

## GOLDEN: 7 Godly Habits That Change Everything. Community Group Host Book

### WELCOME TO GOLDEN

We are so excited that you are hosting a Vox Church Community Group for the next 7 weeks. God has put a burden and desire on our hearts to see people living in authentic Christian community all across New England, and community groups are the best way for us to see this dream come to life. Each week, Vox Church Community Groups gather in people's homes to talk about Jesus and encourage each other in their relationship with Him. Lives are transformed through these groups, and we are thrilled that you are joining us in this mission!

This Golden series explores 7 different habits of the Christian walk and examines how God uses each one to grow us into who we were created to be. This series is designed to help you and your group investigate further what following Christ looks like in your life. Through the video teachings and application questions, we pray these next 7 weeks will be an eye-opening journey for you as you discover the grace and freedom found in daily interactions with your Creator.

For the next 7 weeks, you and your group will be meeting weekly to watch a short video teaching by Lead Pastor Justin Kendrick, and will all participate in discussion using our application questions found in this Host Book. Before your group meeting, we strongly encourage you to preview the video teaching and read over the application questions. This will help you to familiarize yourself with the content and be best prepared for your group.

Again, we are so excited to partner with you in this series! The entire staff at Vox Church is praying for your group. We cannot wait to hear stories of God expanding your faith over the next 7 weeks! God Bless!

## Habit #1 Spend the First Hour of Your Day Alone With God.

*In this first video, we learn that there's something powerful and unique about meeting with God in the morning. Daily time with God is vital to your growth as a follower of Christ. As the group leader, you decide what format for answering these questions will work best. Will you break into groups of 2 or 3, men and women, or stay together as a whole group? The purpose of this session is to have individuals honestly assess their time with God and choose to embrace change and growth. After discussion, encourage everyone to participate in the practical application by choosing an accountability partner from the group.*

1. Ask a few members of the group to read Mark 1:35, Psalm 5:3, and Isaiah 50:4 aloud. What are these verses saying about the power of meeting with God in the morning?
2. What would it look like to give God your first and best in the morning? Think through and discuss the practical details of '*not speaking to any man before you speak to God*'. What adjustments would you need to make to your attitude, schedule, or routine in the morning?
3. In the video, Justin talked about meeting God in the desolate place. The desolate place can feel inconvenient, unfamiliar, or even boring. God may feel distant or we may feel unsure of how to interact with Him. What does your desolate place look or feel like? What practical steps can you take this week to enter into and embrace this desolate place with God?
4. In Mark 1:36 we see the disciples tell Jesus that '*everyone is looking for Him*'. Instead of reacting to that pressure, Jesus moves towards the next place God is directing Him. What are the demands that keep you from hearing God's voice? What is the correlation for you between meeting daily with God and hearing clearly from Him?

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION:** Are you willing to commit your first hour of the day with God? As a community, we place a high value on relationship and accountability. As we form this daily habit of the first hour alone with God, it's important that we support each other. This week our application is creating an accountability relationship with someone in this group. The purpose is to encourage and challenge one another to make the changes necessary and meet with God every morning for one hour. Take some time now and connect with someone for this purpose. *Please note: an accountability relationship can be personal and vulnerable; therefore, it should be two people of the same gender.*

## Habit # 2 – Share Your Faith Every Week

*Before beginning this video, take 10 minutes and allow group members to share their experiences this week with spending the first hour with God every day. Ask them to talk about any positive effect accountability has played in their life this week.*

*In this second video, Justin discusses the importance of sharing your faith. Questions # 4 and 5 will require the “Praying for Those Far From God” cards to be distributed.*

1. We learned this week about the importance of sharing your faith every week. What are your biggest struggles in sharing your faith? What practical steps can you take this week to overcome those fears and begin to share Christ with others?
2. Do you honestly treat prayer like it matters? In your spiritual journey, what role has prayer played? What hinders you from consistently praying for those in your life who are far from God?
3. Read Colossians 4:2-6. Talk about “walking in wisdom towards outsiders”. Think of areas of influence in your life (for example, your job, neighborhood, family, places you regularly go to, etc.). What would walking in wisdom look like there? Be specific – how would your words, actions, choices, etc. be affected by the wisdom God gives when we ask Him?
4. Remember, as we share Christ, we are not salesmen – we are people changed by the grace of God. Take a few minutes to complete the *Sharing My Story* side of the card distributed this week.  
*CG Host: take a moment and review the card together. Then, play some soft worship music as people complete their cards.*
5. Take a look at the *Praying for Those Far From God* side. We are going to commit, as a group, to pray for our loved ones who are far from God. Take a few moments and prayerfully ask God to show you the names you need to write on this card.  
*CG Host: take a moment and review this side of the card together, then play some soft worship music as people complete their cards. End the meeting praying for one another for boldness and faith to share their faith this week.*

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION:** Your group members will take home the *Praying for Those Far From God* cards. Encourage them to commit to praying for those on their list every day, and look for opportunities to share their faith.

### Habit # 3 Act on the Prompting of the Spirit.

*In this third video, Justin shares the importance of being available, attentive and willing to follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit. After discussing the questions, you may want to take some time and 'practice' hearing the promptings of God. This means asking God to speak something specific for someone else in the group. Take a few minutes waiting for God to speak. Perhaps, play some soft worship music while people are waiting on the Holy Spirit. Then, share what you feel God is saying. Remind your group members that this is a safe place to practice, but no one should feel pressured to respond. As the group leader, you decide whether you want to do this as a whole group or break into smaller groups.*

1. Take some time and talk about how you shared your faith this week.
2. Talk about a time you felt a "nudge from God". What did it sound, feel, look like? How did you respond? Be honest and share both the times you acted on that prompting and the times you didn't. What kept you from doing or saying what you felt God was guiding you to do?
3. How do humility and confidence play an important role in acting on the prompting of the Spirit? Which of these two areas do you need to grow in? Why do you sense this?
4. Read Acts 9:10-18. We see that initially Ananias struggled with the promptings from God. How do you struggle when you sense God nudging you? What emotions or thoughts try to scare you away from obeying the Holy Spirit? What practical steps can you take this week to lay those fears and hindrances down?
5. Have everyone write their name on a slip of paper. Place them in a bowl or a hat, then have everyone draw a name (someone else's name). Now, practice hearing God! Take some time and receive from God an encouraging word for the person whose name you drew. Write what you hear on that slip of paper. Allow about 5 minutes. Pass back the slips of paper to the appropriate people.

*You may want to play some quiet worship music as folks are seeking to hear God's voice.*

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION:** Every day this week, pray this prayer during your daily time with God: *Jesus, help me to develop a life that says to You: "I'm available, I'm attentive, I will act". Open my ears to hear you. Open my heart to say yes to Your promptings. Fill me with boldness and courage to act when You speak.*

This week you will find yourself in the 'immediate moments' where God may prompt you to pray for someone who is sick, share your faith, or speak some kind of encouragement to another. Don't be afraid to obey! Remember when you follow these promptings, miracles will follow you!

## Habit #4 Live Accountable to Sexual Boundaries

In this fourth video, we learn about the freedom and joy found as we live within sexual boundaries. After question #1, please split into groups of men and women. Be sure there's adequate space between the groups, so people feel free to talk honestly.

1. What happened last week when you responded to the Spirit's prompting? Briefly share one experience you had.

*Please note the following questions are to be discussed amongst people of the same gender. Gently remind the group that in order to create an environment where people are not afraid to be vulnerable, what is shared here is confidential.*

2. Justin talked about the "push your boundary" mindset that is prevalent in today's culture. How has this mindset impacted your sexuality? What struggles have you found yourself in when you've lived without sexual boundaries?
3. Do you resist the concept of sexual boundaries? Why is that? How does this resistance show itself in your everyday life? For example: your interactions with the opposite sex, your thoughts, what you watch or read, etc.
4. Justin mentioned two roads for freedom, joy, and peace in our sexuality. These roads are not very popular in today's society. The first is celibate singleness. The second is monogamous marriage between a man and a woman. Where are you in relation to these roads? How have they impacted your spiritual journey so far?
5. DISCUSS THE 4 BOUNDARIES:
  - The Boundary of My Brokenness: Have you faced this truth in your spiritual journey? What does this look like for you? Do you have a sense of your great need for God?
  - The Boundary of Accountability: Do you resist full disclosure to a trusted, same sex friend? Why? Are you willing to change this?
  - The Boundary of the Future Picture: What would your future look like if you followed compromise in sexual sin? What will your future look like as you live within God's boundaries for your sexuality?
  - The Boundary of Your New Identity: Review the verses Justin discussed (they are on your Participant Card). What truth is God saying to you about your identity?

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION:** Are you willing this week to begin living within God's boundaries for your sexuality? Here's some steps you can take:

1. Find a same sex, trusted friend to whom you can be accountable. Develop a 24-hour rule. This means if you find yourself outside these boundaries and walking in any sexual sin, you will reach out and confess to that friend within a 24-hour time period.
2. Take the scriptures from this week and write out statements of truth about yourself. For example: "I am a new creature in Christ, my old life has passed away. I live in the new life, the new identity that Jesus has given me." Speak these statements over your life each day. Confession of truth is powerful!

## Habit #5 Structure Your Finances Around Priority, Progressive, and Percentage Giving.

In this fifth habit, Justin unpacks the incredible joy that is found in the life of the generous. You may consider breaking into smaller groups for all the questions. This may allow people to talk more freely about their experiences and habits with giving. Before you end, gather together and pray for one another for freedom from fear, and to receive a generous spirit.

1. Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-9. Our culture often equates comfort & wealth with happiness. However, these verses describe a church that was joyful in persecution and generous even in poverty. How does this concept encourage you? How does this concept challenge you?
2. We see in verse 5 that they “gave themselves first to the Lord”. It takes a step of faith to engage in priority giving, that is – giving first to God before anything else. When we give like this, we are literally telling God that we trust Him to provide for us. Are you practicing this principle? Why or why not?
3. The church gave “according to their means, and beyond their means” (verse 3). The principle of percentage giving encourages us to start at 10% of our income. Does this challenge your trust in God? Share your experiences with percentage giving. How has your heart been changed by giving this way?
4. Verse 7 tells us to “see that you excel in this act of grace also”. The last principle Justin discussed was progressive giving. This is when we consistently (perhaps, annually) increase our giving unto God’s Church. How would this willingness to increase giving allow God to free you from fear, anxiety, tension, or trusting in money?
5. What fears are hindering you from freedom in the area of generosity? What would your life look like if you laid down those fears and practiced these 3 principles of financial stewardship? What steps will you take this week to trust God more with your finances?

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

Let's all take a step this week into one of the 3 giving principles we learned about today.

**PRIORITY GIVING:** Am I giving to God before I spend money on anything else? If not, start here. Take the first step of faith and trust in God and give the first & best to Him. As you settle your heart in this area and become willing to trust God with your money, consider following the "Percentage Giving" application.

**PERCENTAGE GIVING:** This concept tells us to give the first 10% (or the tithe) to God. Choose to take this step for the next 3 months and watch how God works in your heart and life.

**PROGRESSIVE GIVING:** As believers, we desire to excel in our spiritual lives – this includes excelling in our giving. This week, prayerfully consider your finances and ask God to show you how He wants you to increase your giving. As you trust God in this, He will free you from fear, anxiety and worry.

## WHICH STEP IS GOD LEADING YOU TO TAKE?

*Proverbs 11:24 "The world of the generous gets larger and larger;  
the world of the stingy gets smaller and smaller."*



## Habit #6 Practice living by grace through a weekly Sabbath.

This week we learn about the importance of rest and taking a weekly Sabbath. Be sure to have pens available and allow time for people in your group to answer question # 5. There is space for them to write on the back of their participant cards.

1. Honestly discuss your schedule – that is, your patterns and habits of busyness. On your spiritual journey have you learned the importance of rest or does life keep you constantly running?
2. Justin talked about the importance of returning to the Source to find rest for our souls. How would you describe your daily, devotional time with God? Do you consistently expect to hear His voice through Scripture? Do you lean heavily on material other than the Bible (for example, books, podcasts, etc)? What practical changes would you like to make this week in this area?
3. Read Matthew 11:28-30. Do you see this happening in your life on a consistent basis? In other words, what is the condition of your soul? Is it in a constant state of weariness or stress or are you refreshed and rested? Why is this? What habits or choices are you making that are determining the state of your soul? What steps would you like to make this week to live with a rested soul?
4. What would it look like for you to relinquish control and create space to follow God's command to honor the Sabbath? Is this difficult for you? Why or why not?
5. It is in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Sabbath helps us rediscover ourselves in Christ. It's through this time we spend being refreshed that we find out our value and identity is not based on who we are, what we do, or who we know. It's found in Christ.

Spend the next 5 minutes brainstorming some things to get you on the path to Sabbath. Use the back portion of your participant card.

Wrap up by sharing one or two things God has shown you.

### 3 ELEMENTS OF SABBATH:

- **PAUSE:** cease from work. This includes both paid & unpaid labor, household chores & responsibilities and all the things we do to 'catch up' on our day off.
- **PRAY:** spend special, extended time in worship, Bible reading and prayer.
- **PLAY:** engage in life-giving activities with family & friends.

### PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

Sabbath will not happen without planning and preparation. Make time in the next few days to intentionally plan your Sabbath days for a whole month. Here's some suggestions:

- Involve those who are affected by this. Talk to your family or spouse.
- Make a list of what you'd need to do in order to truly Sabbath. (i.e., grocery shopping, chores, etc.)
- Be sure include all three elements of Sabbath. (for example, for PLAY – make plans with family or friends to do something fun.)
- Mark the Sabbath days on your calendar.
- Be accountable to someone in this.

## Habit #7 Build a circle of discipleship.

This week, we unpack the seventh Golden Habit. In this video, we learn how rewarding it is to be a believer who engages in making disciples. Perhaps as a group, take some time to pray for one another. Pray specifically that God would strengthen and increase these habits in each person's life.

1. Share your experience with Sabbath this past week. If it was a struggle, what seemed to hinder you? What practical steps can you take this week to enter into that Sabbath rest. If you did practice Sabbath this week, how did it impact you?
2. This week we learned about making disciples. What do you think might stop you from replicating these disciplines in the life of others? (for example: fear, apathy, insecurity, lack of time, etc.) What changes can you make so that you can obey the words of Jesus and 'make disciples'?
3. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:3-6, and answer the following questions:
  - a.) Why do you think a pure motive is important in discipling others? How could impure motives hurt or hinder another's growth?
  - b.) What does a spiritual family look like in your everyday life? Who are the spiritual fathers, mothers, brothers, & sisters in your life? How do you each go above and beyond for one another?
  - c.) Do you willingly share not only what you know about God, but also your life as well? This means your time and your resources. If not, why not? What is holding you back? What will you do differently this week to share your life with others?

### PRACTICAL APPLICATION

This week's application is two-fold. Spend some time seeking God about this area of making disciples. Then journal what He shows you in response to these questions. Don't be discouraged if it takes some time to find the answers to these questions. Keep faithfully seeking. God will speak to you.

1. Who is my spiritual family? Have I expressed appreciation for them lately?
2. If you're not sure who you would call 'spiritual family', ask God to begin showing you 2 or 3 people of the same gender who can be family to you. Those you can share your life with. Those who can help you grow as a Christian. Ask God for the courage to reach out to those He shows you.
3. Ask God to show you 2 or 3 people of the same gender who you can help disciple. That is, a few with whom you could share these 7 Golden Habits with. A few who you could share

not only what you know about God, but also your life. Receive the strength and courage to act and reach out to those God shows you.

*Please note: we encourage same gender discipleship due to the personal and vulnerable nature of learning to walk in Christ.*