

FAR

ABOVE RUBIES



Creatures of Habit

In the dictionary a custom is defined as *“a traditional and widely accepted way of behaving or doing something that is specific to a particular society, place or*

time.” In our society at Christmas-time it is customary to decorate the Christmas tree, indulge in turkey dinners and give and receive presents. Many of us will go to church on Christmas Day to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is after all what Christmas is all about!

A custom is also defined as a thing that one does habitually, or a habit. We are all creatures of habit whether they are good or bad. In Luke 4 v 16 we read that Jesus *“came to Nazareth where He had been brought up; and He went to the synagogue, as His custom was, on the Sabbath day.”* Even though Jesus came to earth as Messiah and paid the price at Calvary for the new Covenant, He still habitually attended the synagogue every Sabbath. In Acts 17 v 2 we see that the apostle Paul also went to the Synagogue *“as was his custom.”*

Sadly, there are some Christians today who have gotten into the habit of not attending Church. They may have started missing a few weeks here and there, until now it doesn't even enter their minds. There are others who feel that they can worship God just as well at home and have decided to go it alone! If that were the case there would be no need for the warning in Hebrews 10 v 25 about *“not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”*

In these last days it is essential that we meet together to worship God and to encourage one another. In actual fact we should be meeting even more often before the Lord returns! We are living in days when Christianity is seriously under attack. That is why we need to stand together and stand firm on His word!

As Christians it is essential that we establish and maintain good habits, for both our physical and spiritual well being. If we get into the habit of over-eating, not taking enough exercise or getting enough sleep, it will affect us physically. If we get into the habit of not reading God's word, not going to church and not spending time with God it will certainly affect us spiritually.

In 1 Cor. 6 v 12 Paul writes *"All things are lawful for me but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me but I will not be enslaved by anything."* When we think of being enslaved to something, we are generally thinking about things that are damaging to our health, such as smoking, alcohol abuse or drug abuse etc. There are many other bad habits, however, that are just as harmful and that we should avoid e.g. gossiping, swearing, deceitfulness or even lying. All harmful – some sinful!

Recently, a warning was given that *"Too much gadget use can damage your child"* and can cause speech delay, attention deficit and learning problems. If we want the best for our children, we need to start monitoring and limiting the time they spend on social media, i-pads and playing computer games. There is actually a lesson there for all of us!

Aristotle once said *"We are what we repeatedly do..."* and there is a lot of truth in this as we consider the workaholic, the alcoholic, the shopaholic and even the chocoholic! Those who over-indulge in extreme diets and exercise regimes have come to be known as fitness freaks, whilst those who spend most of their time watching television, and taking little or no exercise, have been dubbed couch-potatoes.

It has been said that a bad habit is like a comfortable bed – easy to get into but hard to get out of. It's reckoned that, on average, it takes around 21 days to make or break a habit, and 66 days for a new behaviour to become automatic. Establishing good habits will require perseverance, but we need to remember that we have the Holy Spirit to help us and that *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* (Phil. 4 v 13)

Joyce Meyer once said, *"Bad habits are our enemies, because they hinder us from being the person we need to be."* As the New Year approaches, we would all do well to take a close look at our habits and determine to eliminate the harmful and futile. If we are to experience the best that God has for us, we need to encourage habits that are helpful and fruitful.