

(This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**) The following ice breaker is just a starter for your group. The message comes after the second bar. Please enjoy!)

**CROWD BREAKER: Did you make a New Year's Resolution this year? What was it? How is that going? Have you ever made a New Year's Resolution that stuck, and is still bearing fruit? How did you do it? What was different?**

**—The scribe**

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to fearlessly proclaim the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

---

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions raised by Pastor Mark's message from this Sunday. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.**

---

**Answer Mark's question: On your last workday, what did you do that was similar to the previous day?** (You got out of bed. You checked Instagram. You drank coffee...) **Did you suddenly notice you were functioning automatically, and say, "How did I get here?"**

**What are your daily habits?** Mark says, "Forty percent of what we do every day is from a daily habit." **Is this true?** He says, "If we're doing the right thing the majority of the time, we're winning. That's how democracy works." **What do you think?** "You have to keep going back to that right habit."

From last week, "Goals don't determine your success." **What does determine your success? Do you remember?** He says, "Systems determine your success." **Do you remember now?** "You don't rise to the level of your goals; you fall to the level of your

---

systems.” –James Clear, *Atomic Habits*. “Successful people do consistently what others only do occasionally.” **What did Daniel do consistently. Look up Daniel 6: 1-3.** <sup>1</sup>Now it pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, <sup>2</sup>and over them three administrators, including Daniel, to whom these satraps were accountable so that the king would not suffer loss. <sup>3</sup>Soon, by his extraordinary spirit, Daniel distinguished himself among the administrators and satraps. So the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. **What do you think set Daniel apart as exceptional? What was the source of Daniel's excellence? How did he acquire that resource?**

Mark says, “God has purposed you for a ministry...God is setting things in your life to prepare you for promotion.” **Is this true? Do you have a testimony? What is your ministry? What will set you apart to be fruitful in what you do?**

Mark points out, “When you are in a position where you’re doing what God has called you to do, you will face a lot of criticism and naysayers.” **Do you have a testimony to share?** He continues, “People don’t want to see other people succeed.” **Why? Where does this come from? How does it help to “keep your eyes upon Jesus”?**

**Look up Daniel 6:4-8** <sup>4</sup>Thus the administrators and satraps sought a charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom, but they could find no charge or corruption, because he was trustworthy, and no negligence or corruption was found in him. <sup>5</sup>Finally these men said, “We will never find any charge against this Daniel, unless we find something against him concerning the law of his God.” **How does this set Daniel apart? In the light of the doctrine that we’ve all been taught all of our lives, “Everybody sins. You can’t stop sinning,” what does Daniel do different, that challenges that teaching? Could they catch Daniel in a sin? Can you see sin in Daniel? What would it take for you to become a Daniel? Do you believe it is possible? Is successful living possible?** Mark says, “Daniel set some simple habits in his life, by which he was able to ward off and completely avoid corruption.” Again, **what do you think set Daniel apart as exceptional? What was the source of Daniel's excellence? How did he acquire that resource? Did you change your idea from the last time we asked?** “It is not about the what (what can I do/not do), but it’s about the who: Who do you want to become?” **What is the difference between law-keeping and fruit-bearing? How much is God impacted, how much does He change, when you keep the law? How much was Babylon impacted, when Daniel kept the Law? How was Babylon changed? Does this make sense? If you are a godly father or mother, husband or wife, co-worker, who will benefit most? God or your neighbor? Describe how their life will change by your decision?** Mark says, “I want to be in good health so I can play with my grandkids when I get older.” **Whom will that benefit? Describe the benefit the grandkids will derive? Do you remember your grandparents?**

<sup>6</sup>So the administrators and satraps went together to the king and said, “O King Darius, may you live forever! <sup>7</sup>All the royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers, and governors have agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce a decree that for thirty days anyone who petitions any god or man except you, O king, will be thrown

---

into the den of lions. **8**Therefore, O king, establish the decree and sign the document so that it cannot be changed—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.” ***Why is it significant that the accusers sought to use Daniel’s strength against him?***

**9**Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

**10**Now when Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went into his house, where the windows of his upper room opened toward Jerusalem, and three times a day he got down on his knees, prayed, and gave thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

***What changed when the decree was signed? What were Daniel’s habits before the decree? How consistent were these habits? Who saw Daniel behaving this way before the new law was written? What was the impact? Why did his habits not change after the new law was written? Why is this important? Were the two co-administrators and the satraps ever able to find sin in Daniel? Real sin? Mark says, “Small things were developed into Daniel that made him who he was.” Specifically, what small things? How do small things become life changing? World changing? (What are we reading about today? How long ago was this event?)***

**11**Then these men went as a group and found Daniel petitioning and imploring his God. **12**So they approached the king and asked about his royal decree: “Did you not sign a decree that for thirty days any man who petitions any god or man except you, O king, will be thrown into the den of lions?”

The king replied, “According to the law of the Medes and Persians the order stands, and it cannot be repealed.”

**13**Then they told the king, “Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, shows no regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed. He still makes his petition three times a day.” ***What did Daniel do wrong? What should he have done differently? How significant is the open window? Do you close the window?***

Mark describes a vicious circle: “We make these resolutions at the beginning of the year that are so big, and so hard, we mess up once, and we say, ‘See...I just can’t do it.’ Then we go back to living life the way we always have.” ***Do you have a testimony? What is the impact of this perceived “failure?” What is the solution?***

***Answer Mark’s next question: What if you choose only one small habit? What if that begins to define your relationship with God?***

“Anything that has been successful in my life and that has made a difference was the result of a small habit that continued over time, and that became greater. For me it was journaling. Year one...year eight...year ten...just doing that...” ***What does this make you think? Can you see a stack of your journals collecting over years?*** Mark confesses: “Not

---

every day. There were days that I did not journal, but maybe five days a week.” **How does this confession help? How does that stack of years of journals look, now that you know the truth? Why is there no failure when the stack confirms that the effort continues? Can you explain how this changed something in Pastor Mark?**

**What would two minutes of silence daily in the presence of God change?**

**Talk about flossing: Why do we or don't we floss? Have you tried the little floss sticks that are ready to insert into your teeth? How does/would that help create the habit?**

**Why would a simple habit simplify the effort? What simple habits did you think of that you might be able to do? Do you have a testimony?**

**What are the habits that we can add to our lives that will help go step by step to becoming more Christ-like? Look up 1 Timothy 4:8:**

**8For physical exercise is of limited value, but godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for the present life and for the one to come. How does this fit Mark's message?**

**Based on who you want to become, what one habit do you need to start?** (Mark cautions, it doesn't have to be big. You don't hit the snooze button. You don't do Instagram first...)

Pastor Mark's how to create that new habit: "It's not the goal that matters. It's the system." **What do you remember? Can you list the three steps?**

1. You need to have a cue, something that jogs your mind.
2. A routine response to the cue.
3. A reward that comes from that response.

"I will (do...fill in this blank) after I (fill in the blank) ...linking activities together..."

Mark's example: "When I drink a cup of coffee (the cue), I'm going to pick up my Bible (routine response)." The reward is the relationship that comes from this. You're creating an action from a routine that is already set in your life.

Example two: When you are showering, you can listen to worship music or listening again to Mark's message. **How does this work for you? Can you think of what you do regularly, to which you can link a godly habit? (Is there a book you have wanted to read that can be kept beside the toilet? How could that add fruitful minutes to the day?)**

**How does saying grace at mealtime relate to this? How does putting the children to bed relate? How might keeping a journal beside the toothbrush help?**

Mark says, "Make it obvious. Make it easy. That will bring the change to your lives." **Apply this to the toothbrush/journal example above. Why will it help if the vitamins you are determined to take are already in a container labeled by the days of the week?**

***How do small things add up? What is the cumulative effect of a single Bible verse a day? What about a single chapter a day? How will you reading the Bible change the world? Did Daniel change the world? How?***

Mark talked about the flipside of habit making. ***Do you remember? How was judgmentalism and "mind reading" mistaken for a "spirit of discernment?" What is the impact on relationships? What steps did Mark take to change that habit?*** Mark says, "The moment I started creating someone else's narrative in my own mind, I stopped. I would say, 'Can I ask you a question...'" ***How would this contribute to relationships?***

***How would the book you intend to read be best located beside the bed?***

***What is the one action you can take that will help you become who you want to be? What will your life look like as you "blossom and flourish" in the goals you have set?***

---

Scribe's notes pertaining to current events: How close are we to the day when Administrators and Satraps go after Christians? What do you know of Canada and Australia? Could that happen here? What fruit will develop if we learn the habits of Daniel?