

Good Habits

As Christians we are to live in ways that cause other people to hunger for a relationship with Jesus Christ. When we do this, we are being effective believers who bear fruit in God's kingdom, and we enjoy our lives. We need to break our bad habits and develop good ones, so I want to focus on nine habits of highly effective Christians.

1. **Spend time with God.** Moments with God can include praying, studying the Bible and singing. Playing worship music while quietly listening for His voice is another way to experience His presence. David, who was "a man after [God's] own heart" (Acts 13:22, The Amplified Bible), prayed and communed with God every morning, noon and night. Fellowshiping with the Father should be a habit in our lives.
2. **Keep your conscience clear.** Nothing will keep us from enjoying life as much as guilt can. In Acts 24:16, Paul said, "Therefore I always exercise and discipline myself [mortifying my body, deadening my carnal affections, bodily appetites, and worldly desires, endeavoring in all respects] to have a clear (unshaken, blameless) conscience, void of offense toward God and toward men." Walking in the confidence of a clear conscience will keep us free and happy.
3. **Live by faith, one day at a time.** Faith is extremely practical and an invaluable habit to cultivate in our everyday lives. Faith is a positive view of God and His ability and willingness to help us; it always expects something good to happen (see Ps. 27:13-14). Faith believes God's Word is superior to human reasoning, no matter what. And when we live by this principle, we take life one day at a time, trusting God in everything.
4. **Do your best.** We must be motivated to do our very best in whatever we set out to accomplish. God is excellent. As His representatives, we should be too. Paul urges us to "learn to

... prize what is excellent and of real value" (Phil. 1:10). As we make excellence a way of life, we will sense God's joy and be good examples to the world. We must sow excellence in order to reap an excellent harvest.

5. **Handle criticism in a godly way.** Everyone who is truly successful in life has to deal with criticism. It can be painful, but a godly response is always a great testimony to those around us. Trust God with your reputation. Respond to criticism in a way that honors Him. The Bible says only a fool hates correction.
6. **Practice peace.** One quality that sets believers apart from the world is inner peace. In John 14:27, Jesus makes it clear that peace is available to us: "Peace I leave with you; My [own] peace I now give and bequeath to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you." When we make and keep peace, people know we belong to God.
7. **Finish what you start.** When we begin projects or activities and then leave them undone, we end up with a sense of failure and cause others to feel they cannot depend on us. The Bible teaches diligence, steadfastness and determination—all of which have to do with finishing what we start.
8. **Live by discernment.** Simply defined, "discernment" is spiritual understanding, and developing it takes practice. Discernment involves paying attention to our hearts. We have to know that when we do not feel right about something in our hearts we should not do it. As we grow in our understanding of God's Word and in our relationships with Him, we also grow in our ability to discern.
9. **Be generous.** Second Corinthians 9:7 tells us, "God loves (He takes pleasure in, prizes above other things, and is unwilling to abandon or to do without) a cheerful (joyous, 'prompt to do it') giver [whose heart is in his giving]." We should give whatever we can: help, encouragement, money, time, talents and forgiveness. And remember, giving makes the devil mad. But those who give cheerfully are happy, fulfilled and highly effective.

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