

1 John 4:11–12 NLT

Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

We regularly follow unconscious routines. We don't think about them. They can be quite complex, and they account for about 40% of our actions per day. Everyone has them. They ensure people make good decisions without constantly asking for permission. Habits make it easier to work with others, even if you don't like them.

The brain creates routines (habits) to conserve willpower, which create an autonomous sense of control. It does this because we have a limited supply of willpower, and this is the brain's way of ensuring we have enough for dealing with difficult things. The brain, unfortunately, can't distinguish between good and bad habits.

Toxic patterns emerge when habits aren't planned. Habits can be ignored, changed, or replaced. Changing habits requires renewing the mind through hope for a new routine; love of God, ourselves, and others; and knowledge of next steps. The source of hope, love, and knowledge is God. The means of receiving hope, love, and knowledge is Christian community. To renew your mind, replace your current routine with Christian community.

This is why we love people at Shoreline City Church—all backgrounds, shapes, colors, sizes, education, salaries, single, married, young, old, churched, dechurched, and unchurchd. We understand that experiencing God's love from others and giving God's love to others transforms us and helps us experience freedom. As we pray and fast, we should remember those whose willpower is insufficient to achieve permanent freedom and ask God to give them the love and community they need to break free.

SC: THE POWER OF HABIT 02



Prayer:

Father God, thank You for freedom. You can empathize with our struggles because You sent Jesus who suffered the same temptations. You have offered us grace and mercy to help us in our time of need. Give us the strength through Your Holy Spirit to stand strong and receive community so that we may live lives of self-control and purpose according to Your will. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Additional Scriptures:

Psalm 50:15 | John 3:16–17 | Hebrews 4:15–16