

0 (1s):

I've heard it said that if you wanna humble a Christian, ask 'em about their prayer life. And I think the true same is true for me. I'll be honest with you guys, I have struggled with my prayer life for years. You know, there might be some things that I grew up doing, like praying before meals that comes naturally to me. Yet there's other things like having a personal prayer time with God. I struggled for years and years on and off, like I could not make it a habit. I struggled. I was like, man. And if people knew they wouldn't even want to come on Sundays and listen to me, then I, I struggled with it. And, and I think if you've ever struggled to develop a habit or especially a faith habit, you're human, right?

0 (44s):

Okay. You are normal. If you've struggled to pray, struggle to read your bible, struggle to even think about memorizing a Bible verse, you're like, no, that's way beyond me serving. I don't have time for that. If you've ever thought about that, you are normal. Okay? You are a human being because it is really, really hard to start a new habit. And last week we kicked off this series habits because small changes can make a, an enormous impact in your life. And last week we, we kicked it off with just this idea that we actually should be making habits, that we should take it seriously. In fact, the big idea last week was train to win.

0 (1m 24s):

And straight from what the Apostle Paul teaches in the Bible is that we should train to win. That we should run and run and away so that we could be first place. Do we do that? And we learned a simple little acrostic if you were here last week to train, right? Take it seriously to reach for the reward, to act purposefully, to internalize self-control and then never give up. And we have to do that to develop habits. So I hope that some of you last week were encouraged, challenge, inspired to try some new habits. I heard from one mom that said, Hey, my kid was like, yeah, I'm gonna start a new habit mom. And I'm like, I love that we're investing in the next generation, but I wonder if that kid experienced what the rest of you guys did.

0 (2m 5s):

It's hard to start a new habit. Who in here wanted to start a new habit last week and has already struggled? Anybody? Okay, yes. We gonna be honest here. It is hard to start a new habit and that is a normal thing. So today we're gonna talk about how do we actually make habits stick? And I'm going to teach you a, a simple concept today called habit stacking. And it's not just something that psychologists and self-help gurus have written about recently. It's actually something that God invented, okay? And it's in the Bible itself as we'll see. See that habit stacking is such a powerful way that you can develop good habits. So I've said this series is gonna be excellent if you're like a non-Christian, if you're Buddhist here, if you're an agnostic, whatever, this is gonna be a great series for you because you can take all these idea of habits and apply it to your life.

0 (2m 55s):

So if you're here, please just listen. Take some notes, learn. But for those of us who are followers of Jesus, I hope that we can take it another level. Because today in particular, I'm gonna focus on habits of faith, how to

start habits of faith. And I'm gonna challenge everybody today to pick one little habit of faith to start in their life. But even if you're like, I'm not a person of faith, maybe there's something spiritual that you can add. Maybe there's some other thing that's important to you that you can add as well. But what we're gonna do is we're gonna understand the idea of habits first before we jump into God's word. And we're gonna see that God taught it long before it was ever written in books over the last 20 years. And if you have your U version Bible app, you can follow along in the, if you look in the bottom right hand corner, there's three lines.

0 (3m 41s):

Hit more and then find events for Rice church, Jennifer, you can see all the notes there. Save 'em their scripture. And then also there's a link to resources on our website or rice.denver.com/habits where all the resources I reference are linked there. So we're gonna learn this idea of habit stacking, because I want you to learn how to habit stack your faith. So what are habits? How do they actually work? I think this is important. So much so that if you're here in person on your seat, you should have one of these cards on the front. It has the habits loop. Now, I did not invent this. It's been around for a lot of different years. And it's just a simple way to understand habits. So how do habits work? As you can see on this graphic that's behind me, that habits have three parts.

0 (4m 25s):

And some, some people do four parts, but I think three parts is the best way to understand it simply is that there's a cue. Something happens. The cue sets you off. Maybe it's just waking up and you reach over for your phone. Okay? There's a cue. You wake up, maybe you wake up and run to the bathroom. Okay? I don't know what your cue is, but there's lots of cues throughout our day. When you go in the grocery store and you walk by the donuts, that's a cue. That's a cue, right? You see it, you smell it. There's different cues. It can be a smell, it can be a sight, it can be a sound, it can be something in your head that happens. There's a cue. That's the first thing.

0 (5m 5s):

And then when that cue comes into your life, that that trigger, it leads to a routine, a behavior, or a set of behaviors that you have that you smell the donuts and you go and start eating one. Okay? You don't even wait till you pay for it, right? Anybody else? Am I the only one? Okay, I pay for it at the end. Okay? But you, you do that, you have the cue, you, you come downstairs and you automatically go to open up the cabinet to start brewing some coffee, right? You have the habit and then there's the behavior that comes out of it based on that cue. And then the third thing is the reward. The reward that when you brew that coffee and you take the drink, you feel warm inside and energized and you're ready to go, you taste that donut.

0 (5m 53s):

Ooh, that's good. That sugar rush gets you, doesn't it? Whatever the habit is, this is how it works. And it, it's a circle, right? Because it reinforces itself. If you get that reward enough, the next time you smell the donut, you want another one. And that's how it goes. It reinforces it until it becomes mindless. And this is the good

and bad of habits, right? The good and the bad of habits. The good is that 40% of your life, as we said last week, are habits. You do them without thinking you might drive all the way to work 25 minutes. Not even think about it. Once you guys, you know what I'm talking about. Like, you just go through the whole routine, boom, you're there in front of your desk, okay, now what am I supposed to do now what I'm supposed to do?

0 (6m 34s):

You, we have habits like that. And that's the good thing, because if you build good habits, you don't even have to think about it. You don't even need to use self-control. You, you just do the good thing. It's also bad for bad habits, which we're gonna spend a whole message next week talking about. So if you're like, I got some bad habits, I need to break, come back next week for breaking bad habits, it's gonna be good next week. But this, this idea of a routine reward is so important. And I think what we struggle with, because most of us just jumped straight to the routine, that's the habit you wanna build, right? Here's this thing I wanna do. So I wanna start a good habit. I wanna start praying, I wanna start reading my Bible. I wanna start serving. And you're just gonna go straight to the routine. That's the routine I want.

0 (7m 15s):

And we actually end up ignoring the cue in the reward. But those are so important for us to understand if we actually want to make a loop that makes it easier and easier and just natural, if you want that good habit in your life. So what we need to learn is three different things with each one of, or I guess one thing for each one of these three components with a Q, we need to learn to make it obvious. It needs to be clearer, it needs to be so simple that it hits you in the face. Just so obvious. If you want to start running, for me, one of the hardest things is getting my clothes on in the morning, right? I'm like, oh, where's my shoes? Where's my, and if the shoes and the clothes are just sitting there right next to the bed or, or sitting there right by the door, whatever your routine is, it's like, it's obvious.

0 (8m 2s):

Oh yeah, I'm supposed to run, right? You have an alarm go off and it says on the alarm what you're supposed to do. Has anybody ever done this? I do this for myself. It becomes obvious what I'm supposed to do next. Make it obvious. The second thing with a routine is that we need to make it easy. We sometimes want to jump in the deep end. I think a lot of people do this. Around January, I talked with the trainer in our church this morning. He's like, yeah, this place, the the, the whole gym was packed. He's like, in January, people are there every day in February, they come about three times a week. And in March they're gone, right? Because you jump in a whole hog at the beginning. I'm gonna make this huge retreat routine.

0 (8m 43s):

That's gonna be awesome. I'm gonna lose all the weight that I want to within the first two weeks. A and then it's too big of a routine. It's like, it's too much. I'm too exhausted. I don't have time for that in my work schedule. So you give it up by March. Anybody been here? Okay, confession time. Okay? The routine is too complex. It's too hard. It's too difficult. We need to make it easy. Make it simple. James clear in his book,

atomic Habit says, if you wanna start running just every morning, start tying your shoes. Make it simple. Okay, I can do that. I can get on the treadmill now for five minutes. I can do that. Okay? You gotta make it very, very simple. What's the simple way to do it? And then the third thing with the reward is that we want to make it satisfying.

0 (9m 26s):

The reward has to be better. The reward has to be better. I'll tell you what I'm doing this year to make it better. When I run, we have a, this like elliptical stair climber thing. When I get on it, that's the only time I watch the show. I wanna watch. That's my reward. It's built in. It makes me want to get on there more. You, you don't have to create a brand new reward. Like you don't have to like give yourself a chocolate every time you work out because that kind of defeats the purpose. But that could be for maybe another habit. You reward yourself in some way and you make it even more satisfying. Cuz if you're like, wait, isn't praying enough that you can like commune with God or whatever, it's like, yeah, but let's make it, sometimes it takes a while before you really start feeling God in your life, changing things.

0 (10m 10s):

But you can, like, like for me, I, I check a box, right? Yeah, I did it. Okay, I make it. I can feel that little reward every time I check a box. So what are you doing to make it satisfying? So this is a simple way to establish any habit. And why I really want to focus on this idea of habit stacking today is because it really focuses on the first thing that, the first thing, the cue, the reason why we struggle so much to develop a new habit is because we're trying to just develop it outta thin air. We're trying to create it outta nothing. I am going to every day get on my knees and pray for 15 minutes. Well then when in your day are you gonna do it? Where are you gonna do it?

0 (10m 50s):

How are you gonna do it? It, it just becomes so complex. But the idea of habit stacking is that you already have hundreds, maybe not thousands of habits in your life that you do every single day. I want you to think of the last normal day you had the normal work day, the normal school day, whatever it is your normal day. Think about when you wake up in the morning, what do you do? What's the first thing? What's the next thing? What's the third thing? I'm sure in your head, you already know all the steps that you do. If you really stop to think about it and you're doing almost all of those things without thinking at all, you already have some habits. So the idea of habits is that you already have a habit. Use that as your cue and build onto it.

0 (11m 32s):

Stack onto it some other habits. So with prayer, let me tell you, I struggled and struggled cuz I thought, okay, if I want to be a good prayer, okay, I want to be like the great saints, I gotta, you know, get up. I gotta get on my knees by myself in like a prayer closet. And I'm like, well, I don't have a prayer closet. Okay, what do I do? Okay, where, where do I go? How do I do it? And it became so big for me that I was just like, that's too daunting. But then when I was like, well, every morning I grab my phone, right? What, what do I do? Well,

that first thing you do, what if maybe the first thing you do becomes prayer? Well, I got a prayer app now, okay, it took me years and years.

0 (12m 13s):

I'm telling you guys this. Not as like some superior person. It took me years of struggle and failure. I've confessed to some of you guys how, how much I failed at praying regularly. But finally now I have a prayer app that I can go to and I'm already waking up in the morning. I'm already grabbing my phone. I don't need to like create a new habit. Like, no, no, no. I gotta run outta my bed, put on my shoes, get a, you know, no, I'm just gonna pick up my phone and use my prayer app. And I've already programmed it with all the things I wanna pray for, the topics, the people, the, the issues so that it automatically brings it up for me. So I have made the cue obvious. I'm already doing it. I'm already doing it. And then for me, I've made it simple. Like the app tells me what to pray for. Some days, I don't know, right? You guys with me?

0 (12m 54s):

And then the reward, I gotta check Mark, right? I've done this with Bible reading too, that you get the check mark, you can see yourself reading through the Bible and you're like, wow, I'm getting ahead. Like, this is cool. We, we were talking at our community group in the fall when we did our bible series and we were like, Hey, who uses the Bible app and what's your streak? So I wanted to see with you guys here in the church, okay? So what, who in who, who uses the bible app to either read their Bible or to keep track of their reading? Because you can use it and read in a physical bible. If that's you, who, who in here? I wanna say who has the biggest streak? Okay, let's just take a, a quick little thing. Anybody wanna share? What, what do you think is, is your longest streak?

0 (13m 34s):

Anybody in here? I think I know who's gonna win because this person's in here. Anybody? Anybody over a hundred day streak? Does anybody know how to find the streak? It's in the upper right hand corner. It has like a lightning bolt and a number. Anybody over a hundred? Josh? Yeah, Josh. We got another rwa here. Okay, anybody O Okay. Sh Sharon, anybody over 200 days? Jeremy Rwa. Okay. Okay. You're over 200 days to chase's it or you just stretching. Okay? Okay. Anybody over 300 days? Jeremy and Rwa. Okay, RWA, what's your streak?

0 (14m 17s):

2000. Jeremy, what's your streak at? I think RWAs our winner. 1,902 days. 2000 ua. Like that's impressive, right? That's a good streak, right? And it's like a reward built in. I'm seeing it every single day, okay? And now you get to share it with other people too. You can share it online, you can have friends on the app so other people can see that you're reading your Bible. There's rewards built in. So habit stacking means don't create a habit out of nothing. It is nearly impossible to create a habit outta nothing. It's so hard. But do you already have a habit that you can stack it onto? Now, maybe it's not morning for you.

0 (14m 57s):

Maybe it's every night when you lay down in bed. That could be a good, you're already laying down in bed every single night, okay? I don't think you're pulling on all nighters regularly, right? But every night when you lay in bed, what do you do every time you brush your teeth? What do you do every time you open up the fridge? What do you do? We have built in habits into our life. Now let's stack onto them. And this doesn't have to just be spiritual thing. It's like every time you open the fridge, drop down and give you 20. You know, if you do 20 pushups every time you open the fridge, you're gonna get ripped. Okay? Right? Am I right? But that's what habit stacking is good for you. You already have habits in your life. Now add to it the habit you want to build. And make it simple.

0 (15m 38s):

Make it easy, James. Clear recommends not more than a two minute habit. If it takes longer than two minutes, it's gonna be really hard to establish. Just do two minutes and then add another two minutes and then another two minutes. Don't start out praying for an hour every morning, okay? If you can't, great. But most of us can't. Most of us can't. But could we pray for two minutes? I think so. Now this idea of habit stacking, some of you are already like, well Matt, you've talked a lot about psychology, all this, this stuff from books. Like I, I didn't come here for a Ted talk. I want some of Jesus, right? I need some of the Bible. Okay, we're gonna talk about the Bible next. So let's look at what God says because he's actually the one who invented habit stacking. And I want you guys to see this in Deuteronomy chapter 11.

0 (16m 18s):

Now, there's a lot of different places that I think this concept is throughout the Bible. They didn't call it habit stacking in the Bible. Okay? Somebody invented that later, but it was there. But in Deuteronomy chapter 11, we see a habit stacking brought into your life and into your family's life. So we're gonna read a passage from Deuteronomy 11 verses 18 through 21. And I wanna read this whole passage and then we're gonna look back a little bit closer at what it teaches. So this is Moses speaking and he says, fix these words of mine, God's word, the Bible. Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

0 (16m 59s):

Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up, write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates so that your days and the days of your children, maybe many in the land, the Lord swore to give your ancestors as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth. So here's this passage taught by Moses. He's teaching them now for the first time, giving them God's word. He's speaking to them. The 10 commandments are coming through Moses, so many other things that God is instructing his people about. And he says, Hey, you've gotta take all these things that you're hearing and you've gotta fix them on your minds and hearts.

0 (17m 40s):

Fix them. Get them stuck there. Get them in your mind and in your heart. And then he says to teach them to your children. It's really interesting. This passage is just quite similar to Deuteronomy chapter six in Deuteronomy chapter six, verse six and seven. It says, these commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts, impress them on your children. It's a very similar idea. So, so this is not just a habit for yourself, but for your whole family. Impress them. That word impress only occurs like that one time in the Hebrew there. And it's a word that could mean engrave. I like to think of it as that you're writing something over and over and over again until it makes a groove in it, right?

0 (18m 20s):

It's like a tattoo on your heart because you've gone over it and over it and over it. It's a habitual thing. It's not just, it's talk about God's word one time. Listen to God's word one time. No, no, that's not enough. That's not enough. That's why you don't graduate from church. You guys notice that you might graduate from like a membership class, but you never graduate from church because we gotta hear it again and again and again over and over and over again. It's gotta be impressed. It's gotta be imprinted. It has got to be engraved and tattooed on your heart that many times it's gone over. This is the idea of making a habit, isn't it?

0 (19m 3s):

And it's interesting how God speaking through Moses teaches us how to do it. Did you notice what he said? Especially in the home. Verse 19 says, teach them to your children. Talking about them when you sit at home, when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up, seems like normal everyday things of life that you already have habits with. I think this is fascinating. Yes, we do create a space every Sunday that you come that you hear God's word, that you bring your family. This is important. It's why we have arise kids. It's why we have stuff here that you can worship something for everybody in the family like we have that it's important, but it's like when you go home, you don't need to create a brand new habit of faith.

0 (19m 49s):

You're already doing things that you can bring faith into, you can stack faith on to your everyday life. Do you see that? I, I remember my parents went through this phase and they were like, we're gonna do daily devotionals as a family. Or maybe it was weekly. I don't, I don't even remember. I just remember hating it and I think they hated it more than we did. Like if I look back, I'm like, all the kids were like, oh, when is this over? Okay. At first my dad tried it before the meal and it was like, oh, we're so hungry, right? Half hour devotional, the food is cold by the time you eat. Okay? Then it was like, no, we'll do it Sunday nights and trying to create a whole time by ourselves. Like what do you do? Sometimes you read instructions like this, like get out the hymnal. And I'm like a hymnal. Like how do we read those notes? Like nobody knows how to do that anymore. That's like a loss read, sing the song together, read the Bible and it's really hard to make out of whole cloth a brand new habit.

0 (20m 36s):

But from the beginning Moses was like, Hey, you're already walking somewhere. And they walked everywhere. They didn't have vehicles in those days in case you didn't know that they didn't have a car. But we drive places, don't we? Do you drive somewhere with your family? Maybe it's the church even. Maybe it's dropping 'em off in the morning for school, picking 'em up from school. Maybe it's a longer thing, a road trip. So how could you stack faith into your drive, into your commute? He, he says, when, when you sit at home, well, when are you sitting at home as a family? Maybe for us it's meals, especially dinner. That's the one where everybody's there, everybody's focused. Well, how could I stack faith into my meal?

0 (21m 18s):

Maybe not a half hour devotional, but maybe we could pray for a minute or two, two minutes if we do a two minute prayer so the food doesn't get too cold. Okay? And then it says, when you lie down, well, when do you lie down Every single night? Whether it's your individual lying down or whether it's with your family and, and you're tucking your kids in at night, you're already doing that. How could you stack faith onto that? Or when you get up every morning, everybody's gotta get up. What do you do in the morning? In a sense, a lot of Bible scholars look at this and they're like, oh, it just means like everything in your life bring God's word into yes, amen.

0 (21m 59s):

But you can't start with everything. Okay? But you can start somewhere. What if one of those things, or, or maybe it's something else that you do all the time as an individual or as a family, how could you stack faith onto that? Maybe for you it is starting to pray at a meal every night. We're gonna pray before dinner. Simple prayer. Maybe it is every night before bed, gonna read a Bible story to your kid. Maybe it's just for you. Maybe you need to read a Bible story, right? You gotta start there. James Clear, who, who I've mentioned a few times. He, he says that habits are easier to build when they fit into the flow of your life.

0 (22m 42s):

You can't divert and go do something completely different. It's already going. Let's add God into it. There's this really great book that came out a lot of years ago called Revolutionary Parenting, revolutionary Parent, and it's by George Barna, who is a Christian sociologist. So what he did was survey the kids and they, they really did a lot of survey first to figure out what kids grow up in a Christian home so that they are, he calls 'em spiritual champions into and throughout their life, meaning they walk with God, they have biblical knowledge and understanding. They give, they serve, they love other people and they have a strong faith to get 'em through trials. He's like, what are they doing that's different than everybody else?

0 (23m 24s):

So it's, it's really like, okay, what are those spiritual champions? What do their parents do that's different than everybody else? And there's really five things in the book that he kind of points out. But two of them, and that, that I think fit together in this is one, is that the parents have personal spiritual habits. That's like the first one. Like there has to be somebody who, who actually praises themselves. You can't expect the kid to pray if

the parent doesn't pray. You can't expect the kid to read the Bible if the parents don't do it. You cannot impart what you do not possess. You guys hear me on this? So that's kinda the first one. They've developed some of their own habits in their life and one of the other five items, the second one is that they actually talk about God throughout their life.

0 (24m 10s):

It's not like a separate daily devotional or whatever. It's through life as things are happening. As they're driving, they talk about things when they see a homeless person, they talk about it. How do we have compassion for those? And whenever something comes up in the, like they talk about faith, it calls it like God talk. Like, do you have God talk? And I'm like, that sounds a lot like what Moses was teaching here in that normal bit of life. They're, they're bringing in a habit of talking about faith that they're praying because that's bringing the spirituality into everyday life. You wanna be a revolutionary parent habit stack. If you want spiritual champions in your kids and in your grandkids, you need to learn to habit.

0 (24m 54s):

Stack your faith habit, stack your faith today in Arise Kids, the, there's a cool project some of our volunteer team came up with was that they're, they're making these jars and they're, I think gonna decorate 'em. And then on in the jars there are a bunch of Popsicle sticks and on the Popsicle sticks are things to pray for. I think that's pretty cool. So it's like cool little art thing that they're doing today at Craft. So if your parents are in Rice kids right now, they'll come out hopefully with one of these jars, with the Popsicle sticks. I'm not sure which age. So if it's probably a nursery kid, they might not have those Popsicle sticks. We don't give those to the infants yet. But I, if your kid comes out with that, now you have something that you can bring into your everyday life.

0 (25m 37s):

I think that's pretty cool that you could keep it in your car. And as you're driving, like, Hey, what's one thing we can pray for? Pull out a popsicle stick, pray for it first thing in the morning. What's something we should pray for today at night? What's one thing we could do at dinner? You pull out one Popsicle stick. We're trying to make it easy, right? You got the cue, you already have the thing happening in your life. Now let's stack on faith to it. And some of you're like, oh, that's a great idea. I wanna give ideas like that. You should serve and arise kids. Yeah. Yes, we are looking for 20 more individuals to serve and arise kids. And you could be a part of it. We're, we're planning probably within the next six months, we're gonna have two more classrooms open. Okay? So that's four more volunteers a week that we're gonna need, right?

0 (26m 17s):

Two for each of the classrooms every single week in, in, in each service, right? I, I might have done the math wrong, but that's why we need 20, okay? Whatever the math is, Brenna told me we need 20. So that might be you go to rise denver com slash serve to invest in the next generation. Because what we aim to do, and I don't know if you guys know this, we use a curriculum called Orange. And the point of orange, the

whole basis of orange curriculum is that we as a church come alongside families. Do you wanna know? One of the sad statistics in revolutionary parenting, even if you bring your kids to church every single week, but you never talk about faith outside of church, your kids will not walk with Jesus when they're adult.

0 (26m 58s):

They won't. We cannot transform your kids life in one hour a week. I'm sorry it's not enough, but we can come alongside you and help you. There's even an app with cues like I wonder where they got that idea. It's called the Parent Cue app to give parents cues to things to talk about. How could you, after Sunday, you should come, come back with, with a Bible verse or with this little sheet of paper and honor our things to talk about with your kids. What if every Sunday after you're leaving church, you say, what'd you learn today? I mean, that's a simple question, right? But that's something you could stack on every single week and build faith into your kids every single week. You're, you're taking it home with you habit.

0 (27m 40s):

Stack your faith. What what's amazing though is as we begin to habit, stack our faith, it really does change us. That's why God invented it. He created it so it could change us back. Back in verse 18, it says, fix these words of mind in your hearts and minds. Hearts and minds. That's how we're supposed to do it. When, when it's on your heart, something just you feeling you, you just have it in there. That's, that's what a habit does. It's, it's there in your heart. So it's not just like, well I guess I have to serve. No, I want to serve. My heart has been changed. I've been transformed to, to wanna love people and to serve people. It's not just like I have to spend time with God in the morning cuz it's my boring habit of prayer.

0 (28m 23s):

It's like I can't wait to do it. The more and more you develop a habit like that, it become begins to change your heart and your mind. You're gonna think differently. You're gonna feel differently and therefore you're gonna act differently. That's the goal of habits. What's interesting in this passage, you remember, we, we read, it's like fix these words on on your hands, put it on your forehead. Okay? This isn't literal. And no, and I have to say this because so many people take it literally like you've gotta get the Bible verse. No, no, this was a thing. And I point this out because in Jesus' day people only took it literally. They had these little boxes they would build and write scripture on it and put it in the boxes.

0 (29m 7s):

They were called phylacteries these boxes of scripture. You can't put a Bible verse on your forehead. So they had to like make these tassels and they would have tassels on their garments because they would wanna do it. And it says on your homes too. And they'd put these glass boxes or metal boxes with little pieces of scripture written in it and they'd put it on every single doorpost because they wanted to literally fulfill what the law says. Jesus got mad about that because those people were the most arrogant, mean religious jerks on the planet. So, so interesting. In Matthew 23, Jesus talks about this. He's like, it's not supposed to be just literal.

0 (29m 47s):

He says, everything they do talking about these religious people is done for people to see. They make their pH factories wide. They want everybody to see that they have their Bible verses on their wrists, right on their hands. It was never about the external, it was about making it internal. We don't have prayer habits and scripture eating habits and memorizing scripture in order to impress other people. We do it so God's word will be impressed in our hearts and minds. It's to transform us from the inside out and make us into the people. God has called us to be more like Jesus, more like who you wish you could be. But it takes those daily habits, habit, stacking your faith.

0 (30m 29s):

So it changes us. And what I love about this passage is that it not only changes us, it changes our destiny and the destiny of generations to come. Simple habits done regularly. Did you notice in verse 21, the last verse in our passage, the reason why we do these daily habits, habits stack your faith into your regular life. Why? So that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land. The Lord swore to give your ancestors as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth. How many days are the heavens above the earth every day forever. God is saying, if you bring God's word, you bring faith into your everyday life and into the life of your family and you have these habits that keep going and building and getting stronger, it will impact you and your children and descendants, generations to come that you won't even know your name.

0 (31m 22s):

It could completely change the future. A few weeks ago I met with someone in our church, Brian Shoemaker, and he was telling me about kind of his fave background. And what I loved was, he's like, yeah, it was a major deal. When my grandpa stopped having his store open on Sundays, I was like, tell me more about this. He grew up in, in Missouri and his great-grandfather and grandfather had been farmers, but they decided to buy an auto parts store in town and open it up and they have to work hard. They were farmers. So they're working seven days a week all the time. And he said it was his grandma taking the kids, his his parents and and his aunts and uncles to church every week.

0 (32m 3s):

Just the grandma. And if you know anything that you know statistically if, if the dad goes to church, I don't know if you guys knew this, 87% of kids will become followers of Jesus for a lifetime. 87%. It's almost reverse if it's just the mom, it's 17%. Okay? So for in his family it was just grandma that was taking the kids to church Grandpa and great grandpapa ran the store every Sunday, but then a revival came to town. And in 1955, great grandpa, grandpa accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior. And they decided we need to follow Jesus. And they made a decision. And it seems just like a simple decision that we're gonna shut down the store on Sundays so that we can go to church and worship with our families.

0 (32m 45s):

And that's a big deal. Like, oh my gosh, a seventh of our revenue could be lost, right? That's a huge deal. But they made that decision and it what happened? It became a habit. So every single week from then on, the kids and the grandkids were with grandpa and great grandpa in church. And Brian said it transformed our entire family for generations that he traces even his faith back to that decision to make a small spiritual habit to worship weekly. That's huge. That's huge. Small habits can change your destiny and the destiny of your kids, your grandkids, even your great grandkids who won't remember you.

0 (33m 28s):

Your decisions to make a little impact through a habit can change your destiny. And that's why we're talking about this here. I hope that the habits you develop in these 21 days of prayer and in 2023 can impact your life. Make 2023 better. That'd be great. We all want a better 2023 than 2022, right? We want it better. But this is not just for 2023, this is for long. As long as the heavens are above the earth, if you make small habits of faith could impact your destiny. So if you're here in person, you have one of these cards, if you're online, you can fill, follow the link to the resources and, and if you flip this card over is a simple little equation that could help you add one faith habit to your life.

0 (34m 18s):

So we wanna do one faith habit and, and it's simple. I want you to write this down because if you write it down, it's more likely to happen. And what I want you to do, and this is just a simple equation. So after blank, that's the current habit you already have. You're already doing something in your life, your alarm already goes off, we already sit down for dinner, it's something you're already doing. So write that first and after that thing I will blank. And that's the new habit that you're trying to develop. Bringing faith, spirituality. If you're not a Christian, just something meaningful into your life, add that in a second blank. And then the third thing, we haven't talked about it much today, but is the reward. What's something that you want to do? Okay, maybe it is watch that Netflix show or, or it is check Instagram, okay?

0 (35m 0s):

You get the dopamine rush from that, okay? You, you're gonna wait to do that until you have done the thing that you want to do. Do you guys get this? So I want you to take a minute right now and write that down. I'm gonna give you a minute to do that and Melissa's gonna come up and share a little bit. Hey

2 (35m 37s):

Everybody, I just wanted to tell a little of my story that has to do with a two minute habit. When I was a little girl, I was two years old, my mom decided to make a habit of, of praying with me every night. And she committed to that and she habit stacked it into our bedtime routine. And so every night she would come in and we would just say a quick little prayer together. And that habit has blessed my life so much in so many ways.

2 (36m 19s):

And you know, because we had done that from the time I was two years old, when I got to the kind of difficult middle school years and the difficult things that happened as a teenager, I was used to her coming into my room every night and praying and I could, I felt so comfortable just sharing things that were hard, that I needed prayer for. And you know, that simple habit that she established when I was so little taught me so many things about faith and about how to trust God and just to rely on him in, in the hard things and the good things.

2 (37m 1s):

And you know, even now as an adult, we still pray together a about lots of things. And it has just been such a blessing to have that in my life. And it all started with a two minute habit that was stacked into our bedtime routine. And now I'm starting to do that with my kids too. And so the habits that you're writing down today, not only can bless your life, but your kids, your future kids, your grandkids. So I just wanna encourage you to commit to that habit of faith, whatever you're writing down.

0 (37m 47s):

Thank you Melissa. Can we give her a hand? Thank you. And Luann is here today, so thank you Luann. Thank you for praying with Melissa every night. So yeah, what's your one habit that you're writing down today? What's the one habit of faith that you want to commit to, to stack it into your normal routine, into your normal life? Because that two minutes can change your destiny, change your destiny. And I want to tell you this, some of you here today, maybe you've been kind of circling around faith, maybe you know that there's something deeper, something more important, and maybe you need to make the decision to make Jesus your Lord and Savior. It's a decision, but let me tell you, it will impact all of your habits. We'll change so much.

0 (38m 27s):

And I want you to know that Jesus came to this earth to love you, to serve you, and then to die on your behalf cuz you will mess up, you will do bad things. You have some bad habits that you need to come back next week to learn how to break. And yet still Jesus loves you and he's still died on the cross to forgive you of your sins and give you a better future and an eternity with him. And that's available when you receive his gift of his death on the cross. So I want to give everybody the opportunity to, to say that simple prayer right now. If you're already a follower of Jesus, repeat this prayer after me to give courage to somebody who needs to pray it for the first time. Please bow your heads, close your eyes and repeat after me.

0 (39m 9s):

Dear God, I'm a sinner. I need a savior. Save me. Forgive me in faith, I declare Jesus' Lord, give me the gift of eternal life. Fill me with your spirit. Help me to follow you and develop good habits and change my destiny. If your eyes are closed right now, but you made that decision today, the most important decision you could ever make, we wanna celebrate with you. So on the count of three, put your hand high in the air, 1, 2, 3, put

your hand in the air.

0 (39m 51s):

Praise God. We're celebrating with you. Can we celebrate those who made that amazing decision? Praise God. We love you. I see you here today. What a great decision God is working in your life. Now I want to turn it over to Melissa because if you're here today and maybe you're making a habit of faith and you're like, I'm gonna do it, I'm committing to you. We want to help you and Melissa's gonna pray for you. So if you're making a decision to make a habit of faith today, put your hand into the air right now. Put your hand into the air. If you're making that decision of faith today, and Melissa's gonna say a special prayer blessing for you guys.

2 (40m 25s):

Lord God, thank you so much for these ones that are making these commitments. God, I just pray that you would bless their efforts so much that you would just give them fortitude and strength and tenacity, God, that you would just let these habits that they're establishing today impact their life, impact their kids' life and generations succumb God, that you would just let them see the fruit of these habits in their life. God, I just pray a special blessing on them that you would pour out your favor on them, that you would let the people around them see the ways that they're being changed God because of these habits of faith.

2 (41m 11s):

Thank you God, we, we know that you have blessing in store for this. We thank you so much for all that you do for us, all the ways that you help us and all the good things that you bring into our life. Thank you so much. Jesus name. Amen.