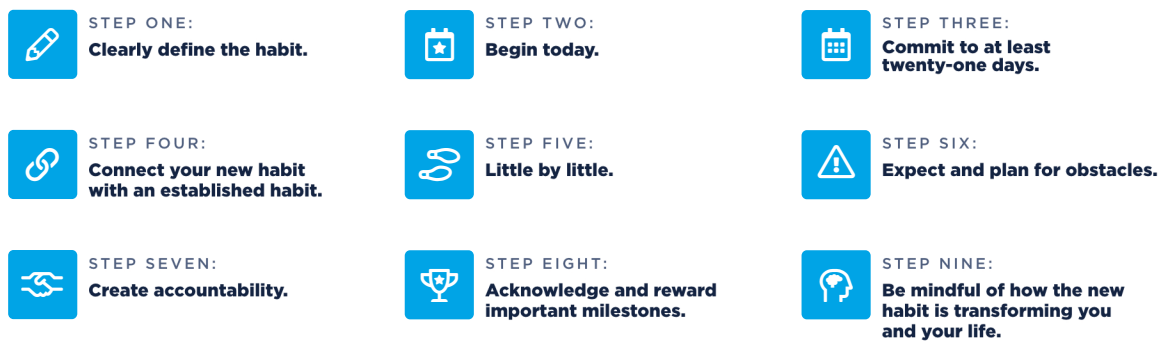


# 9 STEPS TO Forming a New Habit

"Those who fail to plan, can plan to fail" was one of Benjamin Franklin's observations. It applies to our discussion of habits. Without a clear plan, it is very unlikely we will establish the habit of daily prayer in our lives. So, what are the steps we need to take to plant a new habit in our lives? Let's go through them, keeping in mind that these steps apply to establishing any new habit in our lives. Then we will circle back and discuss what each means in relation to specifically establishing the habit of daily prayer.



Now let's consider what each step means in relation to daily prayer.

## **Step One: Clearly define the habit.**

Spend ten minutes each day in conversational prayer with God.

## **Step two: Begin today.**

You already know everything you need to know in order to begin today. So don't delay. Other habits may require preparation time before you can begin, but this one does not.

## **Step three: Commit to at least twenty-one days.**

Put it on your calendar. Make it a sacred priority in your daily schedule. Nothing is more important than this ten-minute period for the next twenty-one days.

## **Step four: Connect your new habit with an established habit.**

Know exactly when you are going to pray each day by connecting it to something else you already do daily. For example, practice your daily prayer after you have your coffee in the morning.

### **Step five: Little by little.**

Be patient with yourself and the process. You may have a desire to pray for much longer than ten minutes each day. That's great! But take it little by little. Perhaps your desire is to spend thirty minutes in prayer each day. Begin with ten minutes each day for a week, and then move to fifteen minutes a day for a week, then twenty, and so on. I would rather you pray for ten minutes every day without missing a day than pray for thirty minutes inconsistently.

### **Step six: Expect and plan for obstacles.**

Every new habit encounters opposition. Some of it comes from within us and some of it comes from outside. Don't be surprised; expect it. Some days you just won't feel like praying, because you are tired, or more likely because you don't want to face something that is happening within you. You don't become an Olympic athlete by practicing only when you feel like it, and you won't establish this life-giving habit of prayer in your life if you pray only when you feel like it.

### **Step seven: Create accountability.**

Ask someone to hold you accountable to pray every day for the first twenty-one days, and then at agreed-upon intervals after that.

### **Step eight: Acknowledge and reward important milestones.**

Celebrate your first day, your first week, twenty-one days, your first month, three months, your first year, and so on. We celebrate to remind our souls of what is important, and this is important.

### **Step nine: Be mindful of how the new habit is transforming you and your life.**

This will strengthen your resolve to continue honoring this habit of prayer by making it a daily priority.