

THE HABIT OF ALL



By Waldo Malan

I was reflecting on my own penchant to fall into all kinds of habits, and at first I thought I was unique in this, until I realized that all people are creatures of habit. This is not simply because we choose certain habits (although this is true), but really, just the way we were made. From birth to our death we are creatures of habit. When we first made our appearance on earth, we all got a slap, pinch or some other incentive from a doctor or nurse to take our first breath. And voilà, the habit of breathing is formed. After that we took on the habit of eating, sleeping, crying (later becoming a more intelligible communication), cleaning, and so forth. Throughout our lives we pile habit upon habit, not only to survive, but ultimately to make sense of this world we are in.

As we mature, the nature of our habits change, and they start having many, varied and far-reaching implications. Some habits are better than others, some are outright good for us, and yet others are totally destructive and evil to the core. This made me think about God, from whom, I believe, we all come. I believe God to be the Creator of all, and therefore, also the creator of me. In fact, it was Moses who recorded (by divine inspiration) the conversation in heaven where God decided to make people in His image and after His likeness. So, my reasoning says that if I know a little bit about God, I will also know a little bit about myself. Obviously, the more I get to know God, the more I get to know myself.

God is a God of habit. Many people in the past and present, have made the statement (after getting to know God), that He has always been, still is, and will forever be the same – He doesn't change. So what habits of God do I know about? Well, for one, He has the habit of being kind, good and loving. He has the habit of doing good. He has the habit of constantly seeking out my company. He has the habit of being just and fair. And He has the habit of displaying grace in His dealings with me.

People form habits, and as I've said, some are good and some are bad. The habit of eating is good since it keeps us alive, but at the same time we can form bad eating habits that will speed our death. Some stuff is outright bad for eating and will cause instantaneous death, preventing us from forming a habit with that! Many habits are destructive to our bodies, but then there are the habits that are destructive to our spirit and soul, and these effect the people around us, and ultimately our own future. It is for this reason that God encourages all people to follow His habits, and He even took the time to have His bestseller, *The Book Of Habits*, written for us. Habitual anger, resentment, taking of-fense and unforgiveness are a few habits that will kill our spirit, deaden our perception and destroy our passion. Habitual peace, joy, gentleness and love, on the other hand, will revive our spirit and have a positive outflow in our body.

It would make sense therefore, that every now and then we take stock of the habits we have surrounded ourselves with, especially those habits we have come to regard as friends. Are they really friends? Are they really good for us? Do we really benefit from having them around? Then, after taking stock, make the decision for some Spring cleaning where needed, and rid ourselves of those who turn out to be unfriendly, ungainly and ultimately unwanted.

Let us get into the habit of examining our habits and clear out decisively those that hamper our vision and passion. Let us cultivate new habits that will encourage our creativity, energize our vigor, and regenerate our passion for life! Someone once said that first we make our habits, and then our habits make us! Success or failure? Which do you want? The philosopher Aristotle remarked, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit." 📌

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