



# PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path"  
Psalm 119:104*

July 1, 2018

## Habits

by Frank Himmel

My dictionary says a habit is "a behavior pattern acquired by frequent repetition... an acquired mode of behavior that has become completely or nearly involuntary." A habit might be good, bad, or indifferent.

Most of us follow a routine for the day. We get up about the same time each day, then do, often in exactly the same sequence, what we must to get ready for the day: check our phones for news/messages, clean up, get dressed, eat breakfast, etc. Hopefully prayer is somewhere in the mix.

Driving to work is also habitual. We take the same route day after day. Driving itself perfectly illustrates how a thing done over and over gets to a point where it can be done without even thinking about it. It becomes "second nature" to us.

Good habits arise from self discipline and commitment. We make the choice to do what is right or good, then we abide by that decision whatever happens. It might be the choice to be honest, to be kind, or to be cheerful. It may be a commitment to refrain from buying what we cannot afford or to abstain from certain kinds of conduct. Job once said, "I have made

a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin?" (Job 31:1).

Following this procedure, in time you can develop such good habits that the decision of what to do in a given situation becomes second nature—you would not think of doing anything else.

Unfortunately, bad habits are easier to develop. They do not require the commitment good ones do. They

are frequently the result of laziness or selfishness. But make no mistake, we can be so accustomed to doing the wrong thing that it, too, becomes second nature. Profanity, outbursts of anger, lust, immodesty, and complaining are a few applications that come to mind. This is what Paul meant when he wrote, "We... were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest" (Ephesians 2:3). Centuries earlier

Jeremiah asked, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then you also can do good who are accustomed to doing evil" (Jeremiah 13:23).

One more thing. Jesus was in the habit of going to worship every week (Luke 4:16). Are you? I hope so. It is a good habit. Ironically, it is also an area in which we must be careful. The problem is, the sameness of worship activities week after week creates the possibility of somewhat thoughtless participation, what Isaiah 29:13 calls "tradition learned by rote." We must guard against that. "Let us draw near with a sincere heart..." (Hebrews 10:22). ■



Build  
Good  
Habits

# Bible Classes

by Frank Himmel

The book of Psalms opens by describing the blessed man: “But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night” (1:2).

In another place the Psalmist wrote, “O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day” (119:97). A few verses later he likened himself to a hungry animal: “I opened my mouth wide and panted, for I longed for Your commandments” (v. 131).

Luke noted the Bereans’ superior disposition: “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11).

Peter urged Christians, “Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord” (1 Peter 2:1-3).

Jesus Himself preached, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6).

Most congregations these days have Bible classes on Sundays and Wednesdays, with additional studies

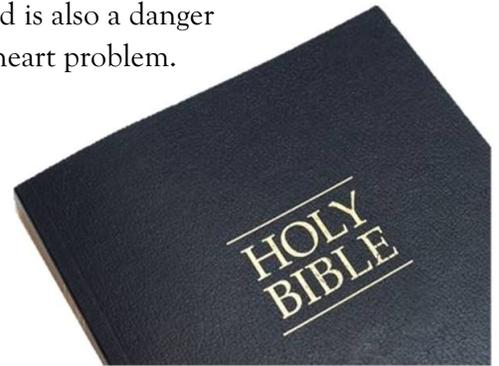
from time to time. Our classrooms are comfortably furnished and sufficiently equipped for sight and sound. Children’s classrooms are especially colorful and filled with visual learning aids.

The classes themselves are usually good quality. We follow a planned curriculum in order to present a balance of material. Thankfully, gone are the days when the class consisted of a “teacher” who went down the rows, had each student read a verse, then asked what it means, usually to be met with, “I think it means what is says” or some equivalent. While some depend too much on their “gift of gab,” many churches are blessed with teachers and/or students who study thoroughly and can supply insightful analysis.

Many churches have something else in Bible classes: sporadic attendance. Why is that?

The answer is in the verses cited earlier. Hungry people do not have to be begged or prodded to come eat, and when they come they do not have to be spoon-fed. As surely as lack of physical appetite is a sign of sickness or decline, lack of appetite for spiritual food is also a danger sign: there is a heart problem.

“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you...” (Colossians 3:16). ■



Service Leaders for the Week		
	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	Mark Clifton	John Baucom
SONG LEADER	Carlos Garcia	Ian Brown
OPENING PRAYER	Mike Zachry	
LORD’S SUPPER		
BREAD	Bruce Hollander	
CUP	Bruce Williams	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	John Baucom	
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Steven Turner
CLOSING PRAYER	Adam Gibson	Daven Daniel