

Atomic Faith

Part III: Make It Attractive

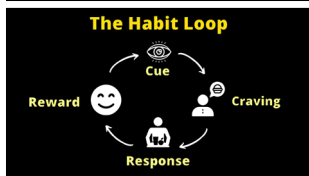
July 27, 2025



Today we're learning to make our faith **irresistible!** Cuz, the truth is we *don't* do what we *should* do – we *do* what *looks* good cuz we assume it *feels* good! And since it's our perception of *potential* benefits that *pull us in*, if we want our *faith* to have the kind of *gravity* that *guides* us – we have to see it as something we *want* to do, not just something we *ought* to do. So, **is your faith attractive?**



I mean it – on a scale of *one* to *ten*, how *craveable* is your *current* walk with God compared to, *say*, a walk in the *park* with a *loved one*? How about compared to a walk in the *park* with a *loved one* – when you realize there's a *music festival* with your *favorite band* going on? And there's *carnival rides* – and *food trucks* with *corndogs* and *funnel cake* – and a *beer garden*, with promotional *giveaways*!



Does your daily *faith* feel that enticing? Well that *should* be the goal, cuz **our most appealing options become our most consistent choices.** And until we see something as *desirable*, we'll *treat* it as *disposable*. Cuz as we've been *learning* for a few weeks, we live our *lives* by our *habits* – and *each one* is *driven* by a loop started by something we *see* that *cues* a *craving* for something we *want* – which *leads* us to *respond* with an *action* that's aimed at *obtaining* that *reward*. So, the *premise* of this series is simple: **hack our habits to be more holy by stacking faith into each step.** And last week, we learned to *use* our *cues* for *faithful* purposes by making them obvious by *design* – so *this week*, we're gonna learn to capitalize on the *cravings* in our loops by making *faith* more *attractive*. Cuz **obvious things steal our attention, but attractive things hold our attention.** And *longer retention* means bigger *changes* to our *intention* – the way that the *smell* of a *pie* can *stop* you in your tracks but the *thought* of *potentially eating* a *piece* *pulls* you to *pursue* like a cartoon in a *trance* of *temptation* that *overrides* our *willpower*. The way David sees *Scripture*:



I have not departed from Your laws, for You Yourself have taught me. [But after that power makes him pause, it's his taste of a potential payoff that has pull.] How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! – Psalms 119:102-103 NIV

And *that's* the *trick* that makes habits *stick*; *perspective*. Cuz **habits aren't built on a sense of duty, they're built on a promise of joy.** Like the way I used to *hate* making my *bed* until my wife said, **"When you make the bed, it feels like you're saying you love me."** She *stacked* the task with a whole *new meaning* to make me see a *reward* I *already want*. So *now*, I *don't have to* do something I *dread* and make the *bed* – I get to do something I *like* and I tell my wife **"I love you"** ... by rearranging some *pillows* and *blankets*. And in the *same way*, David *doesn't ever have to study Scripture*, he gets to *savor a tasty treat*... *by reading God's Word*. And likewise, we can change the *taste* of our *faith* so it *looks so good* – that it *redirects* our *routines*; it just takes the 7 keys to *attraction* from *Atomic Habits*.

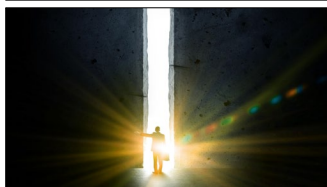


And we've already begun with key **1. Desire Drives Discipline**. Ever heard of *dopamine*? Your *brain* has – and it's *addicted*! And scientists used to think it was just the “feel good” chemical for *pleasure* – until it was *studied* in a 1954 experiment that *blocked* it in rats. Cuz *depriving* dopamine *didn't* lead to a *loss of pleasure* – they *lost the will to live*! The rats wouldn't *eat, drink, or move* and even when scientists *fed* them sugar, they *liked* it, but wouldn't *seek* it – and eventually *died*. But, when *others* had dopamine *restored*, they *sprang to life* – and we *discovered there's a big difference between liking and desiring*! Basically, we can *like* the things we *have* – but we can *desire* the things we *don't*!

And that means *desire* alone includes *hope*! And **hope always outweighs what we have** cuz today's *pleasure* is *finite* but *tomorrow's potential* is *infinite*. So *getting* what we *like* doesn't make dopamine *spike*, it's *hoping* for what we *desire* that makes it *fire*! And it's the *craving*, not the *completing*, that drives *behavior* cuz **the motivation for today is built on anticipation of tomorrow!** And since our *heart* is the *home* of our *hope*, we're warned to *carefully train* what it wants:

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. – Proverbs 4:23 NIV

Pleasure is the *response* to what we've already *received*, but because *desire* is focused on a *more fruitful future*, our *heart* pulls us *forward* toward that *hope*. Which means **we won't have habits of spiritual discipline until we have hope of spiritual reward**. And to turn our faith from *obligation* into *anticipation*, we gotta learn to *do* key **2. Make Temptation a Tool**.



Who here has ever *given in* to *temptation*? Me too! *Why*? Cuz it's *designed* to create and fulfill *desire* all at once! The *cheesier* cracker, the *fancier* phone, and the *trendier* tank top all *tempt* us to chase *their reward* because **our habits can be controlled by hijacking our hope!** However – once we *acknowledge* that *unfortunate* reality, we can *weaponize* it! Cuz **if the world can co-opt your cravings, so can you.** Y'see, temptation *isn't* the problem – *misplaced* temptation is. And the same way a smoker can *swap* the desire for *cigarettes* for the *promise* of personal, social, and financial profit – we can *replace* the temptation of *earthly* rewards with a desire for our *faith's* more *fulfilling future*:

Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. – Psalm 37:4 NIV

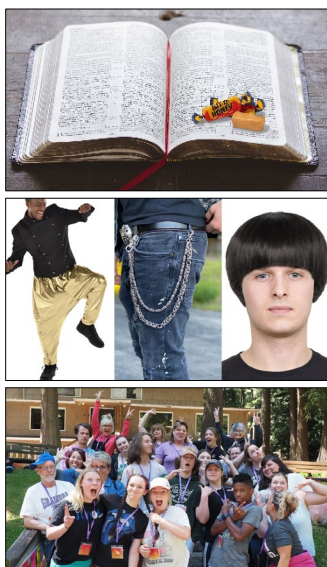
Get it? Train yourself to *desire* what God wants to *give* and you'll naturally *love* the *life* you *live*. So, while *this* world works to *continually* create *ever-crispier* crusts for *even ooyier-gooey low-carb, high-protein* pizzas that *promise* to provide the *easy* answer to the *perfect* dinner you've always *hoped* for – we should be consistently *collecting* all the ways our *faith* can fulfill our *higher* desires for *community, comfort, purpose, power, understanding, acceptance* and *love*! Cuz **focusing on faith's rewards automatically rewires temptation**. And the *more* we look *past face-value*, the *more* we can *see* *faith's* value. And when we start to see the *superiority* of *God's* rewards, we *manufacture* new motivation cuz we *trust* every facet of our faith leads to an *awesome* outcome! But, to *center* ourselves on *that* perspective, we gotta practice key **3. Cultivate Your Cravings**



And Clear offers an easy and effective *model* to increase the *appeal* of new habits in what he calls “*temptation bundling*.” For example, when ABC launched their 2014 Thursday night lineup of *Grey's Anatomy*, *Scandal*, and *How to Get Away with Murder* – they didn’t just *advertise* the shows; they *bundled* the *experience* to make it more *attractive* by calling it “*TGIT; Thank God It’s Thursday*” and telling *viewers* to pour a glass of *red wine*, make *popcorn*, and settle in for a relaxing *escape*. And slowly, people weren’t just *watching* TV – they were *anticipating* a whole experience. Popcorn, wine, and those Shonda Rhimes shows became a *bundled craving* that *cleverly included* the *new habit* the *network* wanted.

Cuz similar to *habit stacking*, *temptation bundling* is a foolproof way to *trick* ourselves into *forcing* the little changes *reinforce* our new *identity*. All we have to do is **pair something we already want with something we want to want**. Cuz *cravings* aren’t conquered by *willpower*, they’re *rewired* by *attaching* rewards. Ask electrical *engineering* student Ronan Byrne – he *wished* he would spend the same time *exercising* that he already spent watching *Netflix*. So, he used his skills to modify a *stationary bike* so *Netflix* only played if he *pedaled* a *certain speed*. And *now*, if he lets his *desired* habit *slip*, he feels his favorite *reward* slip away. *It’s that easy!* So, remember **more faith doesn’t mean losing what we love – it means using what we love**. You can still *watch* TV, play *video games*, scroll the *socials*, and *go out to eat* – just **make your holy habit the requirement for those rewards!** And then, you’ll start *anticipating* it because you’re *equating* it with rewards of the *whole* experience.

Eat honey, my son, for it is good; honey from the comb is sweet to your taste. **[But,]** Know also that wisdom is like honey for you: **[cuz when you develop that kind of desire]** If you find it, there is a future hope for you, and your *hope* will not be cut off. – Proverbs 24:13-14 NIV



Look, Scripture says to see *wisdom* like *honey* so you’ll *desire* it *like* sweets – so **there’s nothing wrong with bundling a bit o’ honey with your Bible as training for that craving!** All we’re doing is wrapping *new habits* in our *favorite rewards* to give *them* the *power* of attraction through a positive *association*. So, to better cultivate *faithful* cravings, we need to *recognize* and *weaponize* what *already has* that *attraction* by *bundling* and exploring keys 4, 5, and 6: The power of *peer pressure*, *positivity*, and *progress*; so let’s look at **4. The Power of Peer Pressure**

Remember Hammer pants, wallet chains, and bowl cuts? Lord knows *they* weren’t attractive, so why’d we *line up* to *get in* on the trend? Well, we’re *herd* animals, so **acceptance is incredibly attractive cuz we already crave community**. And as Clear says, to attain acceptance, **“We imitate the habits of the close, the many, and the powerful.”** So, find *faithful* versions of *each*, to make you crave *their* acceptance!

[Like Paul said] Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. – 1 Corinthians 11:1 NIV

Did you know that your chances of *becoming* obese *increase* by 57% if just *one* friend becomes obese. Well imagine the impact *each* friend with *faith* would have! And to find them, remember *churches* were designed to keep *crowds* of them *close* to *collectively* imitate Christ’s *powerful* character!

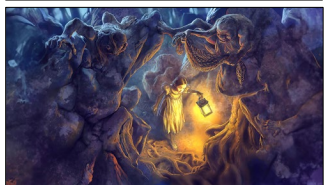
So, like we said last week, saturate your surroundings with people who *have* the *faithful* habits *you* desire, and they'll become so *attractive*, you'll *start* imitating without even *trying*! And as that change occurs, so will your *perspective*, as you discover key **5. The Power of Positivity**



Since *all* our *current cravings* are aimed at *future rewards*, as Clear says, **“Our behavior is heavily dependent on these predictions.”** And the more confidently we can predict the *positive outcome* of a *present action*, the more *attractive* the option *becomes*! So, like *acceptance*, **affirmation is instinctually attractive** cuz *positive* perceptions make motivation *emotional*. So, we must use the *words* that *support* positive expectations; the way studies *proved* saying **“I don’t”** instead of **“I can’t”** increases follow-through cuz **“I don’t”** suggests you *could* do it in the future, but **“I can’t”** cuts off a loop from any possibility of reaching a reward. So, **talk your faithful habits up to increase appeal!**

[Like] Better is one day in [God’s] courts than a thousand elsewhere. – Psalm 84:10 NIV

This week, flip your phrases from “have to” into “get to.” Speak your identity into existence and watch your perspective change. Like Clear says, **“We can find evidence for whatever mind-set we choose”** And when you “get to” go to church – our faith feels more attractive cuz it turns our attention from how *far* we are – to how *close* we’re getting, thanks to key **6. The Power of Progress**



Has anyone ever asked you, **“Have you lost weight?”** How’d it feel? Now imagine if someone asked, **“Are you at your goal weight yet?”** How would *that* feel? That’s because **celebrating present progress is way more attractive than focusing on future attempts.** And there’s nothing more *motivating* than momentum cuz it means our *cravings* are *working* to keep our positive habit loops *spinning*! And that’s *everything* we could want since our plan for atomic faith is based on *sustaining* small holy habits *not* racing toward righteousness! Cuz

The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter **[slowly climbing into the sky]** till the full light of day. – Proverbs 4:18 NIV

Remember, focusing on *repetitions*, *not* results, builds faithful *habits*. Cuz every single step toward God is worth celebrating when we crave *getting closer*; and to keep your course *clear*, it takes key **7. Let Love Lead Life.**

[Jesus plainly told us:] ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. – Matthew 22:37-38 NIV

At the end of the day, habits *stick* when they *align* with what we *love*. And as Clear writes, **“Every behavior has a surface-level craving and a deeper underlying motive.”** You don’t *scroll* because you love your *phone*; you scroll cuz you’re craving *acceptance*, *affirmation*, or *improvement*. That’s *not* a *sin*; that’s a signal. Your soul is *hungry*. And **the love of God is at the core of all human craving.** So to help us *see* it, *here’s* this week’s *challenge*: pick something you *already love* and make your *holy habit* the *requirement* for *that reward*! Cuz even *popcorn* and *wine* can *lead* us to love the Lord!

Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.