

Holy Habits

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Date: 31 December 2023

[0 : 0 0] Welcome to the final day of 2023. My name is Mitch Sefton. I'm the youth pastor here at the First Christian Church and it is a true blessing to share with you all what God has laid in my heart over the last few weeks. It's so hard to believe that this day is here already. It seems like we were just ringing in 2023 not that long ago. It's crazy to see how time seems to go by in our lives. The days seem like they can go by so slowly, but the weeks, the months, and the years go by so quickly. Our family started a new tradition many years ago that we always get together and celebrate with Pastor Ray and his family. I know many of you know this already, but every time I get a chance to tell the story, I will. My wife and Bethany have been best of friends since literally birth. Courtney has always seen Bethany as more than just a friend. She's seen her as a sister. You see, Ray and Bethany were both in our weddings and they were not dating at the time, but selfishly, my wife and I, we decided that we were going to set them up and that seemed to work out pretty well. So they have been close family friends of ours for a very, very long time.

To say that we know each other is quite the understatement. Just like a brother, I know things that really make Ray the man that he is. And I also know things that really get under his skin. I know that when Ray is watching a sporting event and things are getting a little too close for comfort, he will stand up out of his chair about three or four feet away from the television and emphatically rub his nose and rub his hands together as he nervously watches his favorite teams.

I know that being late is one of his greatest pet peeves. 15 minutes early is about five minutes late for Ray. We'll probably celebrate the ringing in of the new year at 1155 this evening, just to make sure that we don't miss it. It can be extreme at times. I know many of you were here a couple months ago, about a month ago actually, when Pastor Ray shared some information about the staff and some nicknames that he had come up with for all of us that would fit our character. Steve is the storyteller. Tyler was the cheese factory because of his cheesy jokes. Lynn was labeled mama. Amy was the nice one. And Jude is baby face because he's so young.

You see, Ray gave me the nickname, the instigator. I think he must have forgotten who was going to be delivering the next message when he gave that nickname to me. You see, that's right. The instigator is the one doing the message today. You see, as a staff, we have taken some time to really think and analyze the accuracy of a nickname for him, and we have chosen one. We are all landed on Cogsworth from Beauty and the Beast as the nickname that we chose for him. This is the clock in the play of Beauty and the Beast if you didn't know. You see, on staff meeting day, Ray will walk up and down the hall, giving us our five-minute warning to make sure that we are all there on time, which basically means that his five-minute warning, I'm going to be walking in in about seven minutes because I know that it will get under his skin just a little bit. Instigator, don't forget.

Ray and I have been meeting on Tuesday mornings for a few years now just to pray and just to do life together, and this is how bad it is. Our scheduled meeting was at 7 a.m., just like it normally is, but our family, we were down to one vehicle because we needed to change a new battery into our truck.

[3 : 23] So I wanted to leave our van with my wife for the day, and Ray was supposed to pick me up on our Tuesday morning coffee that literally at 7.01, I called him to make sure that he was okay because I knew that he would normally have been there at 6.55. You see, this is one of my favorite meetings because he forgot me, and I now get to hold it over his head. You see, I'm excited to celebrate another year with them this evening. I pray that they are enjoying a church family this morning, that they get a chance to just worship together at another congregation, and they get a chance to just be able to have some time away as they're on vacation this week. So I assume many of you are like me, and there is something that you would hope to change in the new year. This could be getting healthier, to save money, to pay down debt, to find a new job, to drink less, to read your Bible more, quit a bad habit, spend more time with family, and the list could go on and on and on depending on where you are in your own personal life. You see, the bottom line is that I'm going to go out on a limb to say that each and every one of us has something that we wish that we could change.

Some of you are even going to take time to tell others what your new year's resolution might be. I'm excited to say that I was able to keep all of my new year's resolutions from 2023.

I kept them in a journal on a shelf. Seriously though, I thought about stopping and doing these resolutions a long time ago because I just really felt like a failure every year because I knew that at some point I was probably going to drop the ball. There were such great intentions on doing better, but the first sign of breakdown in the plan is when we feel like failures and I would end up quitting. It's a lot easier in life to be a quitter once than it is to feel like a failure every day. Today's message is titled, Holy Habits. And before we really dive into it, I just want to take a moment to pray. Father God, we love you. We thank you for the blessing of just being able to dive into your holy word today, Father. And as we exit out of a year and we enter into a new one, I pray, Lord, that we can just really focus in on these holy habits as we can grow closer to you.

I pray, Father, that your holy scriptures will just pour into us and we will find them fresh and new every time that we read them. Your precious and holy name. Amen. You see, some of you are here this morning because you have told yourself that you want to start going to church more.

Some of you may be here because this is your last ditch effort to figure your life out. Some of you are here wanting a fresh start. Some of you are here because church is a major part of your life. Some of you are here because you really want to get your kids involved in a church.

[5 : 57] Whatever the reason you are here, I'm so glad that God has brought you here. I'm so glad that God has you watching this service in this moment on the computer screen.

As we dive into the meat of this particular message today, I pray that God will use what he has taught me this week to also work in your lives. You see, this week, he really caused me to analyze my life in so many different ways, different things that made me reflect and different things that made me think about the person that I am or who I desire to be and what it's going to take for me to get there. You see, as I've listened to messages, wrestled with questions and thought deeply about myself as a man, as a husband, as a father, as a follower of Jesus, God continues to reveal to me and challenge me and where I am lacking. As many of you probably have, our family has a family chat that is usually filled with the funnies of our lives, the cute pictures of our kids, the scheduled reminders of things that are going on. And every now and again, someone will ask something that is very thought provoking and say that we have to really think about. You see, this past week, my youngest brother, Alex sent out a text just like this. Everyone in the family to do something that he has done for a few years. He asked each of us to come up with one word that we want to focus on for this year. 2024, a year of blank and whatever we feel like God has called us to. And so I've wrestled with this. I've really thought deeply about this particular topic and the word for myself that keeps coming back to me is focus. I am a personal self-diagnosed ADD. I struggle so much with staying on task. My mind goes a million different directions and focus has really been something I've struggled with for a long time. I know that this is a huge challenge for me, but for my life and more importantly, for my walk with Jesus, I need to be able to stay more focused. We live in a society where things are always competing for our attention. We thrive for the next hit of dopamine that our brain can take.

Dopamine is that chemical that is released whenever you have a device in your hand, or maybe you don't have the device and your body tells you that you need it, that you have to check that next notification or that you panic when you feel like you've missed your phone. It's that feeling that you get inside and it's the dopamine that's causing those things. It's the addiction that we have with them.

You see, our society has trained us so much on our need for these types of things that we are missing the big picture of life. How many conversations are we missing? How many times have you missed a chance to pour into someone else because you're consumed with just scrolling? You see, God has revealed this struggle for me. Today, we are going to be tackling some very practical ways that we can develop better habits to grow in our walk with Jesus. We're going to take a moment and we're going to call these our holy habits. And holy habit number one that we're going to talk about is that of study. You see, the YouVersion Bible app has many great things you can do. You can go on there and you can study any way. They have plans and they have different ways you can get through the Bible in a year, or you can get through different parts of the Bible, whatever that looks like. Or you can do a quick Google search. And you can see different ways and different variations on how to study the scriptures.

I find myself when I'm driving distances that I'll just hit play in the YouVersion Bible app and I'll just listen to God's word. There are so many ways that we can take the scriptures in today that it's hard to come up with an excuse for why we aren't able to get it done. You see, I was reading an article this week from Focus on the Family about studying the Bible and eight different important ways and why we should do this and why this practice in our life is important. And I wanted to hit on a few of those this morning and just talk to you about a few of those different reasons that came from that particular article. The first reason is personal edification. You see the word edification, which means instruction or improvement of a person morally or intellectually. Basically, that means that we can use this personally to develop a moral code that also will help us improve our overall intelligence. When we have a biblical worldview, we must understand what scripture says in order to do that. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3, verses 16 and 17, that all scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. Another reason for us to read and study scripture is to be able to help others. You see, the Bible is full of information that can be used to help others through situations they're going through in their lives. Scripture is not just for pastors or church leaders to read and tell all about what we read about and heard about on Sunday mornings. Or in some ways, others have written books or are doing podcasts and some of us listen to those things. That's not the only reason that scripture is out there.

[11 : 21] Scripture is out there intentionally for you and for me to have a personal relationship with the Lord. The next thing, the next reason for us to read and study is simply Jesus.

Scripture is God's love story to us, broken down into the Old Testament and the New Testament, where He chases after His people. And as they continue to fall away, time after time after time, He sends down God in flesh, which is Christ Jesus, His Son, to live a perfect and sinless life so that we may one day have eternal life with the Creator God.

The story of Jesus shares of the miracles of His ministry, the lessons that He taught through parables, the most selfless story that has ever been written and lived out, so that you and I could know the Savior more.

Jesus is enough of a reason to read this book. You see, God's Word to us is another reason for us to study. God has chosen to not only reveal Himself through creation, but also through that of His Holy Word that is completely God-breathed and written down by men throughout history that have been given holy revelations to be able to tell the story, the love story that God has for each of us.

He cares for us deeply and passionately, and that can be seen through all the Scriptures. Study His Word. Studying His Word gives us the opportunity to know Him better.

[12 : 59] Another reason for us to study is for us to avoid error. 1 Timothy 4.16 states, Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Titus 2.1 says, You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. This passage goes on to talk about how young and old are to handle themselves.

In the world that we live in, we will be faced with many different questions. Or statements that contradict that of Scripture. We have to know the Bible in order to know where there are errors and where we can confront these issues.

So, it's each of these holy habits I have a challenge for you. So, my challenge for you on the idea of studying the Bible is to begin a daily time in Scripture.

It can be short. It can be long, as you personally desire. But we need to start somewhere. God often does really big things through really small habits.

[14 : 12] And that brings us to our second habit. Prayer. We're going to look at a person in Scripture that is a great example of what it means to be a true prayer warrior and how it can prepare you for your calling in life.

If you would turn to the book of Daniel, we're going to be camping out there for just a few minutes. Daniel is a pretty famous character in the Bible. They recently just came out with a cookbook that was started by this particular man.

It's a new Christian dieting fad because of what this man did in the Scripture. The back story of Daniel is that he and three of his friends were chosen to be trained up to become and learn or be indoctrinated by the Babylonians and their ways on how to be leaders under King Nebuchadnezzar.

You see, these three men were considered leaders in their particular group of people. King Nebuchadnezzar was an awful human being. He treated people terrible. He would have had them killed or tortured for various reasons.

You see, Daniel and his three friends were taken and brought up and basically brainwashed into how to be one of the king's guys, if you will. Daniel would be renamed Balthazzar.

[15 : 24] Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are some names that you probably are familiar with. These are his three friends. We all see as some of the brightest... They were seen as some of the brightest men and chosen for this very task.

They were taken away for three years and trained to learn the customs, the culture, the language, and all of the other things that they would need to know to adequately serve King Nebuchadnezzar.

This group was given food and wine from the king's table. They were treated pretty well. Daniel didn't want to eat what was provided for him because he was afraid that it would defile God.

They had set aside this food for this particular group of people and Daniel said no. Daniel had gained great favor with the guards and was able to talk them into, with him and his three friends, to have only vegetables and water that were provided for them.

That's where the diet comes. So any of you that have ever been forced to try the Daniel plan, you can trace it back to the guard that said yes to Daniel and his friends.

[16 : 34] Fast forward a little bit and Daniel has been granted great favor with King Nebuchadnezzar because he was able to interpret a dream that the king had and no one else was able to interpret. The king was given the great idea of building a giant statue of himself, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

This is where their story comes in. This is all from the book of Daniel. They would not bow down to the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had made. And they were thrown into the fiery furnace and we all know or we know the story of how that worked out.

The furnace got so hot that even the guards were burned to death on the outskirts of the fire. But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, because of their faith in God, were not even singed by the flames.

You see, Daniel had moved up the ranks and was highly favored in the king's eyes. This did not go over well with the other Babylonians and the people that he was around. And they had devised a plan to find a character flaw or fault in Daniel.

And they could not do so. It got to the point in Daniel 6, 5 where it had said, Finally, these men said, We will never find any basis for charges against this man, Daniel, unless it is something to do with the law of his God.

[17 : 50] These leaders under Nebuchadnezzar go to him and with this idea that they knew would trap Daniel. The rule that they brought up was for the king that for anyone for the next 30 days that prayed to anyone besides King Nebuchadnezzar, that they would be thrown in the lion's den.

The men knew that this would be able to get Daniel. Daniel would never waver from his devotion to God. And they knew they had him. They had him trapped.

Staying in Daniel 6, let's now jump over to verse 10 where it says, Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem.

Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God just as he had done before. Just as it is said in verse 10, Daniel did not try to make a scene about breaking this new law.

He didn't go around praying out loud as loud as he could for everyone to see. He went to his home in the upper room and prayed just like he had done before.

[19 : 01] You see, Daniel had the spiritual habit of prayer as it talks about that he had done this for three days, or three times a day, and he had done this before. He didn't start praying just because this rule had been made.

Daniel had this spiritual habit. Prayer was nothing. Prayer was everything to Daniel and was a holy habit than he saw of having as a personal conversation with his creator.

The group of men that created this law with the intentions of trapping Daniel did just that. They went and found him praying and took this information back to the king.

The king was stuck. Remember, he had great favor in the king's eyes, Daniel did. But the king could not back down from this particular law that had been created. Daniel had found great favor in the king, but it didn't matter in this point.

The king gave the order to have Daniel thrown in the lion's den. The king said to Daniel in verse 16, he was distraught about this decision, but he knew that it was something that he had to do.

[20 : 08] And he looked at Daniel and he said, And may your God whom you serve continually rescue you. Moving on to verse 17. A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den and the king sealed it with his own signet and ring and with the rings of his nobles so that Daniel's situation might not be changed.

Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lion's den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you serve continually been able to rescue you from the lions?

Daniel answered, May the king live forever. My God sent his angels and he shut the mouth of the lions.

They have not hurt me because I was found innocent in his sight, nor have I never done anything wrong before you, your majesty. The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den.

[21 : 19] And when Daniel was lifted out of the den, no wound was found on him because he had trusted in his God. At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel, the men who had falsely recused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lion's den, along with their wives and their children.

And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. You see, then King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples of every language and all of the earth.

May you prosper greatly. I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom, people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.

For he is the living God and he endures forever. His kingdom will not be destroyed. His dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves.

He performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions. So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

[22 : 36] What started with a holy habit, Daniel in his prayer life as a young boy, ended up leading a treacherous king to decree that his people must fear and reverence to the God of Daniel.

Do you see that holy habit was important? Something that he started that was preparing him for this particular moment. We never know when our prayer lives are going to prepare us for the moment that God has called us to in such a time of this.

You see, the challenge for you with this particular holy habit is just this. Start a daily prayer life. And I want you to remember that God often does really big things through really small habits.

And that moves us to habit number three. Worship through song. For some of you, this is going to be the hardest. We hear all of the reasons why this is not something that some of you will do.

I can't sing. I don't know the words. I don't want to embarrass my family. I don't like music. This is not my style. I can't hear the lyrics. The music is too loud. The music is too soft.

[23 : 51] This isn't the style of music that I like. And the list goes on and on and on. Allow yourself to sing. Who knows, you may end up liking it.

You may be the one person that someone else needs to see you engage in worship. Our kids have the opportunity in youth ministry to go to camp or conference every single summer or throughout the course of the winter.

And it's amazing to watch them as they truly engage in worship. I see students that sing that I don't necessarily expect to sing or begin to worship in ways that I see as unbelievable because they are so reserved in so many other aspects of life.

It's amazing to watch students truly and totally give it all to Jesus in the midst of worship. You see that we see the same types of things on Wednesday nights during our worship time.

Students engage and allow themselves to have an intimate experience with the Savior of the world. They sing out songs to Him and not just songs but lyrics that show their adoration for Jesus.

[24 : 54] To me, one of the most heartbreaking things that I hear from some of my students is how that Sunday morning worship is not anything like their experience at camp. There just doesn't seem to always be excitement.

Some people there are. I'm not going to say that there's not. But the overall energy in the room when we come on a Sunday morning isn't what they see at a camp or isn't what they see at a conference.

Now granted, I understand that those things are designed to engage students. But it's no different than Sunday morning is designed to engage worshipers to worship the Savior.

And it's sad sometimes when we have to ask people to worship because He loves us and He desires our worship and He is deserving of our worship.

Last school year we had a lesson in youth ministry based on the verse Luke 19, verse 40. Where Jesus is entering the city and the disciples began to praise Him loudly for all of the miracles they had seen Him do.

[25 : 55] The Pharisees were there standing and in the verse 39 they say to Jesus, Teacher, rebuke your disciples. Basically telling Jesus, tell your followers to be quiet.

He responds in verse 40 by saying, I tell you, if they keep quiet the stones will cry out. You see, Jesus will be worshipped.

Whether it's by you and I or whether it's by creation. We just have to make the choice on if we are going to be the ones to do it. Do not ever let someone take away from your opportunity to worship the Savior.

My challenge to you this, and this is something that I listen to Christian radio. I enjoy it. I love it actually. It really helps me in my daily walk with Jesus to sing praises to Him in my car. And our family enjoys it.

But my challenge to you is this, just like the challenge that you might hear on K-Love sometimes. Take a week and listen to nothing besides Christian radio. Listen to it be positive and uplifting, just like what their little jingle says.

[26 : 56] For the first week of 2024, take a moment, take some time. Every time in your car, find the radio station that plays Christian music and listen to it. And just see what happens.

See how things change when you truly allow yourself to worship the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. You see, God often does really big things through really small habits.

And that brings us to holy habit number four. Listen to God's voice. I was sent a video earlier this week.

And I'll be honest with you, this particular video taught this particular portion of the message better than I think that I could have. And as I've listened to it multiple times, I continue to be ministered to by this particular message.

And so I just want you to watch this video. Maybe some of you have already seen it. Maybe most of you have not. I don't know. But there is power in listening to it again if you have. So enjoy this video.

[28 : 02] I was in Alaska doing a lawsuit. We're way out in the Aleutian Islands, getting ready to leave and go back to Anchorage and then home. And I had a ticket in my pocket to get on an airplane.

A pastor came up. And he said, listen, I can save you money. I said, how's that? He said, I flew a small airplane up here. And I fly a small airplane.

And I can take you in my little airplane and you can save your ticket. And this did not sound good. I said, gee, thank you so very, very much. But I've got this ticket. We'll just make our way on home.

Me and this other lawyer with me. He said, no, no, no. You've got to do it. You've got to do it. And against every better judgment I had, I said, okay.

Well, we went out to the airport. Took us by this little plane. And I looked at it. And I thought, well, one good thing, it's shiny. Then he walked around it. We got in.

[28 : 59] He's on the left front. I'm on the right front. The other lawyer's sitting right behind me. And he started it up. And it started up just fine. Well, we taxied out. I said, should we pray?

He said, yeah, that's a good idea. We normally don't. I said, well, this time we're going to. And I'm telling you, I prayed five, eight minutes. I prayed a long time. We went and got on the runway.

He starts down the runway. The plane lifted off ever so gently. And we start climbing. And it's wonderful. Not a problem in the world. We started climbing.

And we flew probably three, four minutes. And something happened that will never leave my mind. The pilot turned to me. And he said, we're going in the clouds.

And I can't fly in clouds. They make me pass out. I said, clouds make you do what? Now, it's been cloudy all day. And we go right up into the clouds.

[29 : 56] And you can't see anything. And he looks at me. And his eyes roll back in his head. And he starts mumbling. And he passes out.

Passed out coat. Now, I grabbed him. And I shook him. And I said, come on. You've got to wake up so I can kill you. Now, we're in the clouds flying along with no pilot. And my friend in the back seat said, we're dead, aren't we?

I said, there's a very good chance of that. Yes. He said, what are we going to do? I said, I don't know. But there was a radio right there. And I handed him the microphone. And I said, start asking for help.

So he's in the back seat reaching up. And he said, hello, hello. We didn't know any proper radio etiquette. All we were saying was hello. And somebody answered back. Hello, hello. Don't you guys know proper radio etiquette?

And I said, give it to me. I said, we don't know nothing. Tell him, we're in an airplane with a passed out pilot. And we don't know how to fly this plane. The guy said, I'm a freighter flying out of Anchorage on the way to Tokyo.

[30 : 49] And he said, you're telling me you have nobody who can fly that plane with you? I said, tell him that's correct. Now, you've got to understand, I am sweating bullets. He said, the first thing I'm going to do is start circling so I don't lose you.

Because I'll fly out of range of your radio and you won't have me anymore. And he said, I'm going to get Anchorage Emergency for you. And Anchorage Emergency will be the people that can maybe help you.

Try to save your life. After about five minutes, Anchorage came on and said, we understand you have a passed out pilot. And those of you do not know how to fly that plane. We said, that's right. They said, well, the first thing we've got to do is find you.

And I'll never forget what this man at Anchorage said. He said, my job is to get you home safe. He said, that's my job. But he said, here's the deal. If you want me to get you home safe, you've got to promise me you'll obey my voice.

He said, you can't see me, but I can see you. And he said, if you're not going to obey my voice, you're going to die. When you can't see anything, you have no idea how disorientated you become.

[31 : 51] Finally, he said, okay, I found you. Now, hear me clear. He said, you're four minutes from a mountain. He said, you're going to crash in that mountain and die. Follow my voice. I never said, I have to follow your voice.

Is that reasonable? You see, I understood without his voice, I had nothing. And do you understand? Without God's voice, you have nothing.

Nothing. Finally, he got us turned. And he said, I'm freezing all the traffic in the area. He said, it's going to take me an hour and a half to get you to Anchorage. And there's a lot of weather between you and Anchorage.

You're in for a rough ride. And he said, I want you to hear me. I don't want you to look at what's going on outside. I don't want you to pay attention to the storm. Just my voice. He said, if you start watching the storm, you will die.

But I'll take you through it. Now, because they cleared all the traffic, several pilots, those nighttime freighters, those 747s, started talking to us.

[32 : 56] They said, we're praying for you, men. You're going to make it. But listen to the voice. That's the key.

They said, trust the voice. You realize your head is full of voices. And everybody in this world wants to talk to you. And everybody wants to be the controlling voice. And God says, I want you to be a living sacrifice.

I want you to put yourself on the altar and let my voice be your voice. Finally, we went through the worst of the weather, but there was still more. And then the voice came back and it said, now, I'm going to line you up.

He said, I'm going to bring you in right down the runway. And at the foot of the runway are some lights. And they're in the form of a cross. He said, don't you forget this. The cross is the way home.

Finally, he's bringing us down. We still can't see anything. And all he kept saying is, stay with me. My sheep, the Bible says, hear my voice.

[33 : 59] And they follow me. Finally, just a couple hundred feet off the ground, we saw the cross. I landed the plane. In fact, I landed it seven times. Finally, it all came to a stop.

And the minute we stopped, the pilot woke up. The voice said, thanks for listening. I watch them crash and burn all the time because they won't follow my voice.

They don't understand I'm the one who can see them even when they can't see me. But they get the voices in their head and they kill themselves. They self-destruct.

Thanks for listening to the voice. Then they put us in a motel room in about four in the morning. Knock at my door.

I opened the door and a man was standing there. He said, hello, David. I said, you're the voice. You're the one who got me home. He said, I am.

[35 : 01] Do you understand one day you're going to stand before him and say, you were the voice. You're the voice that brought me home. If you're not on that altar as a living sacrifice, your head's full of voices.

And then we wonder why kids crash and burn. We wonder why marriages are shattered. And the Lord's saying, I'm the one who has the voice.

All I can remember is that voice saying, stay with me. Stay with me. Don't listen to what's going on in your head and don't watch the storm.

Stay with me. And I'll take you through. Tonight you have a God who has promised to take you through.

A living sacrifice. Holy. I have no idea what 2024 will bring each and every one of us. We will all go through some sort of storm.

[36 : 09] We will all have the opportunity to listen to the world or to listen to God. You see, God loves us. He sees us.

And he will never give up on us. And when we land on the cross, man, that is what life is all about.

See, challenge number four. Psalm 46.10 says, Be still and know that I am God. Challenge number four is just to take a few minutes every day to unplug from everything that this world has to offer.

And just listen for his voice. It's amazing how clear it becomes when we take time to focus on our holy habits. Study his word.

Study his word. Have a daily conversation with the creator of the world through prayer. Worship him through song. And take time to listen.

[37 : 13] And just remember, God often does really big things through really small habits. Pray with me.

Father, I thank you for the opportunity just to learn through your holy word and learn to through the story of Daniel. Father, I thank you for these holy habits that you've laid on my heart the last couple weeks.

And I pray, Lord, that you have just taught the way that you've taught me. And I thank you for Jesus. And I thank you for who he is. In your precious name. Amen.