

A Question Of Attitude

Living a Christian life demands that we develop right attitudes and motivations.

In this article I wish to highlight certain attitudes that we should **not** develop.

Has anyone ever accused you of being in a “*bad attitude*”?

What exactly is a bad attitude?

Do you always recognise when you are in a “*bad attitude*”?

Some people are only in a “*good attitude*” when everything is going well for them, when their needs are fulfilled to their own satisfaction.

But is there any merit in that?

Can you be in a good attitude when you are sick or when you lose your job, or when people spread false rumours about you?

Can you still fully live the Christian life when things get really tough?

Attitude spells success or failure, depending on whether the attitude is good or bad.

A good attitude can mean a happy home, a pleasant job situation, genuine friendships and most certainly a closer relationship with the Creator God.

A bad attitude can result in broken homes, unhappy surroundings, frustration and loneliness.

As a true Christian, having the right attitude is all-important, for the Creator God judges us according to our attitudes!

Having a right attitude is the key to our receiving a place in the created family of God, the Kingdom of God.

Consider the criterion the Creator God used to choose David to be king over Israel.

When God told Samuel, His priest and prophet, to go to the house of Jesse to find out which of Jesse’s sons God would select to replace King Saul, Samuel first looked, as we all do, at the sons’ appearances, [1 Samuel 16:1-6].

God told Samuel why He chose David instead of his brothers, this is how God chooses people to become part of His created family.

1 Samuel 16:7 [New King James] *“But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’”*

What made David and **not** his brothers, a man after God’s own heart?

Acts 13:22 [New King James] *“And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.’”*

Notice David was a man after God's own heart because he was willing to fulfil all of God's will, not his own will but God's.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

It is a person who out of gratitude for who and what the Creator God is and what He has done for all of humanity, willingly surrenders their whole life to the Creator God, whom God will then re-educate them to become acceptable to receive the gift of a place in His created family and eternal life.

This mental frame of mind, wanting to obey and serve the Creator God, is the essence of a right attitude.

The willingness to be shown and correct error is also an important part of a right attitude.

Despite of David's many sins, and none of us are without sin [**Romans 3:23**], David was willing to admit sin and seek to **not** repeat it.

Read **Psalms 51:1-17** to see the attitude that David had when he was shown his sin.

Matthew 21:28-32 [New King James] *“But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said to Him, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.’”*

Jesus Christ gives us this striking example to illustrate the importance of correcting wrong when it is shown us.

We need to ask which of these two sons do we resemble?

Let us now examine briefly four major aspects of wrong attitudes –

We all have wrong attitudes from time to time, and we need to overcome them.

When we do, we make a giant step towards being given a place in the created family of God, the Kingdom of God.

Constantly finding fault –

Some people constantly look for faults in other people.

They criticise and condemn, making themselves judges.

This ‘wanting-to-find-fault’ attitude makes them feel superior, fills them with self-righteousness.

Do you realise that you can never enter into God's Kingdom until you get rid of this attitude?

Matthew 7:1-3 [New King James] *“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?”*

Satan was the first to develop and exercise this fault-finding attitude.

As the archangel Lucifer, before he became Satan, he found fault with the Creator God's government and began to want to take God's place, [Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:12-15].

Satan influenced a third of all the angels to develop this same rebellious attitude towards the Creator God, convincing them to join him in an unsuccessful attempt to knock God off of His throne, [Revelation 12:3-4, 7-9].

Then, after God created the first man and woman, Satan convinced Eve that God was wrong to forbid Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of what was good and evil.

The couple believed Satan and disobeyed God, [Genesis 3:1-6].

Satan continues to tempt humanity to decide what is good and what is evil themselves, not looking to God's Word, the Christian Bible, as the standard by which we judge good and evil.

When their disobedience was exposed, Adam's answer was typical of any person who wants to justify themselves by accusing someone else.

Adam did not consider he should be blamed for his disobedience, [Genesis 3:12].

Eve, when confronted by God, also put the blame on someone else, [Genesis 3:13].

All things considered, Adam probably thought that the fault for the whole incident was the Creator God's, since He had created the serpent, Satan, who in turn, deceived the woman who had convinced Adam to eat of the fruit.

This type of reasoning is called "human logic," that enables us to blame others for our shortcomings and wrongdoings.

Before it is too late in our life, we need to get rid of this 'always-wanting-to-find-fault' attitude.

Being willing to forgive –

We have to ask ourselves, do we easily forgive other people who hurt us?

Most of us do **not** have a forgiving attitude, rather in some way we want to get even with those who have hurt us.

This may be our response without really knowing what we are doing.

We want to vindicate ourselves to prove our own righteousness.

But one thing is very sure, if we do **not** forgive other people, we will **not** be forgiven by the Creator God for our own sins.

Matthew 6:12, 14-15 [New King James] *"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." ... "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*

We need to use this as a powerful incentive to forgive those who hurt us.

The Creator God is love, [1 John 4:8, 16] and is always willing to forgive us if we truly repent of our sins, and He wants us to develop the same forgiving attitude.

Matthew 18:21 [New King James] *“Then Peter came to Him and said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’”*

Peter considered that such an attitude was really generous.

Matthew 18:22 [New King James] *“Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’”*

Such a number indicates that there is no time we should refuse to forgive another human being.

Jesus Christ then illustrated this right attitude with which we should approach forgiveness, [**Matthew 18:23-35**].

Of what value are such parables if we don't learn the lessons they contain for our spiritual growth as future created children of God?

What would be your attitude if you were arrested on false accusations and sentenced to die?

Suppose your persecutors mocked you and even spat on you.

Would your attitude be one of forgiving those who falsely condemned you?

This actually happened to Stephen, [Acts 6:8-15; Acts 7:1-53].

Stephen reminded all who had put him falsely on trial of their rebellious history as a nation resisting the work of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 7:54-60 [New King James] *“When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, ‘Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’ Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”*

As he was murdered, Stephen asked God to forgive those who were murdering him.

A true Christian should have this type of forgiving attitude at all times.

This is the attitude that our Saviour Jesus Christ had towards those who were murdering him, [Luke 23:24].

When we repent the Creator God forgives and forgets our sins, [**Isaiah 43:25**].

We **cannot** become a created child of God in His Kingdom unless we learn to forgive even as the Creator God forgives us.

Feeling sorry for yourselves –

Some people are perpetual mourners, they cannot stop feeling sorry for themselves.

Suffering from self-pity, they consider themselves victims of circumstances.

They seem to be burdened with questions like, ‘*Why me?*’ and ‘*Why did it have to happen to me?*’

Somehow everything seems to go wrong for them, and they are convinced that they have no reason to be happy and content with life.

We all have to ask the question, *'Are we like this?'*

We need to consider seriously all the handicapped people on the earth who have succeeded despite adverse circumstances.

Such people have worked hard in order to, in many cases, achieve simple things that those of us who are more fortunate take for granted.

But whatever their trials, they all have one thing in common, they never pity themselves, never let themselves be discouraged or overcome by their physical handicaps.

I know this from personal experience, for the webmaster of this website is wheelchair bound.

Lindsay Taylor is a dear friend of mine, who personally has this attitude of refusing to be overcome by self-pity.

The Creator God loves every human being equally, even if you are crippled or handicapped.

These are only temporary physical hindrances that will **not** be part of your life in the Kingdom of God.

Stop complaining about what you don't have and be grateful for the life we do have.

Greatness is never attained through self-pity, for no-one will enter into the created family of God, God's Kingdom, until they learn to appreciate the life the Creator God has given them.

The apostle Paul suffered more than most people because of his Christian faith, [**2 Corinthians 11:24-28**].

Before his conversion Paul was a well-respected man, [**Philippians 3:4-5**].

When he became a Christian, Paul just about lost everything that he had, including his friends, [**Philippians 3:7-8**], but counted them as of very little value.

Philippians 4:11-13 [New King James] *"Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*

Paul learnt how to be content in whatever physical situation he found himself, through his close relationship with Jesus Christ.

In total contrast, Paul was never content with his spiritual state.

Philippians 3:9-14 [New King James] *"and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."*

Two things helped Paul to avoid any self-pity and tell us to follow his example of rejoicing in life, [**Philippians 4:4**].

Philippians 4:8 [New King James] *“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things.”*

Always meditate on those things that are a blessing from the Creator God, and have the right attitude towards physical possessions and blessings, compared with the spiritual blessings of knowing Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord, and the active presence of Holy Spirit in us.

Feeling holier than others –

While some people suffer from an inferiority complex, others have a vain sense of superiority.

If we pity ourselves we may have an inferiority complex. On the other hand, if we consider ourselves as better than others, if we are boastful, then we are manifesting a *“holier than others”* attitude.

When we are proven right and someone else is shown to be wrong about something, do we feel superior to them as human beings?

The Word of God, the Christian Bible, warns us against this attitude of superiority.

Matthew 20:27-28 [New King James] *“And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*

We should follow the example of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ and have the attitude of a servant to all other people.

The book of Proverbs gives us many admonitions regarding vanity, conceit and self-righteousness.

Proverbs 26:12 [New King James] *“Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”*

This is how the wise Creator God sees a self-righteous person.

Proverbs 21:2 [New King James] *“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts.”*

It is the attitude of our mind and heart that the Creator God uses to evaluate our worth as a human being.

We may consider ourselves a better person, perhaps a more valuable helper, but if we have the attitude of conceit in our heart we are in a wrong attitude.

Proverbs 27:2 [New King James] *“Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.”*

The other person could well be inspired by the Creator God merely to encourage us to continue on a life of humble service towards other people.

Luke 18:9-14 [New King James] *“Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ‘Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ I tell you, this*

man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

In this parable, Jesus Christ gives us the contrasting attitudes of mind, one that is acceptable to the Creator God and another whose prayers were **not** accepted, **“prayed thus with himself,”** the prayer didn’t leave the ground!

2 Corinthians 10:17-18 [New King James] *“But ‘he who glories, let him glory in the LORD.’ For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.”*

Any true glory or approval that is of lasting value can **only** come from the eternal Creator God.

Philippians 2:3-4 [New King James] *“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”*

Considering others’ interests as more important than our own links us with our Saviour Jesus Christ who is the perfect example of humility, [Philippians 2:5-8].

We all need to strive constantly to have right attitudes that reflect that of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ, that will also be pleasing to God the Father.

Matthew 17:5 [New King James] *“While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’”*

If we hear what the Word of God, the Christian Bible, is telling us through the life, death and resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ, we too at our resurrection will hear the similar words.

Matthew 25:21, 23 [New King James] *“His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’” ... “His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’”*

We too will have brought joy to God the Father and Jesus Christ our Creator.

Our right attitudes are the key to making us true Christians who are “after God’s own heart” and will be the key that will unlock before us the door to entering into the created family of God, the Kingdom of God.