

STUDY 25 – SHHHH! NO COMPLAINING

PART 2D – HOW TO CHANGE

This morning I want to challenge you with a question. I have been teaching on developing godly habits for over six months, and my question is this – “*Has anyone actually made an effort to develop some needed godly habits into your life?*” From my perspective, if you do not take these studies seriously, then what we do here on Sunday morning is fairly meaningless at best. Here is how I see it.

WE TEACH TRUTH SO THAT WE CAN BECOME TRUTH BEARERS.

Now, I want to give you two Scriptures to at least help support my concerns. The first is [John 12:36](#).

Jn 12:36 (NKJV) While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

We MUST “**become**” who God wants us to be. Who we are positionally we need to become practically. In fact, the words “**may become**” that John uses clearly represents a process. It is this “**becoming**” aspect of the Christian life that we are addressing. The words “**may become**” are in the subjunctive mood and the middle voice. The subjunctive mood is the mood of possibility, and the middle voice means that it is something that you “**yourself**” have to do. You can translate it this way - “**that you yourself may hopefully become sons of light**”. There is no guarantee that because you “**have the light**” and “**believe in the light** (or truth)” that you are actually incorporating that truth into your life. The second verse to look at is [Hebrews 5:11](#),

Heb 5:11 (NKJV) of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since (or because) you have become dull of hearing.

The words “**have become dull**” are in the indicative mood and the perfect tense. The indicative mood is the mood of fact, so what that means is that it is a fact that these people “**had become dull of hearing**”. I.e., they had heard the truth, but they had no motivation to implement what they knew into their life. The perfect tense deals with the results of a previous action. So, the author’s use of the words “**you have become**” implies something that has happened over an extended period of time. I.e., they kept hearing the truth, but it never meant anything to them. They never applied it to their life Here is what we know.

The more you IGNORE the Word of God, the LESS DESIRE you have for it.

Trust me, but it is not a difficult thing to lose your spiritual focus. The phrase “**dull of hearing**” is related to being distracted, to not paying attention, to not listening, to being overly preoccupied with less important things. The sad part is that without an intentional spiritual focus, you can never impact other people in a meaningful spiritual way. It simply will not happen. Think of it this way.

Without a hunger for the things of God, we will never have a spiritual influence on other people.

I can teach and teach, but if you are spiritually negligent to apply what is being taught, the inevitable result is that you may eventually just become “**dull of hearing**”. What we do here will become meaningless to you. Please appreciate that the truth and the application of that truth are very simple and not difficult to understand. I have said it before, but [Christians](#) who have become “**dull of hearing**” are much more difficult to reach than lost people. So, I want to make a bold statement based on these two verses.

YOU MUST DECIDE THE KIND OF PERSON THAT GOD WANTS YOU TO BECOME.

In fact, this may be the most important decision that you ever make, and it is really at the heart of this entire series on “Embracing Change”. I.e., is the will of God important to me? [1 John 2:17](#) says,

1Jn 2:17 (NKJV) And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

So, one of the major questions for me personally in teaching this series is “*Why do we even need to develop godly habits?*” Well, it is because God wants us to always be changing, to always be growing, and to always be conforming our life more and more to the image of Christ. The biblical word that describes this process is “**sanctification**” and it always refers to an **ongoing process**. I.e., it is critical to have a method, an approach, a practice, a system to achieve what you know God wants you to achieve. Spiritual growth does not “*just happen*”. Sanctification NEVER operates in a vacuum. It has to be stimulated, encouraged, kindled, aroused, inspired, motivated, increased, intensified. If you ignore and fail to understand that reality, then your default position will always be to do nothing, to ignore your spiritual growth, and to be satisfied with mediocrity and indifference. In [Revelation 3](#), Jesus called it being “**lukewarm**”. So, here is what you must have in your life.

YOU MUST HAVE A WAY TO DEVELOP AND APPLY GOD’S TRUTH INTO YOUR LIFE.

Here is what happens. Someone sets a spiritual goal. Now, goals are great and very necessary to be successful because they **CREATE DIRECTION** for your life. However, goals alone will not get you to where you want to be. You still need a system, a process, or a specific approach if you are ever going to make any spiritual progress. **You cannot make any spiritual progress in your life unless you have some method or process that helps you achieve your goals.** Think about a football coach. His goal is to win a championship, but goals do not win championships. A great coach has to develop a process that includes recruiting quality players, working with assistant coaches, having great practices, teaching players the fundamentals of football, getting his players in the weight room, and watching films of the opposing teams he will be facing. So, having a goal is great, but if you do not have the right process in place to support that goal, just having the right goal will not win championships.¹ Here is what you do.

YOU DEVELOP A PLAN, THEN YOU FIGURE OUT HOW TO APPLY THAT PLAN TO YOUR LIFE.

If you were starting a new business, the best thing you could do would be to develop a business plan, then work that plan. It is no different spiritually. You **MUST** develop a process, a means, a way of growing spiritually, or you will never grow. It is a very intentional effort on your part. If you have no plan to grow spiritually, then rest assured that you will never grow spiritually. Unfortunately, many Christians have no plan whatsoever as to what it will take for them to grow spiritually. However, a major part of this intentional process is **YOU** developing godly habits in your life. A habit is a **simple, easy routine** that is performed so regularly that it eventually becomes something that is automatic and unconscious. When I am driving and come to a stop sign at an intersection, I always look both ways before driving forward, but what I do is almost unconscious on my part. It is just a habit. In the same

¹ Clear, 23.

way, a godly habit is simply the means through which you become what God wants you to become. You do godly things over and over until they just become automatic. Here is what is important to understand.

YOU CHANGE WHAT YOU ARE BECOMING BY CHANGING WHAT YOU ARE DOING.²

Just assume that you are becoming an alcoholic, then it is critical to change what you are doing – right? If you keep drinking heavily, eventually, not next week or next year, but sooner than later you will become an alcoholic. If you are driving somewhere and realize that you are headed in the wrong direction, you just turn around and start going in the right direction – right? So, if you want to change, then you have to make changes. If you want to be a writer, then you have to write. If you want to be a runner, then you have to run. If you want to become godly, then you have to do godly things. You have to develop godly habits. Building godly habits today helps you to become what God wants you to be tomorrow. Here is what is important to understand about habits.

Every godly habit you develop helps you become the kind of person that you want to become.³

Your godly habits actually help create your spiritual identity. Let us say that you claim to be a godly person, but you do not have any godly habits. You have no self-control, you treat people with disdain, you are extremely impatient, you mistreat your family, you disrespect authority, you are terrible with your finances, and you drive like an idiot. At that point, it does not matter one iota if you tell everyone that you are a godly person. Why? It is because your life tells everyone differently. **No one is going to think that you are a godly person if you live like an ungodly person.** Someone’s life and all of their bad habits simply becomes who they are. Stated another way,

Eventually we all become our habits.⁴

Now, I want to change gears for just a few moments. This is a Bible study- right? We are in a Baptist church and we study the Bible in a Baptist church, so I want to make sure that I have a biblical foundation for what I am teaching. Everything this series is addressing is why it is so extremely important to understand the critical importance of **imperative mood verbs** in the New Testament. The Scriptures constantly provide imperative mood verbs to identify the areas in which God wants us to grow spiritually. Imperative mood verbs are God’s way of encouraging the believer to become all that God wants them to become. However, and this is so important, **rarely do the Scriptures identify a specific process of how to integrate God’s commands into your life.** Think of it this way.

Scripture is very clear on WHAT to achieve, but not necessarily on HOW to achieve.

Let me give you two obvious examples of this. The first is [Ephesians 5:25](#) which says,

Eph 5:25 (NKJV) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

This is an amazing verse about husbands loving their wives, but it simply does not provide any practical information on how to actually apply this command in the husband’s daily life. It tells us to love our wives like Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, but it does not tell us HOW He did that.

² Clear, 38.

³ Clear, 38.

⁴ Clear, 41.

So, we have the command, but **we still have to figure out how to work out all of the details.** That is the process that we are talking about. Every marriage is different, every wife is different, every husband is different, every family is different, so in the wisdom and grace of God, He gives us the responsibility to develop exactly HOW to work this out in our personal life. I have worked really hard at this in my own marriage. What makes my wife happy? How can I always be helping my wife? How can I show her how much I love her? How can I know when I am failing? This is the intentional process that it takes to apply **Ephesians 5:25** to my life. There are no shortcuts to this process or to a great marriage. Obviously, what works for me may not work for you, but it probably would. This is so stimulating to me because I know that God is not trying to make me a Christian robot – “*Do this, do that, don’t do this, don’t do that*”. His ultimate desire is for me to grow in His wisdom and in His grace, and then use all of that to become what He wants me to become.

My second example is **Philippians 2:14** which says,

Php 2:14 (NKJV) Do all things without complaining and disputing,

Once again, this verse tells us what to do – do not grumble and argue or be a faultfinder. However, clearly it **DOES NOT** tell us how to actually apply this verse to our life. The reason I have included this verse is because it has become the next godly habit that I am specifically developing and concentrating on in my life. I am currently figuring out how I can actually implement this into my life – not complaining, not contending, not arguing, not murmuring, not finding fault, and not over reacting to uncomfortable moments in my life. To do this, I need a process that helps me to know that I am actually accomplishing this in my life. I need a real way of knowing that I am or am not achieving this goal and what I have to do to actually stop complaining about things or people or circumstances. I am literally developing a godly habit to replace a bad habit. This is about as much fun as I can have. I am actually tracking myself to see if I can make it one entire day, then two days in a row, then one entire week, and hopefully one entire month without ever complaining. I can hardly wait to start my day and keep thinking and figuring out how to apply this verse to my life. I can assure you that I have NOT yet arrived. Why? It is because it takes time to build a good habit and time to break a bad habit. I believe that the actual habit that God wants me to develop is to replace any complaining or murmuring I may have with simply “**Rejoicing in the Lord always**”. **Philippians 4:4** is my target. It says,

Php 4:4 (NKJV) REJOICE in the Lord ALWAYS. Again I will say, rejoice!

When someone or something frustrates me, I want to find something “**in the Lord**” to rejoice about. I want to **REVERSE** what I am feeling or what is troubling me, so I need something that helps me and reminds me to just begin rejoicing in the good things that God is doing in my life. I want this to become my normal, constant habit. This is how you begin developing godly habits in your life. Figure out what needs to change in your life, then develop a good habit that will eventually replace your bad habit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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