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JULY 2017
HEALTHY HABITS

Greetings church!

I have a special treat for you this month. In this edition of the Living Logos, my wife Shannon is going to share with you what God has laid on her heart. Enjoy!

Hey y'all! Shannon here! Before I get into what God has put on my heart to share with you this month, I want to give you just a little update on what's going on with us:

Levi is doing great! His baseball season has wrapped up and he is now playing in a PGA Youth Summer Golf League which he is thoroughly enjoying. He is growing not only physically but spiritually as well. He loves the Lord, and it is pure joy watching him take hold of the things of God. Trey is also doing so well! He is, hands down, my favorite Pastor and Teacher – and it's not just because he's my husband! He has a way of teaching the Word where anyone of any age can grasp it. That is truly a gift from God! The Lord has so blessed me with my wonderful husband and son, and it is so gratifying to grow spiritually stronger together.

As for me, I'm on summer break from homeschooling Levi. I have recently started personal training, which I did years ago. I enjoy working with clients one-on-one and helping them see results. I lead a monthly Women's Bible study at the church, and these women love the Lord! My heart is full and my cup runneth over! Thank you Jesus!

I've always loved helping people get in shape and accomplish their fitness goals. I've seen not only in my life, but in the lives of many others as well, how physical fitness truly impacts your spiritual growth. There was a time in my life when I had no desire to exercise, and it was during this time that I pursued God less than at any other time in my life. Our bodies were designed to move. God created everything in six days and on the seventh day He rested, but many believers want to rest and take it easy six days of the week and get in motion one day of the week. This is not the way God designed it.

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I went through a season of my life when I was not eating healthy or exercising and I can speak from experience when I say that simply existing is not the life that Jesus came to give us. John 10:10 says, "I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows)." God didn't give His all so we could do things "half-way." He wants us loving Him with our whole hearts and so much of this is simply seeing ourselves the way He sees us. I have a friend who lost a tremendous amount of weight and she did this by simply changing the image on the inside of her. She began seeing herself the way God sees her, and this resulted in lifestyle changes that helped her lose and keep the weight off. This is awesome!

Personal relationship with our Father is the foundation for everything in our life. Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek (aim at and strive after) first of all His Kingdom and His righteousness (His way of doing and being right). We can't know His way of doing and being right without spending time in His presence and His Word.

1 Corinthians 6: 19-20 says, "Do you not know that your body is the temple (the very sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, Whom you have received [as a Gift] from God? You are not your own. You were bought with a price [purchased with a preciousness and paid for, made His own]. So then, honor God and bring glory to Him in your body."

I'd like to share a testimony with you: Before Levi was born, I had never had a cup of coffee. After he was born, I started losing several hours of sleep a night. So this resulted in me starting to drink a cup or two every morning. Now I could never drink straight black coffee because it was so strong, so by the time I had "doctored it up" with cream, sugar and sweetener, my cup of coffee was like a small milkshake. A few months went by and I remember standing in my kitchen and hearing the Holy Spirit say, "I want you to lay down coffee." I wish I could say that I instantly obeyed, but I didn't. Never forget: immediate obedience is key. I was leaning to my own understanding, trying to comprehend how I could "survive" without coffee. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." I was not trusting in the Lord with all my heart. God is a good, good Father and anytime He asks us to lay something down, it's always for our benefit.

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Because I chose not to lay down coffee, I opened myself up to a health issue. In 2010, I developed a rash on my torso and the back of my neck. I had developed systemic yeast, which I would later find out can be triggered by caffeine (coffee)! I was experiencing brain fog, joint pain, and unbelievable tiredness. I had to cut sugar completely out of my diet for two months because yeast feeds on sugar. During this time, the enemy robbed me of health, time, and joy because I made the choice to disobey.

Please understand this one thing – you have to do what The Lord leads YOU to do, not what he leads me or anyone else to do. For example, I know The Lord has dealt with Trey about drinking more water. He may lead someone else to come off a certain medication. We should NEVER do something because someone else is doing it; however, we should be diligently listening to the Holy Spirit, trusting that He is leading and guiding us into all truth.

I am happy to report that I have changed my eating habits, made some lifestyle changes, and am very quick to obey when the Lord asks me to lay something on the altar.

God's great desire is for us to walk in wisdom. Walking in the wisdom of God is a way of life – a lifestyle we must choose daily. Romans 8:5-6 says, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

The more time we spend with God, the more sensitive we become to Him and the more successful we become in living a life of freedom. Commitment to God's way will always bring success. Our part is to draw near to God. He shouldn't have to chase us down. Remember, we are to seek Him and His way of doing and being right.

Noah Webster's dictionary defines a habit as "a disposition of the mind or body acquired by custom or a frequent repetition of the same act. Habit is that which is retained, the effect of custom or frequent repetition. Hence we speak of good and bad habits."

Now is the time to get rid of any habit in your life that isn't pleasing to God. You don't ever have to yield to sin's temptation because sin has lost its dominion over you. Romans 6:14 says, "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace."

This means that the answer to temptation is don't do it, turn it down, don't consent.

I want to give you a new outlook on how your everyday life can be filled with habits that glorify God. Sowing and reaping is a Biblical principle. For example, a farmer goes to bed each night believing that the seed he planted in the ground will produce fruit. His life depends on it. No matter how great the last season's harvest was, his future depends on his seed producing for him again this season. It sounds so simple, but if he plants corn, he'll get corn. If he plants wheat, he'll get wheat. And if he doesn't plant anything, he won't get a crop.

This principle works in our lives as well. We can get so busy that our days turn into weeks, weeks turn into months, and months turn into years as we go along not realizing that we're either not planting for the future or we're planting things that won't yield a good "crop" in our lives. We can get easily discouraged by our current situations in life not realizing we're simply reaping what we've sown. If this is where you are, there's hope for change and for letting go of old habits that have kept you from the life you long for. The right kind of "farming" (habits) starts with putting God first because this good habit lays the foundation for any other habit we need or want to develop. And honoring God by giving Him our first and our best is the wisest thing we can ever do.

Let's look back at Matthew 6:33 now: There are times when we don't put God first because we think we're doing fine on our own and we don't need His help or He isn't interested in helping us. These mindsets couldn't be further from the truth. The purpose of your existence is to have a personal relationship with God and see Jesus expressed through your life every day in big and small ways.

Colossians 1:27 says that Christ in us is "the hope of glory." Our lives can reveal who He is to the world around us. In other words, you are the expression of Jesus to the world around you every day. The more we understand the power of that verse, the more it empowers you to live a life that's all about God, and you're able to do whatever He has put in your heart to do- whether that means making good habits or breaking bad ones.

Joyce Meyer says it like this, "When you know in your heart that God has a plan for you and wants you to be His agent of change in the world around you, all of a sudden the motivation to do the right thing comes from the Holy Spirit in our hearts."

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When we make a choice to cultivate good habits – modifying the way we eat, the way we exercise, how we spend our free time – we do it because it positions us to do more for the Kingdom of God. Doing the right thing is not that difficult as long as we keep the perspective that doing the right thing positions us to honor and glorify God even more with our lives.

Matthew 6:33 encourages us to always put God first. Putting God first puts you in the best position possible for God to meet your needs, and it opens the door for even greater opportunities to be blessed and used by God.

In order to be successful in developing good habits, it's going to require a commitment on your part- a commitment to do whatever it takes to succeed and to start planting the right things in your life. As you do this each day, by God's grace, you'll find that focusing on good habits not only establishes good behaviors you want in your life but also helps you break bad habits in the process. So decide that God comes first and then allow your actions (habits) to support that.

You have a will of your own. When wisdom talks to you, jump up and listen. Make some changes. If God deals with an area of your life that you need to correct, be quick to change. Tell God every day, "I put you first place in my life. I know if I follow You, everything else in my life will fall in place. Show me where I'm wrong. Correct me. Instruct me. Reveal to me the things I need to know." Then whatever He says to you, do it! You have to give Him the opportunity to talk to you by setting aside time each day to get quiet, study His Word and pray. You must dig into The Word and lay hold of the spiritual authority that brings healing, deliverance, prosperity, and peace into your life.

When God's Word goes into our hearts and minds, it allows us to think His higher thoughts. Those higher thoughts and higher ways are God's wisdom and knowledge working in us, delivering us from sickness, disease, depression, and every other evil work for which the natural world has no answer. We're able to live a much higher way of life than natural people can live.

John 16:13 says, "But when He, the Spirit of Truth (the Truth-giving Spirit) comes, He will guide you into all the Truth (the whole, full Truth). For He will not speak His own message [on His own authority]; but He will tell whatever He hears [from the Father; He

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will give the message that has been given to Him], and He will announce and declare to you the things that are to come [that will happen in the future].”

Remind your heart and mind every day, “The Holy Spirit leads me. I’m going to listen for His voice, and I’m going to hear from Him today.” Always conduct yourself with the attitude, “The Holy Spirit is in me. I expect to hear from Him today. I expect Him to tell me how to do my job. I expect to hear from Him even in the little matters of life.” If you invite God into every situation in your daily life, you can develop the good habits you want and break the bad ones – one at a time.

Even if you’ve fallen short recently, know that God’s mercies are new every morning and you can get right back up and start afresh again. We desire for you to grow and become all that God has created you to be, and a large part of that is becoming a blessing to others, which will always happen when you make your relationship with God your highest priority.

We must be good stewards of the things the Lord has entrusted us with. If He expects us to steward our finances, how much more should we be stewarding and taking care of our bodies, which are the Temples of the Holy Spirit. Be sensitive to the leadings and promptings of the Holy Spirit, trusting Him to guide you into all truth in every area of your life. God is a good, good Father and He wants you strong and able to run your race. Amen!

Victoriously,

Shannon