



Find a Rhythm that Upgrades Today!

Is Your Daily Routine Making You a Better You?

Several years ago I went to see my dentist and it was an agonizing experience. She did a thorough cleaning and if that means leaving you feeling like you've been stabbed a thousand times by a by Jack the Ripper, then she did a great job. I noticed both my hands were clenched the entire time, my shoulders were sore because of how tensed they were, and I could not smile for several hours. My gums bled profusely the entire time and I had to keep rinsing out my mouth to keep from gagging. At the end of torture session, my dentist told me I needed to floss. I agreed. Something needed to be done to fix my swollen and infected gums. I bought some floss and for about three days I was a flossing champ. Soon the flossing was a distant memory. The next dental visit was just as bad...a bloody massacre of my mouth. For several years, this routine continued. Pain and suffering, a call by my dentist to floss. After perhaps five years of this agony, I finally gave in and started flossing each day. I was proud of my new lifestyle and hoped my upcoming dental visit would be better. It was...by a bit. Still plenty of bleeding and torment. My dentist ripped into my gums with her pointy little weapon with gusto trying her best to salvage my teeth. This time as we finished, my dentist told me I needed to get a water pick and floss too. This seemed too much. It was like asking me to train for the Green Berets or run a marathon in my overweight and out of shape condition. I did though buy the water pic, started flossing again and enjoyed the look of the water pic in the bathroom. Next visit to the dentist. Lots of pain and bleeding and same little sermon about losing my teeth if I did not start a new habit of flossing and using the water pic. Finally I repented and changed my ways. Each evening I flossed; every morning used the water pic. After a year of this, I returned to the site of so much torment and low and behold, no bleeding, not much pain, and a great report from my dentist that my gums looked wonderful. Some habits make your life better, others worse.

I love the way Genesis one reads. Morning and evening the first day. Morning and evening the second day. Again and again this rhythm of the creation days is emphasized. Each day different but the rhythm always the same. You also follow a rhythm of days. Perhaps you always brush your teeth, morning and night. Take some vitamins, comb your hair, check the internet, go on social media, eat at certain times, take a nap, go to work, talk to your family members, exercise. There are habits that are good for us like walking, flossing or getting proper sleep. Others can be good or bad depending on how we approach them like watching TV, playing video games or going on social media. Of course there are destructive habits like smoking, drug usage or overeating. The prophet Isaiah has this to say about drinking, **Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine.** (Isaiah 5:11 NIV) Some habits do bring woe and others are great for us and enhance our lives. We all have a rhythm of habits, even Jesus. Let's look at a few of His.

I'm sure He had all the normal habits that are nearly universal. He was fully human and did perfectly human things...only never sinning in His habits. Here is one habit of Jesus. **Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.** (Mark 10:1 NIV) Jesus had the habit of when groups of people came around Him, teaching them. He saw each gathering of people as an opportunity to bring all of them to God. Crowds were not an irritation nor a thrill for Jesus, they were a divine moment to show all there how to live. Another habit of Jesus is described by Luke the physician. **He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and**

on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. (Luke 4:16 NIV) He went to the synagogue every Sabbath. Today, among Christians, we would call it “going to church”. Imagine that! Even Jesus was not too spiritually mature to worship with God’s people and mingle with them as they sought the Lord together. For all their flaws, hypocrisy and “nerdiness”, people meeting together and seeking out God as the church are better off than if they just live their lives without the church to support them, empower them and encourage them each week.

There are a couple other habits Jesus had that Luke and the Apostle John note. They fit together like a matched pair. **But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.** (Luke 5:16 NIV) **Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples.** (John 18:2 NIV) Jesus made it a habit of regularly going off to private spots to either meet with the Father or to be with His disciples. He was not just getting away from everyone and chilling. Jesus had to clear out all distractions on a regular basis and zero in on God the Father and at other times that faithful band of twelve that He was banking on to bring the good news of salvation to the world. Jesus knew that He needed time to lock in on God, to have His total attention on Him. The same was true for the Disciples. They needed to have everything else pushed aside so they could have just Jesus on their minds, get recharged and clear on what sort of life they had with Him. Jesus knew unequivocally that when He met with the Father, the Father was there and He needed Him, needed His guidance, His empowerment and love. The Disciples, when they met with Jesus, saw it the same way. They needed everything Jesus had to offer them in those private moments, and they made themselves available.

See if these three habits would benefit you. Habits are simply a rhythm of the day, the ebb and flow of how it goes for you. Carve out time to be alone with God. Grab your Bible, read from it and let it sink into you. Pray. Take some time to let God speak into your heart and tell Him what you think and what you need. Pause long enough for your God time to percolate. Treat it like a warm cup of coffee, hot chocolate or a cup of tea. Enjoy your opportunity to be with the Lord.

Second habit. Each day find some way to encourage God’s people. There are two sides to encouragement. The first is encouragement to good and right. **But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.** (Hebrews 3:13 NIV) It is hard sometimes to keep your life right. We all need support in this. You do and so do I. Find some way to help those about you do the right thing, be kind, honest and full of love. The second type of encouragement is the habit of reminding others of what a great salvation they have in Christ and to trust God to put things together for them. **Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.** (1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIV) You will need to be around others to do this but maybe a Facebook post or an email will be just what the doctor ordered. The world is filled with those who could use your encouragement, your support and it will make you a happier person yourself if you are offering it.

The third habit is to make Church your priority. It is not just for the “holier than thou” or the religious. It is what Jesus did because He knew it was best for Him and a good life to develop. Over the years, I’ve heard it hundreds of times. Someone who hadn’t been to a church service in years finally make it and comments, “I am so glad I came, that was great.” We underestimate the supernatural power of God working in us when we are with other Christians who also have their minds on Him. Many make the statement, “Sunday is fun day” and what they mean by that is they use Sunday to go to the beach, drink with friends or lay in bed.” They try to use “funday” fix the troubles of life by winding down, by relaxing, but it usually has not lasting effect because God and His people are not a part of it. Fun day is great until the cracks begin to show up in the person’s life, the family’s life, the emotional and psychological health of those who have made fun day their habit. Whether they ever make the logical jump to needing more God rather than less to have a great life is not always the case. Sunday is God’s day with His people. It is the time you get recharged and rebalanced with the Lord of Heaven and earth, making everything right with you so that your fun is more alive and your joy and peace a firm foundation no matter what comes your way the rest of the week.