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## Surprise the World! Chapter 2: A New Set of Habits

### Scripture

<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. <sup>8</sup> If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. <sup>9</sup> So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. <sup>10</sup> So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith. —Galatians 6:7-10, NRSV

<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? <sup>15</sup> Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup> If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup> In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

<sup>18</sup> But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.”

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.

—James 2:14-18, NIV

### Chapter Summary

The author’s goal is not that this book be another short-term emphasis, but the launch of regular habits that become part of our everyday lives.

“It is far more biblical to see action as a powerful expression of the person who takes that action.

Indeed, Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung once said, ‘You are what you do, not what you say you’ll do.’ —Page 18

Faith is a habit. The habits a society adopts shape the way people think, feel, and act. Desirable American society habits are things like getting married, buying a house, and raising a family. These habits reinforce monogamy, homeownership, professionalism, consumerism, and reproduction. This principle works with individuals as well—the habits we live by reinforce our values. This includes missional values.

“By *missional*, I mean all that we do and say that alerts others to the reign of God. South African missiologist David Bosch wrote, ‘Mission is more than and different from recruitment to our brand of religion; it is the alerting of people to the universal reign of God through Christ.’”

—Page 21

Mission is not primarily concerned with church growth, but with the kingdom of God. So how do we put in place habits which both unite us as believers while also propelling us into the lives of others who need to be invited into the kingdom?

The five habits, which form the acronym BELLS, are:

<b>BLESS</b>	I will bless three people this week, at least one of whom is not a member of our church.
<b>EAT</b>	I will eat with three people this week, at least one of whom is not a member of our church.
<b>LISTEN</b>	I will spend at least one period of the week listening for the Spirit’s voice.
<b>LEARN</b>	I will spend at least one period of the week learning Christ.
<b>SENT</b>	I will journal throughout the week about all the ways I alerted others to the kingdom of God.

These habits lead to generous, hospitable, Spirit-led, Christlike, and missional people. And they are far more effective in changing actual behavior than other strategies.

“The temptation and often the pressure on church leaders is to always be devising a new evangelistic strategy or promoting the latest program that is working in other settings. This is not wrong in itself; in fact, evangelistic strategy can be part of missional effectiveness. However, it is not the core idea of mission in 1 Peter (or the New Testament as a whole). Peter’s instruction to the church is that faithful evangelistic witness comes in the form of the simple, daily obedience of Christian people living together in authentic community and going into their world as ambassadors for Christ.”  
—Lee Beach, quoted on Page 25

Frost ends the chapter with three cautions.

1. Don’t forget the role of gifted evangelists who can fan the flame for others.
2. Remember these are *missional* habits, designed to send us outward into the lives of others.
3. Develop accountability in order to let these habits grow us as disciples (not just impact those around us).

## Questions

Use whichever questions you like. Some are taken from the book; other questions can be found starting on page 109.

1. Galatians 6:7-10 is not referenced in the chapter but relays a principle that we cannot ignore: We reap what we sow. How does this principle apply to the habits we have in our lives?
2. Reflect on the habits you’ve developed related to your faith. To what extent have they become familiarized to the point of being rote or routine? In what ways might your current habits propel you outward to express the reign of the kingdom?
3. Your theology is the most practical thing about you. What you believe is what you’ll do. How does this fit with what James says in the passage above?
4. The habits of this book are meant to create people who are generous, hospitable, Spirit-led, Christlike, and missional. Which of these five are you hoping to grow in the most over this series?
5. For some of us, we’ve heard about habits so often and tried to integrate them into our lives that this may feel like just another list to do, or another set of good things we agree with but have no idea how to incorporate into our lives. How do you deal with the tension between knowing these are good habits / desiring to implement them and the reality of what your life entails now?
6. The “universal reign of God” is the author’s way of speaking about the kingdom of heaven (Matthew’s gospel) and the kingdom of God (Mark and Luke’s gospels). Dallas Willard says the kingdom is “the range of God’s effective will.” It is wherever what God wants done gets done, and this is the best thing for humanity. How, practically speaking, do we invite people to enter the kingdom?

## Prayer

Pray for openness to the Spirit’s moving in your small group or Sunday School class. Pray that you would be open to embracing new habits and open to what God wants to do in them as a result.

## Challenge

Be honest with yourself about any hesitation or openness you may have about implementing these new habits. On your own time, write out a prayer to God expressing where you are in relation to this.

