



reflecting Jesus

BETA

I am my habits **20**



did you know...

who I become depends on what I do

- if I habitually do good things, I am good
- if I habitually gossip, I am a gossip
- if I habitually care for others, I am compassionate
- so I cannot claim to be a certain type of person if my actions do not match!



I can become by doing

- if I want to become kind, I have to habitually do kind actions for others
- if I want to become fit, I have to habitually exercise
- if I want to become loving, I have to habitually do loving actions for

if I want to do well, I have to practice doing well

- doing things well does not happen by accident. We all have to practice
- as a violinist becomes excellent by practising the violin
- as an artist becomes excellent by practising painting
- so as a Christian I become like Jesus by practising to become like Him



**but I cannot do anything that God desires,
unless His power is working in me**

**what do all these pictures
have in common?**



the facts of his story

In the following text, Peter tells us about the qualities of God that God wants to grow within us. Before going any further, read 2 Peter 1:5-7 in your Bible.

2 Peter 1:5-7	Explanation
For this very reason, make every effort to add to your	Effort is required to work in partnership with the Holy Spirit to grow in God's character
1. faith goodness	Goodness: moral excellence, like God, in our character
2. and to goodness, knowledge	Knowledge: of God and spiritual things
3. and to knowledge, self-control	Self-control: is to live by God's principles when our feelings want to do something else
4. and to self-control, perseverance	Perseverance: keeping going—when it is difficult or there is opposition
5. and to perseverance, godliness	Godliness: reverence to God
6. and to godliness, brotherly kindness	Kindness: caring for others people's needs
7. and to brotherly kindness, love	Love: wanting, and working, for the very best for others

We don't become like this overnight. Growing in the character of God happens over time. How successful we are depends not just on God, but as Peter says, on our effort also. Therefore, our habits, as well as our prayers, determine how successfully we reflect Jesus.



thinking it through

A habit is something we do so regularly that it eventually becomes automatic. So to make a new habit, we have to choose to do something differently than we did before. Often this isn't easy because our lives are full of other habits that get in the way. Now look through the characteristics in 2 Peter 1:5-7 that he wants you to reflect. Pause to pray for the direction of the Holy Spirit, and then think about habits you could develop to grow in these areas. You may just want to take 1-3 areas to begin with.

Goodness _____

Knowledge _____

Self-control _____

Perseverance _____

Godliness _____

Kindness _____

Love _____



habits for reflecting the will of Jesus ~ WWJD?

a famous story

There is a great story by Charles Sheldon called *In His Steps*. It is about a pastor who challenged his congregation to ask one question before every decision they made. The question was, "If Jesus was in my place now, what would Jesus do?" The story describes the great changes that God made in the people's lives when they began to take this question seriously.

By asking the question, "What would Jesus do?" (WWJD?) we open the door for the Holy Spirit to come in and guide us. The more we remember to ask it, the more opportunities God has to show us how to live like Jesus.

using your journal...

You can use your Journal to write about the decisions you need to make. Write about the answers you get when you ask the Holy Spirit, "If Jesus was in my situation now, what would Jesus do?" You can also write about what happened when you forgot to pray this, and the difference praying might have made!

example

June 13. I have a friend who really hurt me recently and I really don't want to have to talk to her ever again because it hurts to think about what she said behind my back. Yesterday I asked God, "What would Jesus do in my situation?"

Today I remembered what Jesus said in Matthew,

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who

persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (Matthew 5:43-45)

I think I am going to start praying for her from now on.

Lord, sorry for being hard towards her. Help me to find a way to show her kindness as you have shown to me. Amen.

Important!

Remember: the more we live like Jesus, the better we can answer the question, "What would Jesus do?"

In other words, Jesus spent much of his time praying and reading the scriptures. He was also completely devoted to following the will of his Father in Heaven. So when he had a decision to make, he was in such close contact with God, God could show him just what he needed to do.

In the same way, the more time you spend with God, the easier it will be for you to know the answer to this important question at the times you need answers from Heaven.

Character does not come by chance. It is not determined by one outburst of temper, one step in the wrong direction. It is the repetition of the act that causes it to become habit, and molds the character either for good or for evil. Right characters can be formed only by persevering, untiring effort, by improving every entrusted talent and capability to the glory of God.

Child Guidance, 164



putting the pieces together

In the introduction, we began to see that “we are what we do”. If we want to be good, we have to learn to do good things regularly—by habit. Of course, we need to remember that only God’s power enables us to do good things.

In the “facts of his story” we looked at seven characteristics of Jesus that are to grow increasingly in our lives. These qualities do not mature in us just because we pray, but because we include effort also. But all growth begins with faith—believing that God will grow his character in us as we follow his instructions in the Bible, and the direction of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

In “thinking it through” you had a chance to think about these seven characteristics in your own life. The challenge for us all is to think, pray and plan about making who God is, part of us. Introducing new habits into our daily schedules can help these characteristics grow—because our habits shape who we are.

In “habits for reflecting the will of Jesus” we looked at the habit of asking for God’s help at every decision we have to make. We do this by asking, “In this situation, what would Jesus do?” This is a habit, but it is also a prayer for God to personally show us his will and give us his power to do the right thing.

The second half of a man’s life is made up of the habits he acquired during the first half.

Fyodor Dostoyevski (1821-1881)

Habits are first cobwebs, then cables.

A nail is driven out by another nail; habit is overcome by habit.

— Latin proverb



my time with God

1. This week, practice asking the question “what would Jesus do?” for each decision that you are faced with. At the end of each day, use your journal to record your experiences.
2. Go back to the section “thinking it through” and look again at the areas in which you want to develop new habits. Use your journal to map out a plan of what habits you want to develop, and record what happens as you work and pray through this.



pass it on!

Could you teach a friend about the importance of habits, and how to make new ones?



extra help

1. Character is destiny, by Russell Gough, Chapter 6.
2. Child Guidance, Chapter 18.