

Discipleship in a New Year

Thinking About Our Habits in 2021

Introduction

- Last week we considered the importance of reflecting upon our identity “in Christ” as we enter into a new year. Understanding *who* we are in Him and *what* things are our possessions as a result of this position are of primary importance if we are to see real change in our lives in a new year.
- The reality is that there is a direct link between our understanding of our identity and the ways that we choose to live. Who we view ourselves to be greatly impacts what we do, and what we do reinforces who we understand ourselves to be.

“The more you repeat a behavior, the more you reinforce the identity associated with that behavior. In fact, the word *identity* was originally derived from the Latin word *essentitas*, which means *being*, and *identidem*, which means *repeatedly*. Your identity is literally your “repeated beingness.”

— James Clear, Atomic Habits
- There is great value, therefore, in thinking about the various disciplines and practices of our lives, particularly at the beginning of a new year. These things are an indication of what it is that we truly love and they are also the means by which our loves are shaped and oriented towards a particular end.

“...if you are what you love and if love is a *habit*. This means that our most fundamental orientation to the world—the longings and desires that orient us toward some version of the good life—is shaped and configured by imitation and practice. This has important implications for how we approach Christian formation and discipleship.”

Key Point: Christian discipleship can be understood as the formation process by which are continually _____ of our identity “in Christ” and _____ to live in accordance with it.

The Disciplines & Habits of the Christian Life

Some Initial Observations

1. Christian discipleship is _____ →
2. Christian discipleship is _____ →

Corporate Discipline #1: _____ regularly with the church.

Heb. 10:23-25—²³Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Personal Application: *I am to be a _____ of a local church.*

- (1) By gathering with the church I am regularly reminded that my life is not my own.
- (2) In the presence of other believers, I am reminded of my true identity.

Corporate Discipline #2: The reading and proclaiming of _____.

1 Tim. 4:13—Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.

Personal Application: *The Word of the Lord to His _____ is His personal word to _____.*

- (1) By memorizing Scripture, I learn to recognize the voice of the Lord.

Psa. 119:9-11—⁹How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.

¹⁰With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments!

¹¹I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

- (2) By the studying Scripture, I learn to preach the Word to myself.

Deut. 17:18-19—¹⁸“And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. ¹⁹And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them,

Corporate Discipline #4: _____ the Word with others.

Acts 2:42—And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Personal Application: Prayer my proper response in light of the _____ that I have to God in Christ.

- (1) In prayer, I respond personally to God's Word.

Phil. 4:6—do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

- (2) In prayer, I am mindful of God's work in my life and in the lives of others.

Eph. 6:18—praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

Corporate Discipline #4: _____ the Word with others.

Col. 3:16—Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Personal Application: My singing is both a _____ to God's Word and a means by which His truth is reinforced.

- (1) In singing of God, I declare His truth publicly.

Psa. 96:1-4—¹Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! ²Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. ³Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! ⁴For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.

- (2) In singing God's truth, I learn to express its great value.

Psa. 19:9-10—⁹the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. ¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

Corporate Discipline #5: _____ the Word with others.

Matt. 28:19—Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Luke 22:19-20—¹⁹And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."²⁰And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

Personal Application: Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordained by God for my _____.

- (1) In Baptism, I am reminded that I am "in Christ" by the work of the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 12:12-13—¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

- (2) In the Lord's Supper, I am reminded of Christ's person and His work on my behalf.

1 Cor. 11:26—For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Concluding Thoughts and Questions for a New Year

1. The personal disciplines and habits of the Christian life should be a reflection of the corporate disciplines and habits of _____.

Question # 1:

Question # 2:

2. The general rhythms and habits of our lives are important for us to _____ upon in a new year.

Question # 1:

Question #2: