

## Habits of Renewal

*Why don't many people experience lasting change, even when they want it badly?*



**READ:** Nehemiah 10:28-32, 35, 39

<sup>28</sup> Then the rest of the people—the priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, Temple servants, and all who had separated themselves from the pagan people of the land in order to obey the Law of God, together with their wives, sons, daughters, and all who were old enough to understand—  
<sup>29</sup> joined their leaders and bound themselves with an oath. They swore a curse on themselves if they failed to obey the Law of God as issued by his servant Moses. They solemnly promised to carefully follow all the commands, regulations, and decrees of the Lord our Lord:

<sup>30</sup> “We promise not to let our daughters marry the pagan people of the land, and not to let our sons marry their daughters.

<sup>31</sup> “We also promise that if the people of the land should bring any merchandise or grain to be sold on the Sabbath or on any other holy day, we will refuse to buy it. Every seventh year we will let our land rest, and we will cancel all debts owed to us.

<sup>32</sup> “In addition, we promise to obey the command to pay the annual Temple tax of one-eighth of an ounce of silver for the care of the Temple of our God...

<sup>35</sup> “We promise to bring the first part of every harvest to the Lord’s Temple year after year—whether it be a crop from the soil or from our fruit trees...

<sup>39</sup> “We promise together not to neglect the Temple of our God.”

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## **REFLECT: What hinders us from making changes?**

Research has narrow down the eight greatest reasons we don't see change:

1. We're motivated by negative emotions.
2. We get trapped by thinking that make us feel overwhelmed.
3. We try to eat the entire elephant by an all or nothing attitude.
4. We neglect the toolbox we are given for change.
5. We try to change too much at once.
6. We underestimate the process.
7. We forget that failure is usually a given at the start.
8. We don't make a commitment.

## **What kind of promises and commitment does God want us to make?**

Jesus said this about “vows” and “promises”...

<sup>33</sup> “You have also heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the Lord.’

<sup>34</sup> But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, ‘By heaven!’ because heaven is God’s throne.

<sup>35</sup> And do not say, ‘By the earth!’ because the earth is his footstool.

And do not say, ‘By Jerusalem!’ for Jerusalem is the city of the great King.  
<sup>36</sup> Do not even say, ‘By my head!’ for you can’t turn one hair white or black.

<sup>37</sup> Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will,’ or ‘No, I won’t.’ Anything beyond this is from the evil one. Matthew 5:33-37

Think about the following statement...



**The power of a promise is only as good as the regular exercise of the actions that create habits of renewal.**

How is this true in your own life?

*“What you do every day matters more than what you do once in a while...  
Habits are the invisible architecture of daily life.  
We repeat about 40 percent of our behavior almost daily,  
so our habits shape our existence, and our future.  
If we change our habits, we change our lives.”*

**Promises the people made to follow the commands given by God to Moses...** (Nehemiah 10:30-38)

- ... not letting their children marry the pagan people of the surrounding area
- ... keeping the Sabbath holy
- ... supporting the temple and the priests who served there
- ... giving to God the first part of their income from their harvest
- ... bringing the best of what they received to the temple
- ... promising not to neglect God’s house that represented his presence in that day .

What are your habits of renewal in your walk with Jesus?

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy,  
 to **offer your bodies as a living sacrifice**,  
 holy and pleasing to God—  
 this is your true and proper worship.  
 Do not conform to the pattern of this world,  
**but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.**  
 Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—  
 his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Morning Habits & Patterns

“I will exalt you, my God and King,  
 and praise your name forever and ever.  
 I will praise you every day;  
 yes, I will praise you forever.  
 Great is the Lord! You are most worthy of praise!  
 No one can measure your greatness.” Psalm 145:1-3



**Habit Challenge:** When you first wake up in the morning, before you do anything else, say something like this...

“Jesus, thank you for watching over me and loving me.  
 Walk close with me today as I seek to live for you.  
 Guide me in all my decisions with your wisdom and strength.  
 Help me to see and respond to others like you do.  
 Thank you for being my closest friend! I love you. Amen.”

**Respond & Apply:** Individual & Small Group Discussion Guide

Aristotle said hundreds of years ago that...

“Happiness is the meaning and purpose of life,  
 the whole aim and end of human existence.”

Why doesn’t the pursuit of happiness actually make us happier?

How does the following reminder for Jesus give us real meaning for our lives?

“I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love.  
<sup>10</sup> When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!  
<sup>12</sup> This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.  
<sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command. John 15:10-14

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**Prayer tonight, Sunday, March 10 at 6:30 pm at the NewDay Office (822 So. Broadway).**  
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*NewDay Envisioning Our Ministry Values*

- 1. We are a community that has a passion to serve others.**
- 2. We are a community that longs for deeper life relationships With God and others.**
- 3. We are passionate about investing in children, youth, and families.**
- 4. We are a people who have a desire to be led by and experience the power of the Holy Spirit in everyday life.**

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