

# Habits

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[0:00] So, okay, we are back at church. Church, the building. At long last, amen. And it's hard to believe, isn't it, that it's been 10 Sundays without church. Church, as we know, the assembling, the gathering together.

10 Sundays, which is 70 days. Now, I've read some studies that say that those that do these studies and research say this, they say it takes 66 days for a new behaviour to become automatic. So, we're over that 66 days. So, we've had 66 days where it's been a habit not to get together, not to gather. And it says that it takes that long to make or break a habit. It takes that time to reset the brain.

So, you can imagine how this virus has stopped a lot of people doing some things that maybe they're going to stop doing and never go back to doing. This magical 66 days that may break some people's habits.

Now, maybe some people will stop attending church. Now, of course, we know this is no condemnation of those that are not here today because we know some have determined, in preference to those that are here, to stay home and just watch it online.

[1:15] But it is possible that some churches will be badly affected by people breaking the habit of going to church. And this long break could break people's habits.

Now, for people addicted to pokies, for example, maybe that's not such a bad thing to do. To have that break from playing the pokies, you know, cha-ching, cha-ching, cha-ching, putting the money in, money in, and hardly any money coming out when you actually break it down.

And to have a break of such a pattern of behaviour can be a very good thing. A very good thing. Mind you, they're saying people are drinking more because of the coronavirus. That's a kind of strange thing. But they're not drinking in the pubs because they're going through the drive-thrus. But they say that it can take, for some people, 66 days on average. Now, mind you, it can take 254 days or 8 and a half months for some people. So, for some people, it takes that much longer, 8 and a half months, to develop a habit or break a habit.

And studies show that 40% of all our behaviour is actually automatic habits. We just get in that routine. Oh, this is what I do on a Monday. This is what I do at a certain time, a certain place I go, things that I, certain actions that I take that I do.

[2:32] They're automatic rather than actual decisions. So, I put to you today, habits are powerful. Powerful factors in our lives. And, of course, we know, as Christians, we can get some habits that are godly, some habits still need time for some of us to drop off.

We routinely do, habitually do, certain things. And it says a lot about us, about our values. And habits can show our character and can shape our lives.

Now, of course, when you think about it, let's be honest here before the Lord and do some kind of self-examination and think of, what are some bad habits that I've got? You know, you could probably think of a few.

Maybe you see that in others. It's easy that way, isn't it? Oh, I see the bad habits in such and such a person or such and such a person. But when we're honest, we look at ourselves and say, maybe I've got some bad habits.

What could it be? Swearing. Bad manners. Some people have got the bad habit of nail biting. It's like they've hardly got any nails left. Some people, it's gluttony.

[3:42] You know, my dad referred to, sometimes you can overeat, you can not look after yourself. Addiction to certain fast foods. You know, you just drive past and you smell that lovely Kentucky Fried wafting through

the air and you've just got to pull over and buy some.

You know, I might be planting a seed here that you might go driving on the way home. But, you know, some habits they can develop early, can't they too? You know, as a child, if your family has always gone to a certain fast food place, you just stay in that kind of in that vein.

You continue to do that. And even what you did as a younger person can affect you for your whole life. You keep on going there because it's ingrained. We can get addicted to certain foods that may not be doing us so good.

And it's almost as if you can even start looking like what you eat. You know, people can learn habits which are dangerous, can't they? You know, like racing across the road when the pedestrian light's going red and you're supposed to naturally not cross the road.

And, you know, some parents I've seen, they're teaching their children, you race across the road when the red light's on. You know, look quickly and you just race across the road and they're teaching their children a bad habit.

[4:56] It could be that bad habit. It could be fatal one day, couldn't it? That bad habit could be so dangerous that they will end up racing across the road one day all because of a bad habit picked up from their mum and dad.

You know, some people take up a health-destroying habit when they are very young. And I'm not naming what you could think what it might be for you. We might take it up at a very young age and it gets a grip on you for a lifetime.

Some other habits we can learn, they can become part of our personality. It could be laziness. That can be a habit. Losing our temper. Lust. Covetousness.

Pride. Envy. These are all things that can be habitually developed in us and becomes part of our nature. So I put to you today, it's always a good time to re-evaluate what are my habits.

Other some things, maybe God's saying, actually, that's not doing you any good. The good news is that habits can be changeable. You can change habits. You can reprogram your mind, your thinking, your routines.

[6:02] You can break that habit. You can chop it off. And when we get saved, we get a new way of thinking, of living. Now, of course, for some, for many, things can take a while to drop off.

You know, it doesn't maybe happen day one. When we've been used to talking a certain way, using certain words, curse words, sometimes it takes a while for those to drop off.

But the power of God can work in you in conversion. His power can help to change you from the inside out. And in the word of God, it talks about this word conversation.

In the old King James, this Bible word, conversation. And we've got some scriptures here that I've printed for you. This word conversation encompasses conduct, way of life, a way of living, how we conduct ourselves.

It's kind of this all-encompassing thing. Conversation. Of course, we know in modern English, conversation is more the communication between one person and another, having a conversation.

[7:06] But in the context of the King James Bible, this word conversation has got a big, broader span of the way of life. And that's what I'm wanting to first put to you today, is this idea of this conversation.

Conversation. You've got a conversion that affects your conversation, if you like. 1 Timothy 4, Paul told Timothy, young Timothy, 1 Timothy 4 verse 12.

He says, Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation. In other words, your whole way of life, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Paul tells young Timothy to be an example in your behaviour, in your conduct, in your way of living, in your conversation.

Philippians 1.27, it talks about the conversation, that it be as becomes the gospel of Christ.

Philippians 1.27. He says, Does our way of living, our conduct, reflect well on the gospel of Christ?

[8:25] We're a Christian. We're an ambassador for the kingdom of God. You know, when you think of the kind of standards people set, even footy players these days, they can't have a, they can't sort of run to riot because the media plasters their name and photo and says, look at this footy player.

They've been unfaithful to their wife. You know, it's even like the footy players have got to have a certain standard, isn't it? And what about us? We represent something far higher than the glorious sport of football.

We represent the glorious kingdom of God. And when you think of ambassadors of a nation, if an ambassador is found acting unbecoming, you know, what a blot it is that they reflect badly on the nation that sent them to represent them in our land.

Likewise for us, we're ambassadors. We should have a high standard, as it were, that our conversation, our way of life is such that we are a good witness for what we stand for, what we claim.

Our conversation reflects that conversion. James 3, it goes on here, verse 13, says, Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you, let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

[9:46] Show out of that good conversation that meekness of wisdom. It goes on, But if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against the truth.

Notice the contrast here. We see the meekness, we see the wonderful conversation of meekness of wisdom. And then we see on the other side, bitter envying and strife in your hearts.

So there's two different conversations there, if you like. What a contrast. Another good thing about conversations is your conversation can actually impact others. You know, as a godly woman, it's speaking here in 1 Peter 3, So that's an encouragement for you that are women who might be married to a man who is yet to trust the Lord, or it might be weak in their faith, that by your conduct, by your conversation, you can be a witness to them.

And they'll see, by your good works, that you're fair dinkum. 2 Peter 3, 11, it goes on to talk about holy conversation, seeing that all these things are going to be dissolved.

Don't we see the world is like this, it's tottering on the brink. It's like it's reached this tipping point, as it were. The world is as it is today. You know, we could reflect how it seems like it's very dire what's going on.

[11:22] It seems worsening. And Peter says this, seeing that all these things are going to be dissolved one day, it's all going to be over. What manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness?

So it's all the more that we should be mindful. Well, this old world is starting to show things are getting shaky here. It's about time we want to stand firm on solid rock and be a person with a holy conversation, a holy way of living.

And I'd like to put it that it's not by our works. You know, for me, I know my inclination is not to be holy. It's in all of us.

Let's be honest. And I'm not big noting myself or painting myself as something more than I am. I'm just as weak as any man.

But God helping me, he helps me to be stronger. And he can help you too. You might feel like you're a weak kind of Christian or hardly a Christian, but God will help you. God will help you to be stronger.

[12:26] And it's that filling again. It's that refreshing. It's that renewing of love. It's that building upon layer upon layer as you can get stronger in your faith.

And you can create new habits. It's been said that man is essentially a creature of habits. What you choose to eat and how much. What time you go to bed. What time you get up. Your conduct.

Your actions. Good or bad. It's kind of a creature of habit, as the phrase goes. But thank God we can see God help us to change habits. To take up new habits.

Habits of faith, if you like. Now a good way to do that is to make a firm decision. To make a firm resolution. A decision. To take up godly behaviours.

Now researchers say when trying for a new habit, making a resolution makes you ten times more likely to be successful. This is what the worldly researchers are saying. Make a decision.

[13:20] Say, I am resolved. I'm going to make a resolution. Now of course as Christians we know it's our resolution, but it's God's enabling we need more so, isn't it? But there's that truth that the world sees.

For something to change, you've got to make a resolution. Make it stand. Stick by it. And it starts with day one, doesn't it? Day one. God can give us the willpower and the won't power, if you like. The willpower to have will to do and the won't power to say, I won't do that. He gives us the willpower to take up a good habit and let go of the bad ones. Now 300 years ago a man called Jonathan Edwards wrote a long list, 70 resolutions.

You can look it up on the internet. Jonathan Edwards, a man of God of old time, 300 years ago, 70 resolutions. Now I'm just going to give you a few here today that spoke to me and they've been updated into kind of modern language.

And basically Jonathan Edwards, what he was saying, I'm going to make a resolution, I'm going to stand firm and I'm going to decide to do what is going to help me to commit to a God-centred life.

[14:30] By his grace and power, I'm going to do some things, I'm going to let go of some things and I'm going to take up some things. And Jonathan Edwards resolved a number of things, such as, I'm quoting here again, some of these phrases have been a little modernised, but they speak to us today in the 21st century.

And as I say, look it up on the internet, Jonathan Edwards' resolutions. Here's what he said 300 years ago, and you can say these things today with him.

Resolved, I will do whatever I think will be the most to God's glory and my own good. Put the glory of God above all. Resolved to do whatever I understand to be my duty and will provide the most good and benefit to mankind.

Do your duty. Do your duty. Resolved never to do anything, whether physically or spiritually, except what glorifies God. Let that be what dictates what you do.

Never to lose one moment of time, but to seize the time and use it in the best way I possibly can.

Don't we live in a world where it's easy to waste time? Don't we? I know for me it is.

[15:43] Time just evaporates. Where's that week gone? Where's that hour, that day gone? Don't. Resolved to use the time wisely that I've got. It's a finite resource, isn't it?

The ultimate finite resource. Resolved never to do anything which I would be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life. Live each hour, hour by hour, as if this was the last hour, because one day it will be, won't it?

Resolved to live this hour as would be, as if it were, the last hour of my life. I would not be ashamed of doing anything. Resolved to maintain the wisest and healthiest practices in my eating and drinking.

You know, look after this body. It's a vessel of clay, isn't it? It's, what's the word? Which I think, it's perishing, isn't it?

It's perishing. This outward man perishes. We don't want it to perish any quicker than it already is. Amen. Resolved to study the scriptures steadily, constantly and frequently.

[16:48] Wow. He said this is important. Resolved to study the word. He says, resolve to act lovingly, respectfully and godly towards all and when I'm feeling ungodly, to quickly repent.

Now, don't your human relationships say a lot about your Christianity? How you get on with other people or not get on with them? You know, resolve to act lovingly, respectfully and godly towards all.

That's a tough call, isn't it? Even the ones who are nasty to you, who are unfair to you. Resolved to live peacefully with all men as much as I can. That's tough too, isn't it?

Easy to say it. Resolved to be strictly and firmly faithful to do whatever God entrusts me to do.

Resolved to be self-controlled in all areas of my life.

Resolved to every week to strive for personal purity and a closer walk with the Lord. Resolved to act purposefully as if I have already seen both the splendour of heaven and the torments of hell.

[17:45] You know, live in the context of eternity, of eternal truths. Resolved to strive every week to have grown in grace and closer to God.

Let this week be better than the week past and let next week be even better in your spiritual walk.

He says, Resolved to cast and venture my soul on the Lord Jesus Christ, to trust and confide in him, to consecrate myself wholly to him, and that from this I may have assurance of my eternal safety, knowing that my confidence is in my Redeemer.

That's where he put his trust, in the Redeemer. He says, Resolved never to give up, nor ever slacken up in my fight with my own corruptions, no matter how successful or unsuccessful I may be. Look, we can all suffer defeat. We can all sometimes trip and slide and fall and wane and weaken, but I'm still going to keep fighting the flesh.

I'm still going to keep fighting against that which is not right. I'm still going to keep aiming for the best, God's best and highest.

[18:54] He says, Resolved to be completely honest before God, confessing my sin, acknowledging my weakness and asking for help. Don't we need some help? We need his help.

We need his help. Resolved to never forget I'm not my own but God's, and never to live for myself but to live for God. Put it in that context. You're not your own. You're bought with a price.

Resolved to let there always be goodness in everything I say. These are good habits, aren't they? Good resolutions. You can make those resolutions yourself. Look them up and print them out.

These were good habits. Jonathan Edwards, 300 years ago, and they're good habits for you and me right here and now today in Australia. These were good habits. The Bible contrasts good habits with bad habits.

We see, for example, what the Lord Jesus set for us as the greatest example, the ultimate. It says of him, John 18, 2, that he oft times resorted to the garden.

[19:51] He oft times resorted to the garden of Gethsemane. That speaks to me because I think, you know, before the cross, he was in the garden. It wasn't the first time. He was in the garden lots and lots of times.

Oft times. Often times he was in the garden and Judas knew where he was going to be. Judas knew where he was because he often went to the garden.

Maybe he often went there to pray. Maybe that garden prayer of Gethsemane's garden was one of many, many prayers. That was just the last prayer as he prayed.

Take this cup. Nevertheless, if it be thy will. Prayed for you. He prayed for me. He thought of us in the garden.

As he shed those tears, as it were, drops of blood falling to the ground. Jesus, our Lord, was often in prayer. As it says in Luke 22, as he came out, he went as he was wont, as he was used to, to the Mount of Olives.

[20:47] He was often going to the Mount of Olives. He was often going there. And what does Gethsemane mean? Olive Press. That was where the olives were smashed and strained and pulverized and broken and squashed in that press.

They were pressed and broken in the garden. Gethsemane means olive press. And our Lord was pressed there, wasn't he? He was pressed as an olive would be pressed, as an olive would be broken and pulverized and bring forth the oil of the olive, the olive oil.

Our Lord was pressed in the garden for you and me. And the Lord demonstrated the habit of prayer. It says the Lord Jesus had this custom. He was used to going to the Mount of Olives. We could understand that as he went to the Mount of Olives, he would have gone to that time, that place of prayer.

It says it was his custom. It's the same word manner. The same word custom manner as he was wont. It's the same word of this word custom.

It's used in Hebrews 10:25. Of course, one that we might reflect on. That again speaks of a habit. And the writer of Hebrews says, Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner, in other words, the custom habit of some is, but exhorting one another as much the more as you see the day approaching.

[22:17] Now, of course, we know my dad gave you the heavy word there. You know, go to every meeting. I'm not saying you have to come to every meeting. We know there's realities here. We know that not everyone can do that.

But God helping you, when you can, assemble. And not forsaking it, not making it things, I couldn't care less, I'll give it a miss for the next week or two or three or four.

And it becomes a habit. Not assembling becomes a habit. Not assembling ourselves together as the manner of some is. The habit of some is not to assemble. Now, of course, we know, as I put in

the context, as we started this message that essentially we have gotten that habit of not assembling, but we can make a change today.

So some people have developed the habit of not assembling. It's a bad habit, isn't it, not to assemble? It's a bad habit to miss church. And again, we're not being critical of folk in the current circumstances.

But the Lord Jesus had the habit, he had the custom of attending the assembly. We see that in Luke 4.16. As it says, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and he stood up for to read. [23:22] And it says, as his custom was. It was the Lord Jesus' custom to assemble, to go to the assembly place on the assembly day.

And he went there as his custom was. The people in Hebrews 10 did the opposite of not assembling. And so let's rather follow our Lord's example. What's some other examples of habits that we can cultivate that are going to do us good?

They're going to benefit our soul. And by God's help, we can take them up and let go of the ones that are bad for our soul. And Paul knew the powerful power of habit. In Romans 7.19, he says, For the good that I would, I do not.

But the evil which I would not, that I do. He knew he was always tripping and falling, doing what he should not do, and not doing what he should have done. And so if Paul is such an honest example for us today, he's saying it can be hard.

He's saying he knows real life. Our flesh can naturally do what it ought not to do, to go its own way instead of God's way. You know, we can all find that, that we can act selfishly and carelessly and fleshly.

[24:33] Now, here's a good little acronym to remember. Five words. Five words. Think. You might have heard this before.

This is what you should do before you say anything, or before you might post anything on Facebook, whatever it be, to stop and think. T-H-I-N-K.

You might have heard this one. Ask yourself these questions. T-Is it true? H-Is it helpful? I-Is it inspiring?

M-Is it necessary? And K-Is it kind? I'll say that again. A good acronym to help us to remember, before I say anything, is it going to be true?

We can all hear things. Oh, did you hear? Did you hear? Whisper, whisper, whisper. And before you know it, it's changed. It's not true. It's just hearsay.

[25:35] It's falsehood. Is it true? Is it helpful? Is what I say actually going to help someone, or is it going to hurt them? Is it going to help them? Is it going to lift them up? Is it going to be beneficial? Is it going to be hurtful? Is it helpful?

Is it inspiring? Does it actually lift people to that higher walk with God? Is it something that's going to bless them spiritually and edify them, build them up? Is it necessary? Should I even bother saying it?

Is it just something that, no, leave that alone. It's not necessary. It's useless. Or is it kind, especially? Kindness. So these are good habits, aren't they? We can easily develop habits that are not good.

Hypocrisy is a bad habit, isn't it? Carnality. Negativity. Always seeing the negative. Always having something to whinge about, complain about. Instead, by God's grace, we can rather cultivate good habits, godly habits, in our lives, in our thinking, in our relationships.

Romans 13, 14 says, put on the Lord Jesus Christ. You may not have provision for the flesh to fulfil the lust thereof. There's a sense of putting on, of being robed with God's person, with that robe of righteousness, being clothed with our Lord Jesus as our covering, as the one who we live inside of him.

[26:43] And a big factor that can help us and help us to keep good habits is also the company that we keep. You know, it can be a huge impact on the habits that we take up.

The company that we keep. 1 Corinthians 15, 33, it says, be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners. In other words, if you hang around people that are against God, it's going to corrupt you.

It's going to adversely affect you. So what it's saying, really, if you think about it, get people around you who are going to do you good.

Do your soul good. Get people around you who are going to help you to grow as a Christian. Other Christian folk. Get believers around you. Get people around you who are going to be uplifting for you.

Not people are going to drag you down into the old way of life, into those old patterns of sinful behaviour. Now, isn't it true?

[27:48] Isn't it clear that when we, who we hang around with, who we mix with, we start talking like them. Now, you might not believe this, but I used to have a pure English accent.

You know, I used to speak like the people on Coronation Street. You know, I spoke in the motherland's mother's English. You know, the true English tongue of an English man.

And now my language has been corrupted. I've got an Australian accent. Does that sense? I'm making the point, I'm making the point that if I mix with Aussies, I start talking like Aussies.

You know, when my wife gets some, when my wife comes, gets some, some friends come over from England, she starts reverting to her Southampton language. You know, God has sort of really, you need to ask for help with the interpretation of that foreign tongue, of the Southampton accent.

If we mix with people long enough, we become like them. That's the point I'm making here. And so, we should think about the words. We pick up the words that they say. If you hang around people who are swearing and cursing and using unwholesome language all the time, you start talking like them without even thinking, hey, I'm a Christian, I don't talk like that.

[29:04] So don't hang around people like that. They're going to drag you down. Spend time rather around God's people. So our language will change as we get saved. Our habits can change and we can replace the sinful ones with good habits.

Here's some other examples. Daniel's a good example. He had the habit of prayer. Daniel 6, verse 10. It says, even in the context as this act of worship was really declared illegal, he says, I'm going to keep praying as I always have done.

And he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks as he did aforetime, as was his custom. Daniel 6, verse 10. How can we break bad habits?

How can we make good habits? Thank God the Lord Jesus says he's the great deliverer. His salvation work is a work of deliverance and he delivers us. He sets us free.

He helps us to overcome sin. Now that can be a work that is a progressive work. But we know some habits are health destroying. Let's choose rather good daily habits.

[30:07] Make it a resolution. Make a deliberate step. Another thing about habits is habits come with repetition. So keep deciding each new day to do the right to let go of the doubtful.

Exercise the conscience muscle and it will get stronger. You know, I've heard it said even if you want to read your Bible more and more faithfully, set yourself at least a minimum.

Someone has said even two minutes a day, whatever it be. Set yourself a minimum amount of time and then God will help you to make it more. God will help you to grow that. So just set something, I'm going to set this as a minimum.

This is what I must do. This is what I'm going to resolve to do. Spend some time in the Bible, a certain time, before breakfast, whatever it be, whatever pattern works for you.

So that becomes a part of your daily routine. It's like brushing your teeth. You do it without thinking now. I hope so. But it becomes automatic, doesn't it, to brush your teeth? It's likewise with the things of God.

[31:11] It can become automatic. It says that in Hebrews 5.14 that some people, they have, by reason of use, their senses are exercised to discern good and evil. There's a sense where our senses get exercised.

We get that exercise, we get in that train of thought, we get in that pattern of behaviour such that it becomes a part of our daily day. And so, for now, what are we going to do with this message?

Let's take an honest self-examination. What are some of the habits that I would be better off without? Gossip is a bad habit, isn't it? Don't do it.

Decide not to do it. Wasting time is a bad habit. Putting things off is a bad habit. You know, I've got lists at home. I do gradually cross things off but the list is still there.

You know, it can be a bad habit. You know, indulging in alcohol can be a bad habit. The Bible says nothing much good about this substance. Lying is a bad habit.

[32:12] Our Lord calls us to discern what is good and acceptable, the perfect will of God. Aiming for God's highest and best is a good habit. Our Lord promises us victory. It says, submit yourselves to God.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you. There's many promises we can take heart. As my dad talked about, memorising the word is a good habit, isn't it? Put it in your heart. Look at the example of our Lord when he was attacked.

When he was attacked in the wilderness, he says, it is written. That's the answer. That's what you need. When you're feeling like you're under attack, it is written. That's the answer.

That's the example of our Lord. And he withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. He's got the sense of, he oft times did such. He prayed. How can we grow?

How can we cultivate spiritual fruit? Galatians 5, of course, we know the fruit of the spirit. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

[33:16] These are good habits, aren't they? They're good character qualities. And they that are Christ have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. It's a new way of living. 1 Thessalonians 5 talks about rejoicing evermore.

It talks about praying. These are good habits. In everything, give thanks. This is the will of God. Wow. These are good habits to get hold of. Rejoice. Keep on rejoicing.

Keep on praying. Keep on thanking God. Have we got that habit of rejoicing? To have that heart that, well, as much as it's been a tough day, I can see something I can thank God for today.

I can see something to give thanks for. Giving is a good habit, godly habit. Generosity is a good habit. Forgiveness is a good habit. Depending on the Holy Spirit is a good habit.

And we're assured of victory. There's a promise here, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Learn to depend upon him. Prayer, our vital communion with God.

[34:18] I'll put to you just as we're coming to a close here, Ephesians 4 talks about the corrupt, the old man. Talks about the spirit renewed, of the spirit of the mind.

The spirit of the mind renewed. Talks about putting on the new man. It's a sense we've got a whole new, we've got a new set of clothes as it were. Those old smelly, dirty, sin-covered garments he takes away and he puts a new garment on us.

We've become a new man. We put off the old man, we put on the new. And there's a wonderful blessing to know. He's able to help you to overcome.

He'll make a way of escape for you when you face temptation. 1 Corinthians 10. There's a sense where, I put to you today, there's a sense where we virtually need to have a funeral.

Don't we? to put to death the old man. Actually, you've got to put him in the casket and say, bye-bye, put him in the ground, he's gone.

[35:25] You know, those put to death the old, the old me. You know, the old Andrew Craig was buried about 40 years ago.

Mind you, he still, he still keeps poking his head up out of the grave maybe so often. I've got to kind of knock him on the head with a hammer and push him back down in the ground. Now, there's a sense, isn't there, you've got to have a funeral. The old sinful man is put to death and his ways and habits, the ways that dishonour our God.

As it says in Colossians 3, 5 to 17, mortify. Now, the word mortify means put to death. A mortician is a clinical job which deals with death, dead bodies, a mortician.

They look at the dead body and there's a sense where we've got to mortify, put to death, those sinful ways and habits as listed there in Colossians 3, verse 5 through 17.

And the good news is verse 10, to put on the new man. Amen. So, there's a real contrast there and you can take these verses and read them further. there's a putting off some things, there's a putting to death and there's a putting on some things, there's life in Christ.

[36:48] And so, and it goes on there, verse 12, it talks about putting on all those things that are good godly things. It talks about holiness, it

talks about mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, it talks about peace, it talks about forgiveness and love, love one another.

That's a good habit, isn't it? The sinful, self-centered, me generation, the selfie generation is all about me, me, me. But as a Christian, it's all about him and loving others.

It's the love of God that's shed abroad in our hearts. And we knit together in love. These are things to cultivate. Think of these habits as we reflect on these scriptures as I've given you the sheet and those watching might like me to send them the verses, I can do that if they request it.

But we're talking about singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord, that's a good habit. When you're driving along, sing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Get that praise habit. The praise habit is a good habit, isn't it?

You can put some music on or you can make the music, making melody in your heart, whatever you do in word or deed. Let your words be God glorifying. Make it a habit that what you say will be good, always.

[38:13] You might think, well, I try to say the right thing, but occasionally I say the wrong thing. Well, Colossians 4 verse 6 says, let your speech be always with grace.

Wow, that's a tough call, isn't it? Okay, zip the lip and say it with grace and then zip it up again. Don't say it without grace. In other words, be gracious.

That's a good habit. How we speak should be glorifying to God. In Psalm 34, David says, I'll continually praise him. I'll bless the Lord at all times.

Get that praise habit. Get the word habit. Joshua 1 says, the book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night. Get the word habit.

It's a good thing to do, isn't it? Meditate on God's word. It will delight you and it will change the desires of your heart such that you'll delight in God, in his will.

[39:11] And so this word changes not, but the word changes us, doesn't it? The word should change us. So feed your spirit, build your faith. Some have said they're saved in their heart, but not saved in their head, in the sense that we need to guard our mind too.

We need to ask God to renew the mind, to develop the mind of Christ such that our thinking will be sanctified, that will bring every thought into captivity to the knowledge of our God.

2 Corinthians 10. And so let's determine, brothers and sisters, as we close it shortly, that we'll determine to take up healthy habits. How can we do so?

Our identity actually changes. We actually get those people on the witness protection program. You actually get a new name, you get a new identity, you get a whole new persona that they give you, don't you?

To protect you and to make you a totally brand new person. Of course, we're not meaning exactly that, but there's that sense where we're actually a different person than we used to be. We're actually become a different person.

[40:19] And our habits change, our way changes. Of course, for the meantime, we know that our identity must be Christ, it must be in Christ.

And friends, there's things we can do. As Paul, it was his custom, his manner was to go into the assembly. It was a good habit.

Now, despite the virus having stopped us, we want to continue in that good habit, getting together, God helping us, as he gives us the help and strength to, as we've got petrol in our car too, that we'll go to assemble where we can, as much as we can.

Our flesh can incline us the other way, to be neglectful, to be forgetful. But God will help us to make and develop good habits, to cleave to that which is good, and to hate that which is evil.

So what we truly need, I'll put to you just in closing, and I've said this a few times now, I'm conscious of the time, but what we actually truly need is a new character, a new identity.

[41:22] We actually need our identity to be in Christ, to be so identified with Christ that he will change us. It won't be us reforming ourselves and us turning over a new leaf, or us trying to reform our character, us pulling ourselves up by our own boot laces, some positive thinking mantra that we mutter, but it will be God doing the work in us.

He will make us more like him as we cleave unto the Lord. Just to close, Paul said this, as he came he had seen the grace of God, he was glad and he exhorted them all that they with purpose of heart would cleave unto the Lord.

Acts 11 23. He will change your heart, he will change your habits, he will help you to delight in his will. And it says that new identity comes as you trust him.

And of course we know that there's positional holiness in that we are holy, he makes us holy, there's that progressive holiness, that walk of sanctification that can take a lifetime and is still in progress when he comes and he takes us, but still won't ever really reach the ultimate until ultimately he changes and gives us a glorified body.

But for the meantime he's doing a work. Amen. Praise him. Let's pray. Lord we thank you that your Holy Spirit is that mighty power that we need to change us, Lord, from the inside out.

[42:58] Lord that you can help us with whatever our circumstance of life. Lord we know there's ingrained ways of behaviour in all of us and sometimes they're not good for us.

Help us Lord to realise that and by your strength to help us take up good habits that will help us to be stronger in our faith. Help us Lord to grow.

As we've heard of your filling Lord, refill us, refresh our love, re-embolden us with your power. Lord, strengthen us again that we can make those resolutions of faith, the resolutions of the godly, that by your strength and grace which we utterly depend upon, you can effect a change in us and you'll continue to change us from glory to glory into that same image as we seek and desire to be more like you.

Help each one, we pray if there's any who've yet to trust you even now that today might be the day they say, Lord, I bow my knee, my will, my heart to you, I trust you for your saving and I ask for your strength to live the Christian war and to be stronger in my faith.

In Jesus' precious name, Amen.