

# Habits

by Rev Dan Balsdon | February 2021 | read online at [www.revdanbalsdon.com](http://www.revdanbalsdon.com)

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What habits do you have?

Habits can be both good and bad – and sometimes that’s different for different people...

For me, in the last year because I’m working from home more I’ve definitely got into an unhealthy habit of snacking, but I have spent more time reading and walking, which is, I think, a good habit for me.

The important thing when it comes to habits, is are we in control of it, or is the habit controlling us?

I was reading information on a study this week that suggested adults look at their phone every 6 and ½ minutes. I made me aware how often I look at my phone, and made me wonder whether I’m in control of the habit, or if the habit is controlling me.

In Mark 8 Jesus says to his disciples and the crowd around them:

***“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?”***

*Mark 8:34b-36*

This call to deny ourselves initially might feel like Jesus is saying ignore your own thoughts and desires they don’t matter when you follow me. But I don’t think that’s quite what Jesus is saying. Actually, I think Jesus is saying we do matter, and it’s because we matter, that Jesus wants to help us to keep our desires and habits in check and under control – and guided by the life that Jesus lived on earth – that becomes a blueprint for how he calls us to live.

To deny ourselves is not about us not mattering, quite the opposite – it’s about ensuring we develop healthy habits that benefit the physical and spiritual wellbeing our ourselves, and those around us.

During lent we sometime stalk about giving something up – chocolate is common – but that’s not really what Lent is about. The period of Lent is really about self-discipline, and reflection – asking ourselves are we developing and living in healthy habits that help our physical and spiritual wellbeing, and asking God to help us.

Jesus goes on to ask what benefit there is to have the whole world, but forfeit life. In his worship song, Tim Hughes words it *“What good is it to gain the whole world, But lose your soul?”*.

If we don’t work to ensure we develop healthy habits, we can fall into a hole of building up our earthly, worldly kingdoms – healthy bank accounts, homes filled with treasures, but loose sight the Kingdom of God – which trades not in cash and material possessions – but in justice and love.

Pray today, and ask God to help you reflect on what healthy habits to nurture and developed to benefit the physical and spiritual wellbeing our ourselves, and those around us.