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Attitude's Altitude!

Quiet, yet powerful. Though hidden, seen. Surfaces unawares. A drive which breeds on the inside and spills out, sometimes nicely, oftentimes ugly. We call it attitude. The perception of a person or a situation frames the attitude. The thought behind a response is another way of posing it. The right and godly, the wrong and the human, need to be legibly zoned. Too often they monkey themselves but they can be matured into stability. We are not born with perfect attitudes. They have to be cultivated, weeded, well-watered and nurtured in fertile soil. They can be worked on. Did you know your attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference to those around you? Attitudes are contagious. Are yours worth catching?

Do you tend or mend menial attitudes? It's the most debilitating disability in life. Is yours more positive or negative? Though Joshua and his men had lots of good reasons to capture Canaan, a bunch of them could not help but focus on the negatives. The talk about the giants and the fortified cities made it easy for their positive

attitudes to turn negative. At a crossroad of a relationship or a decision we should not allow the negatives cause us to lose sight of the positives. If you wish to sing you can always find a song. Do we grumble that roses have thorns? Try being thankful that thorns have roses. Too many of us miss the silver lining because we are looking for the gold.

Using the word impossible with the greatest caution, how could we miss a down to earth challenge in Micah 6:8? Here are three little steps which will take you ahead in leaps — “He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” This is far from theory. It may be hard when you have to and easy when you want to make this verse a reality. Just do the right thing and not what you feel at that juncture. Be honest with yourself.

Quit making excuses. Deal with your heart and mind. Face the issue on the face. When the poisonous attitude peeps out desperate to sting to show its weak power, nip it in the bud. Can you identify with this commonplace example? Chris was gossiped about unfairly. She had the choice to confront the slanderer or to ignore the hurt and jump in to help, when she was in trouble. What would you have done? Problems begin on the inside. The heart of every problem is the problem of the heart.

Be gracious to friends who stir the ugly attitudes in you and don't let them win. That's your strength. Though it is hard to let go of the hurts hurled, it takes two to reconcile and only one to forgive. You will be the winner again if you take the first move. Empathy helps to release

resentment with a smile. Remember the last time Christ forgave your mean behaviour? There are many out in the world who are being extremely merciful and patient with you knowing that God is still working on you and He hasn't finished, as yet. Being the victim does not put you on a higher plane.

A humble and submissive mind is a good soil for healthy attitudes. "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought" (Phil 2:4). Keep yourself behind others. Don't run ahead of them. That's when they may be tempted to stab you at the back. Lie low. "You cannot fall down from a mat," is one of my dad's profound statements. Stay content and happy there. Wherever we may be, we either make ourselves miserable, happy or strong. The amount of work is the same. People cannot take advantage of your submission for too long. We have a busy Advocate!

Are you feeding harmful, critical, cynical and vengeful attitudes? Examine. Do I have this attitude because I am not being honest with myself? Am I blaming others for my problems? Am I holding a grudge and refusing to forgive or make things right? Am I being proud? Have I ceased having a submissive mind? Where along the line have I lost my way? If you are you enjoying the attention and sympathy your bad attitudes get, you are only getting more people to see the dirt.

Paul wore a positive attitude not when he was free but in spite of his chains. His attitude in prison set him free to continue to be all God wanted him to be. Oftentimes it happens we all live our lives caged and we never even know we have the key. Our homes, jobs, situations, superiors and our bodies with their frailties can all seem

like prisons. We can free ourselves with the “I-can” attitude of Paul when he said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13). Though life seems to be a shipwreck, we must not forget to sing in the life-boats. If you are in the gutter, don’t forget to look at the stars.

Did you know negative attitudes have a snowball effect? They roll on, lead from one to another and keep getting worse. The Israelites did not learn their lesson from Korah and his men; instead waxed their attitude of rebellion, dissatisfaction and skepticism and it rolled onto bitterness, resentment and hostility. Beware of the times when you are not content, complaining or bitter. You will roll into a pit far from remedy — separation from God (Num 16:41).

Lashing out at others can be a sign that something is wrong with us. Balaam lashed out at his faithful donkey because it made him look foolish in the process of saving his life. Do we sometimes lash out at blameless people who get in our way because of our embarrassment or because of our hurt pride? Don’t permit yourself to hurt others when your pride is hurt (Num 22:29).

Cain made a wrong choice of attitude which led to unacceptable behaviour. The feelings motivating our behaviour can’t always be changed by simple thought-power. We need to ask God for continuous help.

Strengthen your backbone with right and positive attitudes. Stand for them though alone. It’s OK to be a loner with the right attitudes than to conform to the bad ones with the rest of the society. It’s lonely at the top but aren’t you at the top! The attitude of Micah’s day was

this: “Everyone did as he saw fit” (Judg 17:5,6). Our attitudes have to be shaped by God’s standards and by nothing else. If we adopt the standards of the society we have treated God’s framework of values lightly. While independence and self-reliance are positive traits, they should be well within the measures of God’s divine plumbline.

Don’t allow others’ attitudes dictate yours. We awaken in others the same attitudes we hold towards them. Israel could not see the potential problems of having a king because they wanted one desperately. They remained adamant. Israel’s only motive of wanting a king was to be ‘like’ the other nations. Often we let others’ values and actions dictate our attitudes and behaviour. Others’ negative attitudes will creep into us if we are not guarded (1 Sam 8:19,20).

Though Saul had troubled David much and caused him a lot of pain, when he died David wrote a song of lament in memory of Saul and his son. David chose not to hate Saul though he had every reason to. David made a choice to look at the good Saul had done and ignore the trouble. Wouldn’t it have been double trouble if he had chosen otherwise? It took courage on his part to lay aside hatred and hurt and to respect the positive side of Saul, though he was a proven enemy (2 Sam 1:17-27). Hats off to Paul’s attitude of seeking always the good of others and not clinging to the ‘me-first’ attitude. If Paul could, we for sure can make this a big part of us. Being overly sensitive, doing nothing for fear of displeasing someone, being insensitive to others’ hurts, doing only what we want, flowing with the tide wanting others’ approval and not God’s — Do we harbour any of these immature attitudes?

Read this to see if you fit in — “... even as I try to please everybody in every way, for I am not seeking my own good, but the good of many, so that they may be saved” (1 Cor 10:33).

Our attitude can change others’. Joseph refrained from employing a vengeful attitude towards his brothers. As a response Judah who had stepped forward with a plan to sell Joseph, now stepped forward to take Benjamin’s punishment so that Benjamin could return to his father (Gen 44:33). You are often copied by those closest to you. Begin at home. Let others copy you. Can they now?

“All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast” (Prov 15:15). Our attitudes spill out and colour our whole personality. We cannot choose what happens to us but we can choose our perception towards each situation. Calling a glass half-full or half-empty judges our perception. Perceive through God’s eyes. A change of self is the dire need more than a change of scene. We cannot direct the wind but we can adjust the sails. We cannot control happenings and situations but the reins of our attitudes come under our jurisdiction. The secret behind a joyful heart is to fill our minds with thoughts that are “true, pure, lovely and right” (Phil 4:8). Our attitudes thrive on what we feed our minds with. If we allow our minds to dwell on scheming, our attitudes will be the same. Enjoy the cream of every situation. Whenever you fall, pick something up.

God has His own style of handling problems. We find it difficult to accept His way of problem-solving but He corners us with the core of the issue. In the parable of the rich man, the man suggests equal division of

inheritance as the only solution. But Christ challenges his attitude towards wealth (Lk 12:12). A change of attitude births solutions.

“Let your attitude be like that of Christ Jesus: who in very nature God, did not consider equality with God as some thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the Name that is above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:5-11).

Write it on your hearts!

Attitudes can take us high or keep us down. Do you want to take off or land? Your life’s altitude depends on your attitude!