVs.

Being an effective Christian means to be active, not passive; to be doing, and not just listening; to be the "dent makers" and not just spectators. To be an effective Christian means to come out from our comfort zone and do what needs to be done. We are not to just comfortably sit in our chairs, fold our arms, and wait for someone to do God's work.

We have enough *lukewarm* Laodiceans. What we need are more **zealous** Philadelphians!

At the final analysis, what you read and learned from this book boils down to nothing if you don't apply them in your life. No matter how inspired or motivated you are because of this book, you still need to translate how you feel into something that you *actually* do!

Carefully meditate and understand what James has to say about this subject. He said:

“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and **receive with meekness the IMPLANTED WORD**, *which is able to save your souls.*

But be **DOERS OF THE WORD**, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, *and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work*, **THIS ONE WILL BE BLESSED IN WHAT HE DOES”**
(James 1:21-25).

James here is telling us that if you just hear the words of God and don't do it, then you are just *deceiving* yourself. It is not enough to just believe, *but that belief must be coupled with action.*

We are like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and basically just forgets what he knows if we don't follow through what we learned. It is not the academic knowledge that will save you; it is your *action* and the grace of God.

If we stay faithful and doer of the Word, God has already **pronounced** a blessing for us. A great reward awaits those who have developed the habit of effective Christians, and we can have the confidence that when we are resurrected at the return of Christ, we can have the crown of life given to us.

To be able to develop the godly habits mentioned in this book, you need to be **CONSISTENT**. Habits are not developed

overnight. It needs to be regularly done until it becomes deeply ingrained in our sub-consciousness.

Yes, there will be things that will get us side-tracked. There will be things that will distract us and cause us to lose focus, but we need to remember that as long as we honestly know **we are doing our best**, God will always be there to supply the things that we lack.

Finally, bear in mind that you cannot do it alone. Striving to be an effective Christian is a serious matter, and it is not something we must take lightly. The road ahead of us is bumpy and under construction.

We must **not** commit the mistake of believing that we can accomplish this humongous task by ourselves. We NEED the help of God and Jesus Christ. That's why we must constantly be connected with them – to be connected with the highest Authority and most supreme Power in this vast universe.

Yes, our human frailty may fail us. Our spirit may be strong, but our flesh is weak. And when that happens, know that God is always there to give us strength and encourage us to carry on. Because at the end of it all, being an effective Christian has its reward ***both*** in this lifetime and the life to come.

We must realize that it is an **HONOR** to serve the ever-living God and to suffer for that cause is the best way to suffer with *meaning* in this life. Being an effective Christian may bring us in situations that are inconvenient, difficult, and dangerous, but God has promised us that He will NEVER leave us nor forsake us.

So hold on, keep the faith, and continue steadfastly in fighting the good fight. We may be last today, but we will be first in the Kingdom (Matthew 20:16).

May we all strive to be part of God's Kingdom and **DEVELOP the seven powerful habits of effective Christians**. And hopefully on that fateful day, when Christ finally returns here on earth, we will hear Him say, *"Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of the Lord!"*



About the Author



It was on the cold morning of December 3, 1988, that Joshua Enog Infantado first greeted the morning sun. He was born in Amas, North Cotabato, Philippines. He grew up in Kidapawan City where he spent most of his life.

Joshua and his family transferred to Manila, the capital of the Philippines, to pursue his college education. He took Bachelor of Science in Nursing and passed the board exam to become a registered nurse.

On December 28, 2014, Joshua was married to his best friend, Victoria Elizabeth. He considered it to be one of the happiest and most significant events in his life. Now, their love gave life to their first born son, Caleb Josiah.

Today, Joshua works as an online freelance writer. Aside from motivational speaking, writing is among his passions. He believes that writing is one of the best ways to influence other people to further better their lives. As the saying goes, *"The pen is mightier than the sword."* This is true because you may take away his life, but not his written ideas, aspirations, and legacy.

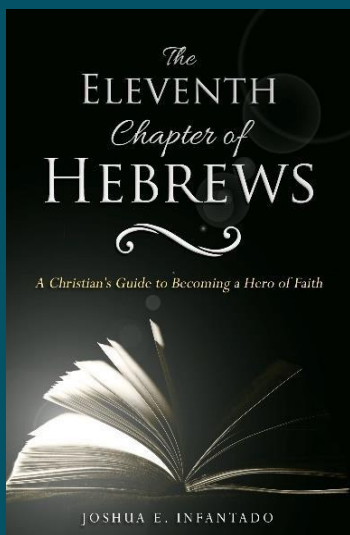
Joshua has eventually come to realize that the only way to have a fulfilling and blessed life is to follow the will of God. This is the main reason that Joshua strives hard to live a life pleasing to His Creator and Lord.

The magnificent obsession of Joshua is to help people find God in their lives. After that, give them the right wisdom and knowledge to live a life that reflects the character of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Joshua is a Filipino, brother, friend, teacher, lover, adventurer, inspirer, joker, observer, learner, student of life, blogger, and a servant of God. He wrote this book in the hope that through his written ideas and words, readers will be drawn closer to God and build an intimate relationship with him.

This life is too short to be spent in chasing the wrong things. So we better put our priorities in line with our Creator's will. Joshua's book will make you smile, laugh, think, and even cry. So read this book from cover to cover. Together, let us work out our own salvation and see each other in the coming Kingdom of God!

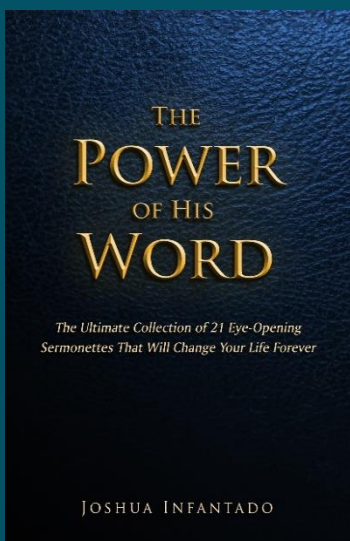
You might also be interested with these eBooks



The Eleventh Chapter of Hebrews

A Christian's Guide
to Becoming a Hero
of Faith

(\$1.99)



The Power of His Word

The Ultimate
Collection of 21
Eye-Opening
Sermonettes that
Will Change Your
Life Forever

(\$1.99)