Developing a Habit, T-P-P

Are habits positive or negative?

Actually neutral. Habits can work for or against you. And they are powerful! Experts tell us that if we consistently practice something for 40 days, a habit forms. When we eat a meal, for instance, most of us don’t think about every action (fork to mouth, chew, keep tongue out of harm’s way, swallow). They are habits. I’m asking the Spirit to stir us with a deep desire to make habits work for us in this area of digesting God’s Word, rather than against us. Let’s brainstorm. Why develop a regular, daily habit of spending time in the Word of God?

I want to share three simple ideas. What comes to mind when you hear the word “teepee”? A youth group grabbing toilet paper and covering their youth leader’s house? An Indian dwelling?

I want to give you the picture of three essentials for a daily devotional time with the Lord.

T - TIME (answers the question, “when?”). We want habits to work for us and not against us. To develop a habit, it helps to be consistent over time. I wonder if you can think of a time that you can regularly set aside to look at the Bible each day, even if for a few moments. Building the habit is what is crucial, which necessitates consistency. Desire and enjoyment will later stretch your time.

In the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation (Psalm 5:3b).

Early morning is normally best to follow Psalm 5:3 with fewer interruptions. If lunch time or night time fits better, set a date with God. Most Christians I know have discovered that “I will just find time each day” normally does not work. For the next five weeks in order to build a habit, schedule the time and keep it like you would a date with the most important person you know. Actually, it is a date with the most significant Persons in the entire universe. But don’t worship your “quiet time” with the Lord. Occasionally, something comes up. The Lord knows. He understands. Write down the time:___________________

P - PLACE (answers the question, “where?”). For most people it’s best to find a quiet, well-lit place where we can be alone time with God day in and day out. Setting prepares our minds and hearts. The as we move to our place of meeting. before. Set the alarm. Gather what we need stumble around to find our Bible, notebook too much time and energy over the years. Anticipate the night before as we fall associations kick in. Prepare the night so that we don’t and pen. I have lost “stumbling!” asleep and our mind will work to prepare our hearts while we are sleeping. Where is that place? Write it down. Place: ___________ ___________

P - PLAN (answers the question, “how?”). The Bible is a big Book. Where do we start? The “DiscipleMaking Companion” series is a very simple, very effective tool. Begin with a small, rich book like Philippians (and later, Ephesians, I Thessalonians). Focus on only one chapter per day for an entire week. A chapter is manageable and measurable, but not inspired. Read rapidly with your spiritual antennae tuned in as you prayerfully explore the chapter to see how it intersects your life-circumstances.