

TOOL: Obstacle Identification

Scripture before screen • Daily



Introduction

Our brains are constantly trying to learn habits. Habits help us save valuable energy for thinking and processing if we can make some things automated. Habits are formed by the repetition of a few things: (1) cues (2) routines (3) rewards.

We start with a **cue**. This is something that serves to trigger our brains that it's time for the habit. Then our brain does whatever it is we've programmed it to do - the **routine**. And then there is some kind of **reward**. When this loop is practiced enough, then our brain begins to crave the pattern. Our brains feel unsatisfied without it. And that is a habit!

So, let's consider our interaction with our morning routine. We begin with a cue: we wake up. Then, we likely have a routine. Maybe it's rolling over, picking up our phone, and checking the news or our social media. Maybe it's reading the paper or making coffee. Whatever that routine is, it has some reward for us - saving us from boredom, giving us adrenaline, or the delicious taste of coffee. And, if you've done that routine enough times, you'll find that it has become a habit, driven by a craving.

Our goal with "Scripture before screen" is that we would get in the rhythm of starting each day with Jesus. And that we would practice that rhythm enough that it would become a habit - that we would crave it.

If you try to just "stop" your current habit, you are going to find that it's pretty hard. You'll crave that phone, crave the coffee, crave the paper. But, our minds are pretty good at crowding out habits with new ones! So, our goal with this tool is to start to notice our cues, routines, and rewards and see if we can practice doing things a little differently.

Practice

Use the exercise below to consider what your existing habits are and then to create and reinforce a new habit.

STEP ONE: Notice your current habits in the morning. It might help to consider what are your current routines or habits when you wake up? What do you crave in the morning? Can you think about what reward you might get from those things? Use this chart to help you track what you notice:

Habit	What is the cue that triggers your routine?	What is the routine (e.g. making coffee, reading the news)?	What is the reward? (This is the hardest thing to notice!)

STEP TWO: Using the same cue and using the same reward, brainstorm a way you could involve Jesus in your routine? For example, if your cue is waking up, and your routine is coffee and the reward is yummy taste → maybe you could try listening to a psalm while you make the coffee. And then, as you drink the coffee, meditate on that psalm.

Habit	What is the cue that triggers your routine? <i>Keep this the same!</i>	How could you replace your previous routine with someone that puts Jesus and scripture first (while still keeping in mind your brain's 'reward' or goal?)	What is the reward? (This is the hardest thing to notice!) <i>Keep this the same!</i>

STEP THREE: Practice implementing your new routine!

Debrief your experience

After practicing with this tool, debrief your experience with your Praxis Group. Below are some questions to process together:

- Check in on life. (Where are you experiencing Christ's presence this week? What burdens are you carrying?)
- What did you learn from this practice?
- Describe your experience with this practice. (What feelings came up, what went well, what got in the way? How has it impacted your relationship with God?)
- What is the next step for you?