

The Journey to Biblical Manhood

Challenge Two: The Gospel

Session Three: 6 Habits to Grow Your Faith

Unedited Transcript

Brett Clemmer

Wow. Good morning. Well, I apologize for that terrible song. The sound in here is not concert hall quality, in case you hadn't figured that out. But it is great to be with you this morning.

We are in challenge two. We're in the third week of challenge two, in the sixth week overall of our Journey to Biblical Manhood. The journey is a set of 12 challenges that we're going through together. We're in The Gospel, building a firm foundation in the faith. In each challenge, as you guys know, we're setting out some faith and life objectives to sort of answer the question: Where are we going? What's the point of all this?

You've got cards on your table. Everybody grab one of those cards if you don't have it yet. Here are the Faith and Life Objectives for challenge two. *We're committed to building our faith on the rock, not on shifting sands. At the end of this leg of the journey, which is today is the end of this leg of the journey, I will understand the basics of Christian doctrine, such as the character of God, justification, sanctification, the church, the Bible, the person of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.* That's Pat was supposed to cover all two weeks ago. You got all those doctrines, right? Yeah, that was a start. Pat talked two weeks ago about the four contrasting views of the world. You guys remember that? I do. I wasn't even here and I remember it. It's Good Friday, guys. Come on.

The second objective is that *I will learn to trust God for my righteousness and security rather than my own strength.* We talked about the Five Types of Men and how the gospel is for everybody. It's not just for men who don't have it yet, but even once you become a follower of Christ, the gospel becomes even more important. The gospel is one of those things I think that the more we know, the more we realize that we don't yet comprehend. That's what we want to get to the place where we trust God for our righteousness and not anything else.

Today, the faith and life objective that we cover today would be *I will have developed the habits of a learner and will continue to grow in my knowledge and love for God.*

Let me pray for us as we jump into this and then we're going to jump into talking about what are those spiritual habits that will grow our faith. Let's pray.

Well, Lord, we're gathered here this morning. We're honored to be with you this morning. We're honored to be in each other's presence. Lord, godly men need godly men so that we can grow closer to you and grow closer to each other, Lord, so that we can become the men that you want us to be. Father,

will you speak to us this morning through your scripture, through your teaching? Will you make it clear to us the kind of life that you want us to live as we pursue being your sons, resting our identity in who we are as your children, Lord, and putting our faith and our trusts in you for our security, learning the things that we need to learn so that we can follow you better and so that we can proclaim the gospel to a world that needs it desperately? In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

All right. There's always kind of a danger when you talk about spiritual habits. A lot of times we use the word spiritual what? Disciplines. The word spiritual disciplines. There's always a danger that you're just going to end up with a checklist of stuff to do. We're just going to end up with, "Check these boxes and you can be a better Christian." I want to tell you from the top here is that our job is not to engage in a set of tasks that make you a better man or to be more acceptable to God or a more spiritual person. That road leads to two destinations: either self-righteousness or self-condemnation. We're not going to either one of those places. Frankly, you don't have the power to save or condemn yourself. That's really God's power that's available to do that.

If that's not what we're talking about, if we're not talking about sort of a list of stuff to do, what are we talking about? I think if we look at 1 Timothy, let's go to 1 Timothy chapter 4 if you've got a Bible. Let's look at this passage of scripture. If you don't, it's up on the screen here. 1 Timothy chapter 4 verses 6 through 10. This is Paul's letter to Timothy. Timothy was a young pastor. Young, we think being probably in his late 30s or early 40s. For some of you, that's really young. I got time.

1 Timothy is a lot about sort of training Timothy on how to be the man in this church that he sent him to. In chapter 4 he says this, starting in verse 6, "If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you will follow. Have nothing to do with irreverent silly myths, rather train yourself for godliness." If you've got a pen and a Bible, I want to encourage you to underline or highlight that phrase. Train yourself for godliness. "For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is a value in every way as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance for to this end did we toil and strive because we have our hope set on the living God who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe."

If you go back and you look at your faith and life objectives, you can see, "I will learn to trust God for my righteousness and security rather than my own strength." Paul says in verse 10, "We have set our hope on the living God who is the Savior of all people, especially those who believe." We're not setting our hope on ourselves, Paul says. We're setting hope on the living God, which is what we talked about last week and we're talking about in this challenge to understand the gospel.

What we see here when we look at this passage, I think, we see the underlying purpose of spiritual disciplines, of spiritual habits. That purpose is godliness. This is godliness with a "little g". This is not becoming a God. This is godliness. This is becoming the man that God wants us to become, the man that God made us to be. That's the purpose of these spiritual habits.

Paul tells Timothy that being trained in the words of the faith and good doctrine are vital because they help us avoid irreverent and silly myths that are out there. In fact, being involved in irreverent and silly myths, in Paul's eyes, is actually the opposite of godliness. If you look around today in our culture, there is a lot of irreverent silly myth going on. You know, just the whole issue of fake news and people writing stuff to basically lie and try to get us to believe something, try to bring us down a road, is a silly myth. It's

irreverent. The way that a lot of people look at the gospel today or they look at the church today is often irreverent.

Paul says the opposite of that is godliness and godliness has value in every way because of what? It holds promise for the present life. In other words, godliness helps us live now the best way we can live. It also holds hope for the future life, for the life that's to come. There's this very real sense that I don't know that we always understand or comprehend. I struggle to comprehend it.

The things we do now, the way we live our life now, actually has some kind of an impact on what happens after we die, on the life that we will have after we die. You can see this when Jesus said, "Store up your treasures in heaven." Well, if you're going to store up treasures somewhere, there's sort of an implied ability to go enjoy them at that point. The way we live our lives now not only helps us today, but it helps us in the next life to come as well. That's a great mystery.

Paul makes this case. Developing spiritual habits are a fundamental way that we can train ourselves for godliness. Let's look at this outline. First, we're going to talk about "What is a habit?" We're talking about habits this morning, and I'm going to tell you a little bit why I'm using the word habit instead of the word discipline in a minute. Then we're going to talk about "Why habits are so powerful." Then finally we're going to talk about "6 habits to train a godly heart."

Let's look at this first point. What is a habit? The best way that I can help define what I mean by habits, frankly, are to tell you a couple of stories.

I've worked at Man in the Mirror for a little over 16 years. The whole entire time we have been in these podunk, rundown offices in Casselberry, Florida on 436...until three months ago. Last year, a lot of you guys know, the ministry was able to buy a building. A lot of you probably helped us put the down payment on that building. If you'd like to help us with the mortgage, that'd be great too. We bought that building last year. We spent the year renovating the building. The week before Christmas, we moved in.

For 16 years, I have pulled out of my driveway and I've taken about four turns and I'm at work. It's awesome. There's this light that I get to that I would take a right and about 90 seconds later, I know that I'm going to be pulling into the parking space in front of my building until three months ago. (Now I drive, my commute increased by 50%. Instead of taking me six minutes to get to work, now it takes me nine minutes to get to work. It's a tremendous imposition.) Now when I get to that light, I don't take a right anymore, I go straight. I go through about five more lights--because it's Orlando--and then I turn right and then I'm at my office.

How many times do you think at that light that now I go straight at I've taken a right in the last three months? Every other week. It's getting a little bit less often. At first it was like every week and then it was like three times in two weeks. Now it's like maybe I think I did it last week. I did it again. Why? Because I have a habit. Now, do I think about it? Do I think about making that turn? Obviously not, because if I thought about it, I wouldn't make the wrong turn. These habits, these are things we don't think about because we have habituated ourselves. That's why we use that word. We become accustomed to doing things.

Now let's think of a different story. Contrast it with this. When my daughter, who's about to graduate from college, was learning how to drive, it was a bit of a challenge at first. She wanted to know like a

mile ahead of time, "Am I going to have to change lanes? Should I put my blinker on now?" I'm like, "Well, you're going to have to change lanes in a mile. You're going 30. It's going to take you a couple minutes to get there." Why was she so concerned about when she had to change lanes? Because what I was thinking was, "Oh, when I get close to the place that I need to take the turn, I'll switch into the right lane and I'll take the turn." She's thinking about, "How fast am I going? Where's the dotted line on the left side of the car? Where's the solid line on the right side of the car? Look back at the speedometer. Am I pressing the accelerator too hard? Who's that guy coming up behind me in my rear view mirror? Oh, stop looking in the rear view mirror, there's cars in front of me." When you're beginning to learn how to drive, you are thinking about every little thing you do.

When my son was younger and he wanted to learn how to play baseball, he woke up one morning and said, "Dad, I want to play little league." I said, "That's great, son." We went out and got him a baseball glove and stood in the front yard and played fetch. You couldn't really call it catch at first. He went from ducking every time I threw the ball at him to sort of knocking the ball down to letting it hit his glove and fall out to hitting his glove and squeezing. That took about a week. A month later, when he was in little league, when somebody threw a ball at him, he just stuck his hand out and caught it and didn't even think about it. He had developed a set of habits that were around how you catch a baseball. Our lives are like this. We don't even think about doing these things. A habit's repeating something enough times that it becomes what – Aristotle actually coined this phrase – “second nature.” When things become second nature, you have repeated something enough times that it's just become a habit. Our lives run like this. This is why habits are so powerful.

Now, think about this. You know, you could go from a person who's thinking about: “Down is left turn signal, up is the right turn signal. The skinny pedal makes me go faster. The fat pedal makes me go slower. I got to stay between these two lines.” You could go from that all the way to 200 miles an hour with cars all around you. It's the same exact activity. Once you've practiced it enough, your skills improve and so a NASCAR driver or a Formula One driver who's in a car, in a cockpit, that can barely see anything, they're going 200 miles an hour like it's nothing because they developed the skillsets, the habits.

This is why habits are so powerful. Because our lives, frankly, are ruled by our habits. James K.A. Smith, I'm going to show you a couple books this morning, but this is a great book called *You Are What You Love*. James K.A. Smith. He goes by Jamie Smith. Jamie Smith wrote this book *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*. I would recommend that you get that if you want to go deeper into this.

In this book, Jamie quotes Timothy Wilson who says this. He says, "5% of what we do is conscious. Everything else is below the surface." 5% of what you do is conscious. Think about how true this is for you. When we say someone is quick-tempered, we don't mean that they decide to get angry all the time. We mean that they often get angry without thinking it through, that their anger is often even misplaced or unjust. This is a quick-tempered person. When you're in a movie and the dog dies or the kid and his dad reconcile or whatever else makes you get teary-eyed, you don't think about, "This is man coming back from war, sees his kid. Oh, I should be teary-eyed at this." No, you just habitually go, “Oh!” That strikes a certain part of you. When a beautiful woman walks by and catches your eye, if you look at every beautiful woman that walks by you and catches your eye and your eye lingers, you develop a habit for doing that. Now, when you wife goes, "What are you looking at?" You don't even know that you're looking at her because you developed a habit. You don't even think about it. It's that 95% that you never think about. It just happens.

This is why habits are so incredibly powerful because, frankly, habits rule our lives. We think that we're thinking beings. "I think," Shakespeare said, "therefore I am." But it's just not true. We have habits that we develop. If we're going to change our lives, Paul says, we have to train our hearts for godliness. Training our hearts is the way that we change our habits. We need to be intentional about our habits.

Jesus put it a different way in Luke 6:45. He said this. He said, "Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks." In other words, even though you're not thinking about it, what you say is an indicator of what's going on in your heart. How do we control these habits? Jamie Smith says, "Your loves are unconscious even though they are learned." How do we develop these patterns, instincts, habits in our lives that make us more like Christ? How can we train ourselves for godliness?

Let's talk about six habits to train a godly heart. A lot of times we talk about this set of intentional actions and we call them spiritual disciplines. There's some great books on spiritual disciplines. You might check out some guy named Pat Morley, wrote *A Man's Guide to Spiritual Disciplines*. We have that on the table over there. Another one of my favorite books is *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald Whitney. Very good. Another popular book is *A Celebration of Discipline*. There's lots of great resources out there. Frankly, I looked at a lot of them and this is kind of what I found. As I looked at these different books on spiritual disciplines, I found all this stuff that I was supposed to do: hearing the Word, reading the Bible, giving, solitude, fellowship, creation, fasting, taking rebuke, communion, baptism, meditation, memorization, evangelism... It's like, "Really? It's a lot of stuff. It's a lot of stuff to do."

What I want to do is I want to narrow it down because this is our big idea. *Intentional spiritual habits will train your heart to instinctive godliness*. That's what we want to become. We don't want to have to think every time we're supposed to do the right thing. We just want to do the right thing. We want godliness to be our second nature. We want the 95% that we don't ever think about to be the parts of our lives that honor God the most. This is our big idea. *Intentional spiritual habits will train your heart to instinctive godliness*.

Let's look at six habits. I'm going to take you quickly through six habits. Now, I'm going to take this a little bit differently than this. I don't want to give you a list of things to do. Instead, I want to give you six ways to do life, six ways to approach your life, that I think that if you approach your life with these six principles, you will instill in your life the habits that will help you train your heart to godliness. Let's talk about them.

First of all, one, *interact with God* as much as you can. How much do you actually interact with God? Do you talk to Him? Do you listen for Him? I mean, you know He's here right now, right? You know that if you've made the decision to follow Christ, the Holy Spirit actually lives inside of you? He's right there. You don't have to go find Him. He's frankly been waiting for you to speak up. We need to make it a habit to take time every day to intentionally interact with God.

Of course, at its base level, what do we call this? It's not a trick question. Prayer, right? We call this prayer. Prayer's more than just a few memorized phrases at dinnertime or some platitudes with your kids when they go to bed. Think about getting in the habit of putting every decision you have to make in front of God. "Lord, show me what you would have me do." Whenever you're about to make a decision, think, "Lord, show me what you would have me do," and then go make the decision. Over time, as you just begin to incorporate this into the way that you do things, you won't even think about it anymore. You'll have a decision to make, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" Then move forward.

At first you'll have to be intentional about it. You might even want to set alarms or reminders on your phone to pray during certain times of the day. You can download a prayer app. I have a prayer app on my phone that I keep a list of people on that I want to pray for that I can set reminders for that helps me go during different times of the day.

A lot of people find a prayer journal is incredibly helpful so you can write down the things that you want to pray for. I'll tell you what I do sometimes. I actually write down my prayers word for word. I don't know about you, but sometimes I pray something and then ten seconds later, I forgot what I just prayed. I literally forgot what I just said. I write my prayers down and then I can go back and read them and see how God has been faithful.

Interact with God as much as you can. Second, *Master the Bible*. The scriptures are the living Word of God. A godly man is striving to master it. This would encompass a lot of different activities, right? You start with hearing the Word preached in a Bible believing church. Paul says that all scripture is God breathed. Reading the Bible regularly as a habit will help you learn the flow and the language of God's words. If you don't know what to read, get a Bible reading plan from the internet, download it, or use something like *Equipping the Man in the Mirror Magazine* which has devotions in it and has a Bible reading plan at the bottom of each devotional. There's lots of ways to help you read the Bible.

Now, when you read a Bible, here's what I would suggest you do. Never read your Bible without a pen in your hand. As you're reading the Bible, I want to encourage you ... I know for some folks, this is a little hard to do. "The paper's thin. Apparently you're not supposed to write on it." No, it's thin because there's so many of them. You can write on it. You can jot notes in the margin about something that was meaningful. You can underline a verse. Then here's what happens. Once you fill it all up with your writing, you can go get another one. They print millions of them. Fill your Bible up with notes, with prayers, with realizations that God brings to you as you're reading it. It will develop the habit in your life of scripture coming to mind. It will become second nature. You will find yourself struggling in a situation and a scripture will pop in your mind.

I'm sitting with a friend of mine, Brian Doyle with *Iron Sharpens Iron*, yesterday morning and peppered throughout our conversation, as he's talking about the struggle that he's going through, he's very publicly going through it and sharing it, using it as a way to share the gospel, of his wife dealing with stage four cancer, and every two minutes, another scripture pops out of his mouth. He didn't have the Bible open in front of him. It's just second nature. He's developed a habit of mastering scripture. When he's trying to figure out how to deal with the struggles and difficulties of life, God's Word just comes to him. Second nature. He's got the habit.

Third, *Know yourself*. The second chapter of *The Man in the Mirror* is called *Leading an Unexamined Life*. Lamentations 3:40 says, "Let us test and examine our ways and return to the Lord." You know, we're often so busy with our lives that we don't take time to think about why we believe the things that we do, how we affect the people around us, what our actions might say about our priorities. Men need time for self-reflection.

Two great tools for this: journaling. Are you seeing a pattern here? Journaling, writing things down, and solitude. I want to encourage you; get in the habit of stopping your life on a regular basis, whether that's a daily quiet time for reflection or a monthly half day of planning or an annual hiking trip in the wilderness. Just get away from the worries and cares of the world and really take a look at your life. Ask people that you care about to give you feedback and then brace yourself, especially if it's your wife.

Really listen to what they have to say. Establish a willingness and a dedication to knowing who you are, particularly in relation to your identity as a son of the King. A man who doesn't understand himself will hurt other people. A man who doesn't understand himself will fail at his objectives. A man who doesn't understand himself will generally be miserable.

Fourth, *Engage in community*. We are not meant to be alone. Life is best when it's lived in community. We know this instinctively. You know, we join fraternities in college and Rotary Clubs as adults. We put on the jersey of our favorite team. We go to the games or we gather in groups to watch those games on TV. We proudly display our alma matter and gather at reunions.

A godly community is more than just shared affiliation. It's sharing our lives. I'm just going to say this bluntly, guys. You need a best friend who is a Christian. You need a guy who has the same values that you do who you will go through life with. Your identity in Christ is the most important thing about you. You should have a best friend who shares that with you. You can have other things in common. You're going to have hobbies or kids or mission or whatever, but you need to have another man who inspires and exhorts you to godliness.

In addition to a best friend, this has really been striking me lately, we need to build our lives around Christian community. We just do Christian community. We go to church on Sunday and then we leave. Maybe we're super spiritual and we also go to the small group on Monday night. Then once a quarter or twice a year, we go on a service project or a retreat, but that's not living in community. That's just doing stuff. Living in community means engaging your life. It might be a small group or a Sunday school class or a group of families that hang together, but you need to make it a habit, make it the natural thing that you do that you gather with a community of believers.

Fifth, *Practice generosity*. Help a coworker out who needs a ride to work. Help a neighbor clean up their yard. Pick a night a week to make dinner for your wife and clean up afterwards. If you're a terrible cook, bring dinner home and clean up afterwards. Give up a round of golf to go help somebody out. Become the guy that other people know – this person's willing to help people out. Be intentional about letting the person with a few items jump in front of you in the grocery store line. Take the parking space that's farther away. Put the cart back in the carousel so the poor teenager that's running around in 95 degree heat on black asphalt doesn't have to run all over the parking lot and find shopping carts. Maybe grab an extra one when you're putting it back.

Jesus said that we ought to be servants, right? Be generous with your time and be sacrificial. You know, look for ways to invest your money. Keep a few bucks in your dashboard. When you pull up to an off ramp and there's a guy standing there with a sign that says, "Will work for food," and every fiber of your being says, "If I give him a buck, he's just going to go buy beer." Who cares? It's not your responsibility what he uses it for. It's your responsibility to be generous. There's no verse in the Bible that says, "Be generous only if the person you're being generous to uses it appropriately." Hesitations? It's not in there. More importantly than that, guys, there are people watching us. If you practice generosity, your kids are going to see it. The people around you are going to see it. They're going to wonder, "Why is that guy so generous? Why does he do that?" Be generous with your time. If your church needs someone to teach fourth grade boys, jump in. I'll tell you what. There's a boy in that fourth grade boy Sunday school class that doesn't have a dad. Invest in that young man's life. Be generous with your time. Make generosity a habit.

A friend of mine once said to me, "My family loves you and we appreciate what you're doing for ministry. Here's what's going to happen." This is exactly what he said to me, "Here's what's going to happen. We're taking your family to Disney for three days. We're going to go to Disney for three days." He said, "If you pull out your wallet once in three days, I will be offended." We did the whole thing, man. We stayed in a resort. We ate at the parks. Yeah, everyone wants to know who it is, right? We had a guide one day walk us around and do the fast passes. It was awesome. What a generous heart.

Now, I mean, I know what he does for a living. I know he could afford it. I mean, think about the generosity of that. He could have taken that money and done an extra thing with his family. He did the thing with our families together, but if he hadn't taken my family on that, he could have taken his family to do another thing in addition to that. He chose not to do that. He chose to do that with our family. I was honored and I was humbled. You know what? I wasn't surprised because I knew him. I knew he had a generous heart. I knew it was a habit for him.

Finally, number six, *Put others first*. How do you look at yourself habitually? Do you think, "Man, I've got to be first. I've got to get out of here. I'm important." You know, once in a while I find myself in a situation in ministry, when I'm gathered around other ministry people and some of you have done this in business. You begin to do this calculation like, "I'm at this level in my company and this person's at this level in their company. I'm more important. Sitting around in discussion, people should pay attention to what I say more than ..." You ever done that? Trust me, if you're in ministry long enough, you see people do it all the time. We're not supposed to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. We need to be known as the people that put others first. When people know that about you, then they're going to ask questions.

Jesus said that we ought to be servants. As Pat likes to say, "The true test of a servant is whether he's willing to be treated like one." Put others first.

Here's six habits that you can use to develop a life, a heart, that's trained for godliness. Interact with God, Master the Bible, Know yourself, Engage in community, Practice generosity, Put others first. **Intentional spiritual habits will train your heart to instinctive godliness.** I'm going to pray for us and then we're going to break to the tables for about 20 minutes. About five of, I'm going to come back and we're going to go through a couple. We won't go through all of them. We're going to go through a couple of the questions together and see what you guys came up with. Let me pray for us and then we'll break to the tables.

Father, we want to live lives that reflect the truth of the gospel. Lord, if we have to think about that every time we do something, we're never going to get there. Lord, would you help us to build lives that instill these habits, that hit the 95% that's below the water line, that build godliness into our hearts so that it's just second nature? Lord, as we talk about this at our tables, would you give us an openness and a willingness to consider the parts of our lives that we need to address with you? Lord, would you give each of us a desire to connect with another man at our table, to help us as we seek to build these habits into our lives? In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Real quick. Yes. Real quick. If you are here for the very first time, could you just raise your hand so we could acknowledge you? Great. Over here. Let's give this guy a hand. I'd love to meet you. If you want come up here, we could spend a few moments together during this discussion time. Guys, break to the tables. I'll see you in about 20 minutes.

All right, guys. Let's gather back in. Hey, Scott. Thank you.

Y'all are trained. You know that, right? Labradors come when you whistle for them. Hey, I put these books up here. *A Man's Guide to Spiritual Disciplines*, *Man in the Mirror*, both have great stuff from Pat. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Donald Whitney, and then *You Are What You Love* by Jamie Smith.

Here's our big idea. **Intentional spiritual habits will train your heart to instinctive godliness.** That's what we're going for, instinctive godliness.

Let me ask: What does the passage today say are the benefits for training for godliness? What did you guys come up with at your table? What are the benefits of training for godliness?

Speaker 2: [inaudible 00:37:19]

Brett Clemmer: That wasn't a question.

Speaker 2: That's the second one.

Brett Clemmer: It was the second question. Look, you guys should have gotten past the first question because I said, "No politics." Right on the piece of paper, I said, "No politics." That was to help you get to the second question. Did anybody get ... All right. In the back. What are the benefits of training for godliness?

Speaker 2: It helps you to see the gray area in the darkness.

Brett Clemmer: Oh, that's good. Helps you to see the gray area. Anyone else? Benefits of training for godliness. Can you think of any other benefits that the scripture promises, that the Bible promises?

Speaker 2: Living well today and rewards for tomorrow.

Brett Clemmer: Yeah, living well today and then rewards for tomorrow and for the next life. This is going swimmingly. Let's look at the next one.

Who struggles with one of the habits that we talked about? Anybody struggle with one, any of the habits that we talked about? Any? Lying? Do any of you struggle with lying or is it just raising your hand that you struggle with? We all struggle with the habits, right? What's one that you struggle with in particular of the six that we talked about?

Speaker 2: Mastering the Bible.

Brett Clemmer: Mastering the Bible. Yeah. How many guys think that's kind of one that they're really struggling with? Yeah, me too. It's one thing to know a few verses but mastering the Bible so that when life hits you hard, you're ready with what God's Word says and how to deal with that. That's a different thing. What's another habit that you maybe struggle with?

Speaker 2: Journaling.

Brett Clemmer: Journaling. Yeah, journaling. I'll tell you what. My spiritual life correlates very well to how much I'm journaling, for me personally. When I will just discipline myself and take the time to journal, I just feel like my actions, my instincts are much more tuned in to what God has for me. When I'm not journaling, I'm not taking that time to do any kind of introspection so I don't know myself. My life goes a little sideways. A lot of times I'll note and I'll think, "Man, why am I struggling so much right now?" Not that journaling is next to godliness. That's not what I'm saying. Journaling is a tool that you can use to help you master the Bible, to help you know yourself better, to help you interact with God more. It's just a way to get you there. If that's helpful for you.

Any other habit you guys want to talk about that you struggle with? The last one, putting others first. Yeah, I think that's a big thing in our culture today. It's a "me first" culture. It's an everyone out for themselves culture. Rick?

Speaker 2: [inaudible 00:40:24]

Brett Clemmer: Oh, that's good. Yeah, he said knowing himself and being honest about it but also sometimes some of us have a tendency to be hard on ourselves. What do you have to remember? You have to remember your lineage. You have to remember you're a child of the King. You are a son of God. Jesus called the disciples, and by extension, us, He called them His friends and He called them His brothers. In fact, if you move forward in Scripture past the end of the gospels into Acts, the word "disciples" is actually kind of used less and less and the word "brothers" and "sisters" is used more and more. Why? Because we're a family. We're in the family of God. Good stuff.

Here's the big one. Here's where the rubber meets the road. What's one habit you're willing to commit to working on this week? Everybody got your habit in your head? What's one habit you're willing to work on this week? You ready? One ... You're going to say it on three, okay? One, two, three. Awesome. Somebody next to you heard you say that. Here's what I'm wanting you to do. On your paper, before you leave, I want to encourage you to have a battle buddy, somebody that you talk to once or twice in the week ahead that you will talk to about that habit.

Listen, I want to remind you guys there's nothing you can do to make God love you more than he already does. He's not evaluating you with a report card. He's not giving you a grade on Bible memorization or hours spent per week in prayer. I hate to tell you this but you already failed that test. Here's the good news. God doesn't grade your paper. He grades Jesus's paper and then He gives us all that grade. These habits are not about measuring up. They're about living it out. Interacting with God, mastering the Bible, knowing yourself, engaging a community, practicing generosity, and putting others first, these are about becoming more like Christ and training your heart for godliness. My challenge to you this week is to be purposeful, to be intentional so that it can become instinctive.

I love you guys. Have a great week.