

Life-Audit

Habits for Love Project, Part 1

“When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies.” Ps 119:59

As followers of Jesus, one of our life commitments is to bring our life into conformity with his instructions for us. We do this, not because we feel the need to somehow earn Jesus' acceptance, but rather because we know that he always instructs us in love, and that his way is ultimately freedom; his “yoke” is easy and his burden is light.

Where our lives do not conform to Christ's instructions, it often isn't a conscious or intentional thing. We simply haven't connected what Jesus has said to certain areas of our lives. To live into the life of freedom to which Christ calls us, we need to “think on our ways,” as the Psalmist puts it, so that in all areas we can “turn our feet” and be reoriented to God's instructions.

This is the goal of the exercise before you. I'd encourage you to take 30-45 minutes to complete part 1, and then another 15 minutes to complete part 2 (one week later).

Part 1: Initial Reflections

1. Think about the life you desire & the person you desire to be. This is not to diminish any gratitude for the good things that are already true of you but instead to acknowledge the simple fact that things are not yet complete. Compare the life you desire and the person you desire to be with who you are now & how your life is now. What differences stick out most to you?

Let's more fully develop a picture of the person you aim to be by considering the person *God* in his love for you wants you to become. Consider these two prayers in the NT and what they say about what we are meant to be.

Colossians 1:9-12

⁹For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord

and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

Philippians 1:6-11

⁶I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

2. What are some of the things you notice from these prayers about what God desires to be true of you?

3. Let's consider a similar question to the first one. How do you think your current situation compares to the life to which God calls you and the person God invites you to become?

“Systems are perfectly designed to get the results they are getting.” In other words, if you want to understand *why* you and your life are a certain way, it's worth considering your *life system*. The system of your life (or we could even say “systems”) includes every aspect

of your life that helps shape you and your life. We could roughly divide this system into two components:

- The *structures* in which you find yourself. For example, your family and your role in it deeply shape you. So does your work environment, the neighborhood you live in, your church, the activities you choose, even the way your furniture is laid out. All of these are structures that help form you and your life.
 - Your *habits*. Do you look at your phone when you wake up? Do you pray before a meal? Do you brush your teeth, or make your bed, or work out regularly? Do you watch TV every evening? The often non-conscious habitual decisions we make day after day have an enormous impact on who we are and what our life is.
4. As you think of the structures and habits that make up the “system” of your life, what are the parts of the system that you think have most positively contributed to your life and the person you’re seeking to become?
5. What aspects of that system do you think might most negatively contribute? That is, what habits and structures may have the tendency to malform you or at least make the life you desire and that God wants for you more difficult to attain?

Over the next week, try to become more conscious of your habits and structures. Pray that God would help you to see more clearly how the parts of your life you take for granted contribute to who you are and what your life is.

Part 2: Upon Further Review (Complete 1 Week Later)

1. Look back on your past week. What did you notice about your system? Can you add to the list of those habits and structures that help you become the person God wants you to become?
2. What else did you notice about those habits and structures that make it more difficult to attain the life you desire and that God lovingly calls you to?
3. What are some ways you might potentially increase the influence of what you mentioned in question 1 and diminish the effect of what you mentioned in the previous question?