

A Good Attitude

The posture of one's mind makes him what he is. Words and deeds are mere reflections of the heart. It is highly important to develop a good attitude. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). Here are some ways in which it is imperative that one show a good attitude:

Toward the Word of God

God gave us the divine word to guide us. We are not capable of directing our own steps (Jer. 10:23). God's revelation shows us the way out of darkness into light, out of sin into righteousness, out of gloom into hope, out of failure into success, out of misery into joy, out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of Christ.

When Paul preached the gospel to the Thessalonians long ago, they displayed a good attitude toward the truth. They received the word of God, "not as the word of men, but as it is in the truth, the word of God" (1 Thess. 2:13). God's word is to be revered and obeyed because it is the word of God. To have the right attitude toward God necessitates the right attitude toward His word. This is the disposition to believe and yield to the authority of His will.

Toward Correcting Faults

No matter how terrible a mistake one may make, there is hope if he shows a good attitude. David did not have that kind of attitude immediately after he had committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah. For a time, he attempted to conceal his guilt. He wanted to shift the blame. It was not until Nathan the prophet pointed the finger of accusation straight toward David, using the parable of the little ewe lamb, that the proper attitude developed. **David humbly admitted his guilt.** God put away his sin, and from that time on, David was of a different disposition toward what he had done. If a person has a good attitude toward correcting his faults, he does not become angry with one who lovingly points out his sins, nor does he resent attempts to help him overcome his weaknesses.

Toward Daily Work

Every person is free to choose his occupation. Whether one decides to be a plumber, doctor, lawyer, salesman, farmer, teacher, engineer, policeman, or something else, his mental outlook toward his vocation has strong bearing on success versus failure. Some people complain constantly of their work, the low pay, the horrible conditions under which they labor day by day, and the general misery that they experience. One wonders why they do not change jobs. Is their work really all that bad, or is it a matter of attitude?

Other people have the kind of attitude that makes their daily work a joy. They have been careful to choose the kind of vocation that enables them to do what they really want to do. Their frame of mind contributes to their being successful and feeling a sense of accomplishment. This good attitude toward their chosen field of work enables them to cope with unpleasant situations which may arise.

Toward Solving Problems

Perplexing and distressing developments have a way of surfacing in all human relationships. Problems may arise in the church, in the home, in our work, in school, in the neighborhood, in business transactions, and in numerous other connections. It is a bit unrealistic to expect life on this earth to be free of problems, and it is equally visionary to expect our problems to automatically vanish.

Like the poor, some problems are always with us. But the person who has a good frame of mind toward the solving of his problems, whatever they may be, is to be commended. In many cases, our attitude toward a problem is half the solution. With a good attitude we can approach the problem objectively, view it sensibly, and handle it wisely. Even if the problem is never fully solved, a good attitude will provide the means to forge ahead and not be unduly upset or hindered.

Toward Trials

The times in which we live are trying to our souls. Evil forces are pulling and tugging at us. On every hand there are temptations to sin. Young people who want to do right have an especially difficult task. So many of today's youth have imbibed the "do as you please" philosophy. Drugs, illicit sex, insistence on one's rights to gratify his lusts no matter how others

may be injured, intoxication, profanity, lying, stealing-these and other evils are increasingly prevalent among young people.

The Bible warns that all who do right will be subjected to fiery trials. Old and young alike may expect pressures and temptations. We must learn to have a good attitude in the face of whatever trials come our way. "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial . . ." (Jas. 1:12, NASB). With the proper attitude toward trials the Christian keeps his faith, prays for strength, rejoices that tribulations empower him to develop patience, and draws comfort from the promises of God.

What is your attitude toward the word of God, toward correcting your faults, toward your daily work, toward solving problems, and toward trials? May each one of us examine self and work to develop an improved attitude in all these vital areas.

- by Irvin Himmel

Forgiveness (1st in a series)

Jesus was clear that forgiving others is absolutely critical to our own salvation: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14-15) It is, therefore, essential that we properly understand this important subject.

First, when a problem arises, we must determine if the issue involves sin or not. If there is no sin, then we can and should forgive unilaterally. For example, if someone simply 'hurt my feelings' or I felt slighted in some way, there is no sin in that. Perhaps it was an oversight, or maybe a case of bad judgment, but there was no sin. In such cases I don't even need to address the other person. I can just let that pass. Certainly, I ought not let this linger or cause hard feelings. I can simply 'let it go'.

Jesus described this type of unilateral forgiveness in Luke 7:41,42: "*There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?*" The Lord's point is clear – those who are forgiven the most are, or at least should be, the most grateful. But notice the scenario He described. Two men incurred debt. There's no inherent sin in that. The creditor just waived the debt on his own, and without conditions. We can do the same, and we ought to do so. Often Christians are much too sensitive, even petty, about the issues that they allow to become major problems. When no sin is involved we need to forgive unconditionally.

However, things change when sin is involved. More on that next week . . .

- by Greg Gwin