

## Be Master of Your Habits

Dr. M.W. Lewis

Hollywood, 10-18-59

I was just thinking after hearing Mr. Rosser remark that there are as many stars as there are grains of sand on the beaches of the world. Imagine! What a creation. Yet, on the other hand, we are all children of God, and can know that Consciousness and Power, which has created all those stars, and all of the things in creation. I'm sure we'd better get busy and master habits that we can realize what we have as God's children.

So the subject: "Be Master of Your Habits." "Be Master of Your Habits."

The Law of Habit is a very strong force, because we are all subject to the Law of Habit. Therefore, the only escape is to overcome the bad habits; follow the good ones; recreate perhaps, we can say, the bad habits; and follow those that lift us from this consciousness, which causes us to be in bondage, and free us into the freedom of God's Consciousness.

Master has this to say about habits. He describes habits in this way, as "automatic mental machines..." They're automatic, alright. You do things that you don't realize you are doing. And so, he says, "they are automatic mental machines established to exercise economy in the use of will power during the performance of action." On one side, they're all right. But on another side, they are very disconcerting.

And so, this economy of nature has to be understood just a little bit. For instance, in doing the ordinary actions, which we do every day from habit – like walking, and making a bed, or making a pie, and all those things – just stop to think. If you had to stop and think to take your first step, as you walk? Or as you made the bed, now, how will I make this bed? Go all through that in making the pie? I don't know when you'd end, because, as I understand, the cooks make the pie as the inspiration comes to them. And so, you see this, this matter of habit is an automatic thing for our good, to save us using our will in everything we do.

I don't know whether you can remember when you took your first step, but I can't. That was quite an accomplishment. From the response from the members

of the family, "Oh, Johnny took his step today. Climbed up, and hung on, and took a step." So think of what habit does. Because now, we can walk without thinking; do lots of things without thinking. And after we establish the habit of God, we can go to God without even thinking about it. That's what habit will do for you, if you follow it in the right way. Otherwise we have to understand what habit is.

And so, the formation of habit comes from repeated action, that's all. The first time it is very easy to offset it. But by repeated action, grooves are formed in the brain. And these grooves lead to stimulation and the formation of tendencies, which make the future action easy. And when it is a case of bad habits, it is something that we wish were not so. And so, as you do these actions, you can see that action becomes automatic. That's the point. And, if we do not realize it, soon, we become "automatons," acting from the power of habit – usually in the wrong way. So let us understand these things.

Now, this action of habit, the worst thing it does is that it blunts our will, and blunts our independent action. Ordinary habit is formed, and takes place from the Seat of Ego Consciousness – lower consciousness, we'll say. But when you perform "independent action," your viewpoint is from the Soul – not from the ego consciousness. Realize that. If you want to create good habits, be sure you attain Soul Consciousness before you start out. That is the trouble with habit. It blunts our will, and also independent action. Independent action followed by will can accomplish anything – even finding God. Realize that. But you have to change the action, from automatic action to independent action. You have to change the starting point, from ego consciousness to Soul Consciousness. That is the key to this matter of overcoming habits.

And so, as I have said, we are creatures of habit. We're automatons. And because of that, because of this automatic action, habit is our greatest enemy. Habit is our greatest enemy, because following of them we become slaves, do we not? We do things, and we do not understand we are doing them. I think that's being a slave. Of course, it's all right, if the habit is the right one. But usually, it is not. It is of a worldly nature, and we go on, and on, following these things, which make us automatons, and instead of being children of God, acting from independent action, we are simply slaves to our habit – absolute slaves to some of them. That is why this lesson is so important this morning. We must be master of such things.

And so, now, a few illustrations of habits and undesirable results of bad habits; I think the greatest is, that they are time wasters – terrible time wasters. We waste so much time which could be utilized in lifting our consciousness to the greatest thing we can attain, which is communion with God. You do not have to be sitting in meditation to find and contact God. You can do it every moment of your existence,

if you can so school yourself to do away with those habits which keep you in outward consciousness, and create the habit of feeling things now – not reminiscing about the past, wasting time talking, and talking, and talking, and talking, looking toward the future with all sorts of hopes. Why not now? Get God now. That's what we can create. That habit of dwelling in the Eternal Present. Not in the future. Not in the past. If we can create such a habit, it will be worthwhile, because security is not in the past. I wish it would stay where it belongs, lots of times, and so do you. Reminding me of all those things I wished never happened. In the future, well it's all right. But we're not sure of it. We are sure of one thing: God and God alone – right now. If we can do that, we've overcome an awful lot. Let us keep that in mind as we go on with our discussion.

So these, these time wasters are the worst thing. A few things to remember, as you tackle this problem of habit is this: first, evil people – due to the Law of Evil Habits, usually associate with evil people, because they have formed the habit. Therefore, you can see we should avoid that. That's natural. And another point: worldly people – worldly people, due to the Law of Habit, usually associate with worldly people. Now they're all right, but most of the time they spend in wasting time, as you know. Perhaps, some of you have listened in on some – I was gonna say, women talking – but I will say people talking, because men are just as bad as the women. Sometimes worse, I guess. But how much time is wasted by this one thing.

And so, the habit of too much idle talk is bad, too much idle talk. Remember that. As my father used to say, "If the cap fits, put it on – if it doesn't, you're all right." But, if you are wasting lots of time, why not eradicate that? Eradicate that, so that you will form the habit of not wasting time, but spending that time in elevating your consciousness toward the Father. It can be done easily. But watch these two things of which I have spoken, that whatever company you drop into, so to speak, will affect you, and will regulate, to a great extent, your habit, until you have reached that point of independent action, when you are master of what you do. That takes effort. That takes time. That takes the Grace of God. Don't forget that. I have found it so.

We may think we're strong-willed, we can overcome environment – watch out! Environment is very strong. But the worst thing is the, that it is time wasting, which we could give to God. Master used to say to me, "Remember, waste not a moment." "Waste not a moment," were his words to me. "Waste not a moment. This life is already filmed and finished. Do not pay too much attention to the body and outward activity. It will be gone, but God will not be gone. God's Love is Eternal." That's what we must realize. And so, these habits, which are time wasters, we must understand and avoid.

I have a little thing that I have...that has come to my attention; I think you'll enjoy it. It is about three hermits. And, that as I recently learned the three hermits who lived in a cave. They go there. Why? Because they do not want to be bothered with talking, and all such things. I don't advise you all, now, to run off to caves, because we must have the congregation the next time I come, and also, every Sunday here. So there were these three, these three hermits. One day the first hermit spoke up and he said, "Say, did you see that light-complexioned lady that just walked by?" A year passed, and the second hermit said, "She was a dark-complexioned lady, not a light-complexioned lady." Another year passed. Another year passed, think of it, and the first hermit said, "I'm sure that lady was light-complexioned. I'm sure she was light-complexioned." Still another year passed. And then the third hermit said, "If you fellows don't quit yelling, I'm going to leave the cave."

Now, if you'll remember that, I'm sure you'll not waste any time. Imagine it! A year between each statement; of course, they were meditating on God...we hope.

Now, the third point to remember is this: if you mix with, or, if you develop, or mix with people who have meditative habits, then you are mixing with Christ-like people and saints, and as such it'll be much easier to govern your habits. I'm sure in Self-Realization Fellowship that you find such people – you find people whose motive is to elevate their consciousness so that they feel the Love of God. I'm sure, in all the majority of Self-Realizationists have a wonderful heart quality. They have other faults – who cares? They do have a heart quality. And that's what takes us towards God, to God. And so, these few things to remember: your company is very important.

And so, now, in overcoming, the key to overcoming, remember, is independent action – independent action and will. That's the key to overcoming. In other words, our independent action, as I pointed out, comes from the vantage point of Soul Consciousness. Instead of an individualistic approach, it is a universal

approach to the problem. Instead of you being governed by ego consciousness, you are governed by the Universal Consciousness of God's Presence. Can't you see what your habits will be? So we must understand this independent action is very important. Independent action is simply, instead of following along like an automaton, to do something about it in your choice governed by the Soul's Intuition within you. That's what independent action is. And that's what we can do.

Now the three important things in overcoming are these: desire, desire is the greatest thing – determined desire. If you don't care anything about God, how can you recreate your habit? Desire is an important thing. Another important thing is independent action, of which I have just spoken. Will, will is the key of overcoming. But if your will is backed up by your independent action from your Soul, which is none other than God in you, then you have a great advantage of trying to do it with only your little will.

So the second thing is independent action. And the third, and very important thing, is your environment. Your environment is very important – company.

Master has written much in his teachings about good company. Company is very essential – good company. We must watch that. Environment, in the beginning, is stronger than will power. But when you commune with God, and feel His Presence, then you can overcome anything. That's why Jesus mixed with the publicans and sinners. He could mix anywhere, go anywhere. I told Master something about that and he said, "First, you become Jesus Christ. Then I'll talk to you," which was good. Because we think that we can overcome, and the first thing, we're flat again. But, if you depend on God, He will make it so that you will not fail. That's an important thing.

Now another point which I have here, is, concentrated mind, or consciousness, and thought power is a very strong force. It is a very great force, if you can utilize it, because it depends upon the application of your will. You know, Professor James, formed blisters on the skin by thought power, or by consciousness backed up with will. He produced these blisters, just by that power of thought. And so, that power within you, of thought, is very important. But it must be backed up by will. And by that thought – I do not mean ordinary mind, ordinary conditioned mind, which was given us by our ancestors, or which we have laid up in this existence, not that kind of mind, and consciousness, but the consciousness, which is above that – or the consciousness which is from Soul. Then that is a very important force, and can be reckoned with, if we can utilize it. It is very important to do this. Remember, thought, when I say "thought," I do not mean the ordinary, conditioned thought. The ordinary thought, which bothers us all the time, bringing to our consciousness the things that have happened and do not amount to anything. That's past. We do not want to work from that consciousness. We do not want to work from memory of all these things. It is not necessary. We want to work from the Consciousness of God in us, right now. Not from the conditioned mind. But, if we use our consciousness, backed up by the realization that God is with us, then it's a very powerful force. Then as mind, we can overcome. So, this is a very important matter.

I'd like to read to you, just for one reference today, what Master has to say about this thought as a force from the Autobiography [of a Yogi]<sup>1</sup>. "Thought is a force, even as electricity or gravitation. The human mind is spark of the almighty consciousness of God." And as we feel mind within us, if we do not allow it to be conditioned, unattached to outward things, it is God's Consciousness within us, an almighty force, says the Master. "I could show you that whatever your powerful mind believes very intensely would instantly come to pass."

Now, if we can feel God as our Father, and know it fully, we will be healed, instantaneously. But that's difficult. But, at least, if we keep our consciousness pointed in the right way, toward Him, the healing will take place after a little bit. God does it. But, if it's strong enough, as we are made in His Image, and as the Master says, we have the Almighty Consciousness of God within us. If we can utilize it to the fullest, instantaneously He will take care of us. These are wonderful things to remember.

Also, from his little book, *The Master Said*, "A bad habit can be quickly changed." Some people, I have noticed, they have bad habits. They snap 'em off like that. Others have to work along with them. That's all right, as long as you overcome the habit. Make the money – you know the story – make the money. Make the money. Honestly, if you can, but make the money. So it is with God. Get Him. Get Him, somehow. And so, our Master has to say, "A habit is the result of concentration of the mind." Think of it. You concentrate yourself on eating chocolate cake. You do it enough times, and you eat chocolate cake, you don't know anything about it, except you're eating it. It's a concentration of the mind. "Habit is the result of concentration of the mind. You have been thinking in a certain way," says the Master. "To form a new and good habit, just concentrate in the opposite direction." You're eating too much chocolate cake, concentrate the other way. But you must put your will into it. Otherwise it'll make no difference. You'll eat it just the same. So these are simple facts which we must remember.

Now, above all, above all, we must cultivate, or create, the habit for God. That's the greatest thing, this morning. We must create the habit for God. Just like you have habits of any nature now – create the habit for God. Every time you concentrate upon, or entertain a good thought – that's of God. Every time you concentrate on a thought other than of God – that is of duality, relativity. That is of evil. Evil is nothing but the opposite to God's Unity of Consciousness. And so these things are very important.

"The evil force sends us circumstances..." Remember this. "The evil force sends us circumstances, which cause us to lay up, or to arouse within us, tendencies, which recreate bad habits." Remember that statement. "The evil force within us sends those circumstances..." – see that's the key. And "those circumstances create tendencies, to recreate bad habits." You know we all have plenty of bad habits within us. That's the key point this morning.

Circumstances – the evil force – make it so easy to get right into a mess, right off. Why? Because they bring out within us, submerged tendencies, submerged tendencies. And they help us to recreate these things we're trying to get rid of. But on the other hand, the same thing happens. God, or the Force of Good, creates circumstances, whereby tendencies are aroused within us to perform good habits, or make good habits: some we recreate; some we've lost; some we've forgotten – the good habits – some we've forgotten, the habit of meditation. Alright, turn to God. He will bring you circumstances which will

make it easy for you to recreate those good habits. What is the result? From one action we get the consciousness of uncertainty, conflict – that consciousness which does not last. And those things that come from God – they can take us to the Unity of His Consciousness, where there is Full Security, and above all, His Peace, and His Bliss, and His Love.

There you have the two forces in habit. You cannot escape it. But you have free will – free will to choose whichever one you want. That which takes you toward God and good, or that which takes you toward relativity, uncertainty, and above all, conflict. Conflict is the worst thing. As I said, I don't know whether I said it the last time I was here, you know our only duty in life is to create those habits which help us to love and delight in God. Think of it. That's what we're here for. Not all this hustle and bustle of worldly living. Of course, we have to do it.

But can we not love and delight in God while we're doing it? Sure we can. Why? Because we're made in His Image – we are His children.

So you see habit seems different, if you look at it in a different way. That's the right way to look at it. Not to be automatons, pushed here, and there, made slaves of. We are God's children. And even though there are, as I pointed out, stars equal to the grains of sand throughout the universe, throughout this world – still, we are God's children. And, if we search Him out, He will show us everything. He will give us everything. We cannot do it ourselves. We must make the habit for God paramount in our lives. There is no getting around it. There is no circumventing it. We must make the habit for God first. That's why we're here. If we do that, then we can love and delight in God. Think of it. How simple the great saints put these things when we read them.

So, finally, the greatest way to enable us to form this habit for God is, as we say many, many, times – right meditation – right meditation, especially Kriya Yoga. Kriya Yoga takes you into the Presence of God, as I always say. It takes you where you can appeal to Him in a better way. If you feel Him right with you, it's easy to ask Him anything. If you have a bad habit, if you feel His Presence with you, say, "Lord, it's a little difficult for me." He will remove it like that. But you have to know Him. You have to get into His Presence, and you have to feel Him. Such is God.

And so, right meditation will take your consciousness from the limitations of the flesh, and from being influenced by mind, as I have pointed out, with all its frustrations, and negative thinking, and all those things that are in the mind, the ordinary mind – it'll take you from that, into the All-pervading

Consciousness of the One Eternal Father. Take you there, where you will find freedom from conflict, and duality, frustration, and you will find All-fulfillment.

Now, you can see from that point of view, being with God in His All-pervading Consciousness of Peace, and Bliss, and Joy, only habits, only right habits will be formed. As you enjoy that Celestial Consciousness, that All-pervading Consciousness, how, how can you create bad habits? You cannot. That's where we belong, and that's the lesson this morning. Know; know first, that God is with you. Know first, that He is your own consciousness – All-pervading. The Unity of Consciousness – not duality, relativity, we have enough of it. Likes and dislikes bother us, because they keep us in an uproar. But the Unity of God's Consciousness will not keep you there. It'll keep you in Peace, and Bliss, Serenity. You'll be satisfied with every condition. Such is the power of God's Love. That's the lesson for overcoming bad habits.

And I'll read, in closing, another word from the Master. Listen carefully when he says, "Turn toward God; Turn toward God." As Sri Yukteswarji says, "The moment a person turns, turns toward God, things begin to improve spiritually for them. Turn toward God and you will find yourself shaking off the chains of habits and environment. Though the drama of life is governed by a cosmic plan..." As Master told me, "This life is already filmed and finished." Think of it. What can we do about it? We can rise above this life. We can supersede this film, and finish business of outward consciousness of the Cosmic Dream.

"Though the drama of life is governed by a cosmic plan, men may change their part by changing the center of consciousness." If you change your center of consciousness, from this Cosmic Dream consciousness, governed by ego, to Soul Consciousness, you will change from bondage, to the freedom of God, by just changing your center of consciousness. "The self, identified with the ego is bound. The self identified with the soul is free." It is so strange that men will go to any length, even to giving their life, for an ideal. And yet, they overlook one of the greatest things, to overcome the bondage of bad habits. Having God we can do it. Without Him, as the saints say, "Without God's Love is life, is death without end. With God's Love is life eternal, without end in His Love."