



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Uphill Habits – Goals & Plans

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Main Idea – Every worthwhile thing in life requires work and effort. To accomplish our hopes and desires we need a good plan that starts with seeking God, followed by doing and applying what God has shown us.

God's Word is a mirror

- Mirrors reflect images.
- God's Word (the Bible) can be used like a mirror to reflect back to us our current condition, at the same time that it shows us where we need to go.
- Everything worthwhile is uphill. The Bible and the Holy Spirit will show us where we need to go. It will be a worthwhile objective. However, it will also take commitment and work to attain.

Have the proper mindset.

- To attain our objectives we need to follow certain steps – and think in certain ways.
- 1. Have hope for your future; for what you are working toward. **Jeremiah 29:11 – For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.**
- 2. Repentance of your past. When we repent, we receive forgiveness. **Philippians 3: 13-14 – Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**
- 3. Have a plan of attack. Establish “uphill habits.” **Romans 12: 1-2 – So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, 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. (Message Version)**

The Uphill Habits strategy – Focus on what you do first

- Go to God first. (What does the Bible say? What does the Holy Spirit say?) God's Word will show you truth and perspective about whatever you are considering. Then, apply and follow what God has shown you. If we do not do what God shows us, we eventually become unusable for Him. (Don't sit in church and soak up the message and environment without taking action to live it.) **James 1: 22-24 – But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.**
- Give God the first of everything.
 - Give God the first of your time and thoughts. Be responsible instead of reactionary. Watch your language. Ask God what to say before you respond to something. **James 1: 19-20 – So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.**
 - Give God the first of your treasure. The first thing we spend our money on has the most power. **James 1: 16-17 – Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.**
Genesis 1:1 – In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
 - Establish a regular cycle of establishing Godly goals; set goals for every year, every month, every week, and every day. Ask yourself, "What can I commit to God for this time period?"
- Expect God to bless the rest. **Proverbs 3: 6-10 – In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones. Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.**

Take action

- After having consulted God, and putting Him first, we have an obligation to follow-through with actions. After having looked into the mirror of His Word, we must respond to what we have observed in the reflection of that Word.
- **James 1: 23-24 – For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.**
- **John 8: 31 – Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide**

in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

- Not only will God’s Word show us our current condition and where we need to go, it also shows us everything through which He has already taken us.

Reflective Questions for Uphill Habits: Goals & Plans

1. Jeremiah 29:11 says God thinks thoughts *toward* us. This implies we can know what God thinks of us, and then act on that. Based on God’s Word (the Bible), and the presence of the Holy Spirit in your heart, what – if anything - have you understood of what God has thought toward you?
2. Give a practical example of how God has guided you when you have gone to Him before doing or saying something. Give an example of what has happened when you have neglected going to Him before saying or doing something.
3. The Bible clearly teaches we receive blessings when we put God first with our thoughts, time, and treasure. Why is “firstness” more useful to God than volume, or size?
4. How are you doing with following up the blessings you receive in church with your actions the rest of the time? Are there a couple of goals you can set for yourself for this year? For this next month, week, or day?