

UPHILL  
HOPES &  
HABITS  
DOWNHILL

We form habits and then our habits form us.

- Most people have uphill Hopes and downhill habits.
- We need a strategy that changes our daily behaviors.

**Obstacles to change:**

- Identify the excuses that prevent us from change.
- Eliminate the excuses that keep us going downhill.

**Three things we need for this journey:**

- Hope for your future.  
10 Jesus answered, "If you knew the generosity of God and who I am, you would be asking me for a drink, and I would give you fresh, living water." John 4:10 (MSG)  
11 For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT)

- Repentance from your past.  
• We need a correction in our direction.

- 8 Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. Matthew 3:8 (NLT)  
13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,  
14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:13-14 (NIV)

- Formation of uphill habits.  
2 ...fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. Romans 12:2 (MSG)

**Habit #1:**

- Come close to God.  
5 ...God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5 (NIV)  
8 Come close to God, and God will come close to you... James 4:8 (NLT)  
28 But as for me, how good it is to be near God! I have made the Sovereign LORD my shelter, and I will tell everyone about the wonderful things you do. Psalm 73:28 (NLT)
- Coming close to God means we're all in.  
13 The Master said: "These people make a big show of saying the right thing, but their hearts aren't in it. Because they act like they're worshiping me but don't mean it, Isaiah 29:13 (MSG)

8 Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. James 4:8 (NLT)

**Strategies for Habit #1:**

- Prayer connects us to God.
- Fasting disconnects us from the world.

16 "And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get.

17 But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face.

18 Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. Matthew 6:16-18 (NLT)

**For drawing close to God:**

- Make God your priority.

29 Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is... love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength." Mark 12:29-30 (NLT)

- Have a purpose for your fast.

Prayer & Fasting doesn't change God, it changes me!

Prayer and fasting doesn't elevate me, it humbles me.

- Decide what you will do.
- Expect results.

6 And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him. Hebrews 11:6 (NLT)

22 let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith, because we have been made free from a guilty conscience, and our bodies have been washed with pure water. Hebrews 10:22 (NCV)



**TO CREATIVELY LOVE AND LEAD PEOPLE  
IN A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.**

**Have Questions? Text them to: (559)-464-5754**

Questions that can be used in Connection Groups:

*These questions also work well for personal time with God.*

- What scripture and/or point spoke most to you from the Talk on Sunday? Why?
- Are you making any New Years resolutions this year? If yes, what are they? What is the difference between resolutions and new Habits? Do you think resolutions are less effective than establishing new habits?
- What does it mean to have uphill hopes and downhill habits?
- Talk through the "three points needed for the journey". Which of these is most challenging for you?
- What does it mean to "Come close to God"? Dave mentioned in the Talk that in our hearts we can distance ourselves from God. What does that mean to you?
- Discuss how prayer & fasting help us come close to God.
- As we call an All Church Fast, have you decided what you will fast? How do hope that the fast will bring you closer to God?
- Do you have someone that can encourage you and support you in your fast? Find someone from the Quest.

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