

# HABITS

After a delicious Sunday dinner, I sat down for a friendly visit with my cordial hosts. On the bookcase lay a large, attractive photo album. Curiosity got the best of me.

“May I see your album,” I queried.

“Why, certainly,” responded the wife, “I wanted you to see the pictures we took when we were first married.”

Much to my surprise, I hardly even recognized the just-married couple in the front of the album. Thirty years really had made some changes, especially in *him!*

Back then, he had a curly shock of brown hair. Now— well, it’s almost completely gone. Just a little straight, graying hair on the sides is about all that’s left.

I wonder if they could have guessed, on their wedding day, what thirty years would bring.

Baldness, you know, does not happen all at once. Probably my friend and his wife hardly noticed it at first—it happened so gradually. Finally it became noticeable. Eventually it became a permanent part of this man’s appearance.

In just the same way, habits begin in a small way— hardly noticeable. But gradually they get control of you. Then they become noticeable.

Youth is the time many men start becoming bald. Youth is also the time you start forming habits, both good and bad. The things you do now, as a young person, will largely determine your appearance and your personality for the rest of your life. These things can make or break your life. They can affect your eternal destiny.

I once heard a man glibly remark, “Well, a boy’s got to sow his wild oats first, then he’ll settle down. Boys will be boys, you know.”

This philosophy has led many a young person to disaster. Many have been the young man or woman who followed the crowd because it was easy. They didn’t want their friends to think they were odd or “chicken.” But God loves each one of us and expects the best of us. He is “*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” (2 Peter 3:9).

I recently read of a young fellow from a respectable home who got in with the wrong crowd. Soon he was carousing around the neighborhood “living it up.”

One night he took a few drinks too many. On his way home, he lost control of his car, slammed into another car, killing himself and the occupants of the other car.

He brought shame on his parents. And worse, he went into eternity without Jesus Christ. There were no more chances to “clean up his life” or to break his youthful habits.

This young man “sowed his wild oats” but, in the end, he reaped DEATH.

The Bible’s sentence on “living it up” is plain: “*Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*” (Galatians 6: 7). “For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind” (Hosea 8:7).

Don’t hope that you can have a “high old time” now, then “turn over a new leaf” sometime in the future. You may never have the opportunity. And even if you do have the opportunity, you may find yourself helplessly bound by the habits you have formed.

We are told that if you throw a frog into hot water, he will jump out. But if you put him in cold water and gradually heat it, he will boil to death. Why? Because he gradually grows accustomed to the heat and is scalded before he realizes what’s happening.

Habits, too, can so gradually enslave us so that we don’t realize the grip they have on us, until it’s too late to change—till we can’t break the habit. It’s too great a risk now to get involved in something you may not be able to change later.

God wants you to live for Him now. Your youth may be the only time you will ever have. You have no guarantee that you’ll live to be old or that you’ll ever have more opportunities to try to improve yourself. God wants YOU—all of YOU—NOW. Form good habits NOW—habits that will stand the test now and forever. “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

~ Roger Berry