

Right Attitudes for Faithfulness

It is clear to every Bible student, you cannot be faithful to the Lord if your attitude is not in keeping with the teachings of Christ (Phil. 2:5; Col. 3:17). Attitude has to do with the content of your mind, your disposition and the control you exercise over your emotions.

The simple truth is, the New Testament is loaded with teaching, examples, prohibitions and warnings about attitude. This spiritually healthy instruction should be the basis of our discipline over our mind. Your attitude toward God is basic. All other phases of attitude are rooted in your attitude toward God. We must hold Him in the highest esteem, revere Him, worship Him and obey Him with wholehearted love and trust (Eccl. 5:1,2; Matt. 22:37; Rom. 12:1,2; Prov. 1:7).

Once your attitude toward God begins to weaken, all other phases of attitude will likely deteriorate. Let us be aware of this and constantly monitor our attitude toward God, seeking to enrich our relationship with Him. Your attitude toward Christ is a component of your attitude toward God. If God is your father, you will love His Son (Jno. 8:42). If you love God and want to obey Him, you will have a favorable and grateful acceptance of His Son, Jesus Christ. You will regard Him as the perfect expression of deity and humanity, the spotless Son of God who died in order for you to be free from sin and enjoy eternal life. Likewise, you will read and study about His attitude with the highest esteem, seeking to imitate Him in all your behavior.

Your attitude toward others develops out of your reverence for Deity. If you believe in God and follow His Son, your behavior toward others will be based on that. You will seek to do all God has said about how to treat people. You will study and follow the compassion of Christ, as well as His boldness in seeking to save the lost. His relationship to others becomes your pattern (see 1 Pet. 2:18-25).

Your attitude toward other members of God's family will be suitable, in keeping with all that is written about such relationships. Peter teaches God's people to "love one another fervently with a pure heart," (1 Pet. 1:22), and John taught extensively that "we should love one another," (1 John 3:11). "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you," (Eph. 4:32).

Our attitude must endeavor to follow the pattern of unselfish humility demonstrated by our Lord (Phil. 2:1-5). Your attitude toward sin will be fitting. To remain right with God, it is necessary to maintain an abhorrence of sin (Rom. 12:9). If you court the favor of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God (Jas. 4:4). It is essential to arm yourself with "the same mind" or attitude Jesus had against sin and error (1 Pet. 4:10).

Your attitude toward life should be realistic and godly, not bitter and angry. If you murmur and complain about your life, and this becomes your habitual attitude - you cannot be what you should be! And when you get to this low state, you need to stop and recognize that the devil has seduced and maneuvered you into this state of constant anger and resentment. While you remain in this mood you cannot develop the love described in 1 Cor. 13:4-7, and you cannot grow and taste the kindness of the Lord (1 Pet. 2:1-3).

In the "beatitudes" (Matt. 5:3-12), the Lord addresses every phase or direction of attitude: Your attitude toward God (poor in spirit & hungering and thirsting after righteousness), your attitude toward yourself (meek), your attitude toward others (merciful), your attitude toward those who oppose you (vss. 10-13), and your attitude toward sin (mourn and purity in heart). Growth and faithfulness depends upon the constant development of these qualities.

- by Warren Berkley

Must One Be Baptized To Be Saved?

"Must" expresses compulsion, obligation, or certainty. The Bible clearly teaches that one must be baptized to be saved.

1. The Jews On Pentecost Were Baptized To Be Saved: When they asked, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37), they were told, "Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ..." (Acts 2:38). Those who gladly received his word were baptized (Acts 2:41).

2. The People Of Samaria Were Baptized To Be Saved: When Philip went down to Samaria, he preached Christ (Acts 8:5), and "both men and women were baptized" (Acts 8:12).

3. The Man Of Ethiopia Was Baptized To Be Saved: Philip preached Jesus to the man of Ethiopia (Acts 8:35). Upon the man's confession of faith in Christ (Acts 8:37), "both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and he baptized him" (Acts 8:38).

4. Saul of Tarsus Was Baptized To Be Saved: Saul was instructed, by Jesus, to go into Damascus where he would be told what he "must do" (Acts 9:6). Ananias told Saul, "arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Acts 9:18 shows that Saul arose and was baptized.

5. Cornelius And His Household Were Baptized To Be Saved: This devout man, along with his house, upon hearing the Word of God, were commanded "to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48).

6. Lydia And Her Household Were Baptized To Be Saved: Lydia and her household heard the Word of the Lord spoken by Paul and were baptized (Acts 16:14, 15).

7. The Philippian Jailer and His Household Were Baptized To Be Saved: He asked Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). He believed (Acts 16:31), was penitent (Acts 16:33) and was baptized (Acts 16:33).

8. The Corinthians Were Baptized To Be Saved: Acts 18:8 says, "many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptized."

9. The Ephesians Were Baptized To Be Saved: When those of Ephesus heard God's Word, "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5).

Have you been baptized to be saved?

- by Johnie Paul Edwards

New Year's Checklist

With the start of the new year there will be plenty of planning, evaluating, resolving, and promising. Much of this will center on worthwhile and needed changes in things that pertain to our physical life. We'll commit to diets, exercise routines, strict financial budgets, and other goals that are aimed at improving various areas of our existence. Why not spend some time doing the same thing about our spiritual performance? May we suggest the following checklist?:

a.. Pray: Commit yourself to prayer every day, and several times each day. And think about more than a few brief moments before meals and at bedtime. Devote yourself to some serious time in prayer. Pray for those who are sick and hurting, but don't forget to pray for the church, the elders and deacons, the lost, those who are struggling spiritually, those who are laboring in hard places, and the work of the kingdom in every place.

b.. Study: We all need constant exposure to the Word of God. It is our guide in every aspect of our lives. Be determined to read your Bible every day. Additionally, you can find a variety of articles in bulletins, on the internet, and in various publications. There are worthwhile books on a host of subjects available. A word of caution is in order: be careful about things written by men. While there is much to be gained from human sources, there is always the danger of false teaching. Carefully compare what you read to the truth of His Word.

c.. Worship: It is hard to imagine a more worthwhile goal than committing to attend every service of the local congregation. Times of Bible study and worship are a great encouragement and blessing. When you miss these, you miss something good, AND your presence is missed by others. Be here!

d.. Teach: We all know many people who are lost in sin. Teach them! Invite someone to services. Set up a class. Look for chances to discuss spiritual things. You can do it!

e.. Live a pure life: Do not fail to keep yourself morally pure. You, of course, must do this to be right with God. But you should remember that others are looking at your example.

Let's have a great new year in His service!

- by Greg Gwin