



## Strengthening Your Grip on Key Areas of Your Christian Life

### Attitudes B

#### Introduction:

1. This is our LAST week of our series: **Strengthening Your Grip on KEY AREAS in your Christian Life**
  2. Our emphasis is reaching out to people, building bridges in our relationships, getting out of our comfort zones and 'connecting' with others
- our primary goal: To glorify God by showing love to one another, demonstrating we are the disciples of Christ, and reaching out to others!

> meeting people where they are and helping them take the NEXT step of growth

3. Each week, we've tried to keep the following question in front of all of us!

**Q: What is the NEXT step of growth for you . . .for us as a church?**

[serving, leadership, evangelism, hospitality to others, prayer life, study of the Word, etc.]

4. we began a study last week on: **Strengthening Your Grip on Attitudes** (or more specifically – the way you think, what goes on in your heart and mind)

- we discussed the impact one's attitude can have on our life/ministry!

❖ **Key Verse: Proverbs 23:7 For as he thinks within himself, so he is.**

- you show me a person's heart, what he/she is thinking, that produces the attitudes and eventually the actions of a person's life

[RE- READ Phil. 2:1-11 – context: Paul is in jail writing to this church; it had some strengths, but he warned them about some weaknesses and areas on which they needed to make sure they strengthened their grip – one of those areas was ATTITUDE!]

- last week we spent all of our time on the truth that:

#### **I. Attitudes Are Important**

- that's what Proverbs 23:7 is communicating – how you think, determines how you act!

- we looked at a few key areas of our lives and what the Scriptures had to say about the way we think about that subject

***“Attitude keeps me going or cripples my progress. It alone fuels my fire or assaults my hope. When my attitudes are right, there's no barrier too high, no valley too deep, no dream too extreme, no challenge too great for me.” – p. 207***

- I want to pick up where we left off last week – so let's begin with this Input Q:

#### **Input: What are some examples of things we have little or no control over?**

- ⇒ Tick of the clock – we function on God's time clock, it's ticking & we can't stop it!
- ⇒ Weather (temperatures – like we've had this week; or a tornado, tsunami, etc.)
- ⇒ People's actions/reactions – you can only control your response (Mt. 7:1-5)

Point: \* **You have little or no control over most of your circumstances – it's your ATTITUDE toward those situations that determine how you ACT in response to them!**

- let's also consider this:

## II. The Value of Attitudes:

❖ Phil. 2:1-2 – *If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose*"

- He's telling us to take charge of our own minds – work at thinking right!

\* Let's consider at least **\*3 key attitudes we need to develop [part of your homework]:**

### A. Attitude of Humility (Unselfishness)

❖ Refer to Phil. 2:3-4 - *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

- This is a mental choice we make, a decision not to focus on self. . .me. . .my. . .mine

> Instead, we are to focus on the other person.

- In short, this is a servant's mentality the Scriptures are encouraging us to develop.

- That's why Paul goes on to write:

❖ **Phil. 2:5-8 - *Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a think to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.***

***"Maybe you have never stopped to think about it, but behind the scenes, it was an attitude that brought the Savior down to us. He deliberately chose to come among us because He realized and valued our need. He placed a higher significance on it than His own comfort and prestigious position. In humility, He set aside the glory of heaven and came to be among us. He refused to let His position keep us at arm's length."*** (p. 210)

**Input: How will a humble attitude help you respond in a godly manner to any situation?**

[various answers – it's not about me, it's about the glory of God and the cause of Christ]

### B. Attitude of Thankfulness

- consider Paul's words to another church to whom he wrote:

❖ **1 Thessalonians 5:18 In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.**

- it's so easy to take things for granted, get used to having things a certain way

- or simply to allow ingratitude to slip into our lives – to be grumpy, complaining, gripe about things

Q: *Why is that so true?*

> because there are so many things around us that prompt us to be irritable

\* **Biblical Examples of Complaining: Israel** – complaining in the wilderness

[cf. Psalm 78 is all about God responding to Israel's sinfulness:

❖ **Psalm 78:19 Then they spoke against God; They said, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?"**

**Input: How does an attitude of thankfulness help you to handle life's problems in a way that brings glory to God?**

[various answers]

**C. Attitude of Genuine Joy**

- ❖ Phil. 4:1, 4-7 – *Therefore, my beloved brethren, whom I long to see, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord, my beloved. . . Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

**“Think of it like this: Circumstances occur that could easily crush us. They may originate on the job or at home or even during the weekend when we are relaxing. Unexpectedly, they come. Immediately we have a choice to make. . . an attitude choice. We can hand the circumstance to God and ask Him to take control or we can roll up our mental sleeves and slug it out. Joy awaits our decision. If we do as Philippians 4:6-7 suggests, peace replaces panic and joy moves into action. It is ready, but it is not pushy.”** (p. 212)

- part of the challenge in life is this: In what (or who) are you going to find joy?
- maybe that's why Paul said *'rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice'*
  - > God will not fail you, He will not forsake you, He loves you more than anyone, but many times we neglect Him the most!

- because of the curse of sin – we have to face the reality of . . .

**III. Unbiblical Attitudes to a Godly Thinking**

**A. Blameshifting – Gen. 3**

- The unbiblical attitude reacts to circumstances w/blame: *“The woman whom You gave me”*
  - > either blaming someone else (which is bad enough) and rarely leaves any responsibility to one's self
  - > or worse, they blame God – Q: What does that imply? -- that God is WRONG!
- God is holy, He doesn't have the ability to make a mistake – He is completely separate from sin and will never be wrong because He is the standard of righteousness!
- Here's the truth of blaming God:

**“If we choose to blame God, we cut off our single source of power. Doubt replaces trust, and we put down roots of bitterness that can make us cynical. If we blame others, we enlarge the distance between us and them. We alienate. We poison a relationship. We settle for something much less than God ever intended. And on top of all that, we do not find relief!”**

– p. 213

- Swindol is right –the very path we choose to get relief, we only find more guilt due to our irresponsibility
  - now, there are times when someone does something that is WRONG – but another person made it easier for that person to sin
  - however, that is no excuse for one's sin – \* **Nobody HAS to sin – you choose to sin!**
- Cf. Romans 6:11-13 [READ – if time – great passage making this very point]

## B. Self-pity

- The only thing worth doing is usually the last thing we try doing:

Living by Faith in obedience to God!

- He has promised to give us all we need to help us bring glory to Him through any given situation:

**Input: What has He given us and/or will give us for the asking?**

[various answers: Christ as our model, the Holy Spirit, His Word, the church body, His grace, wisdom, strength, etc.!]

- there is an example in the NT of 2 guys who chose NOT to walk the road of self-pity when wronged and treated poorly:

**Example: Paul & Silas – prison/beaten**

❖ **Acts 16:25** But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

❖ **Acts 16:26-28** *And suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison/house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains were unfastened. And when the jailer had been roused out of sleep and had seen the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here!"*

- God used their attitudes to change the entire face of their situation.

**Input: What are some other unbiblical attitudes that hinder us from glorifying God and growing to be more like Christ?**

[various answers]

Q: *How are you responding to those who do you wrong? To your unpleasant circumstances?*

- now we need to think about the 'put on' side of our attitudes – what should we be thinking

## IV. Thinking Right

❖ **Phil. 4:8** – Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

- Compare with a key passage on this subject in Proverbs:

❖ **Proverbs 4:20-23** – My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your sight; keep them in the midst of your heart. For they are life to those who find them and health to all their body. Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.

\* Apply this to thinking right about the following:

Conclusion:

Q: What is your attitude toward the following subjects? What should it be?

✓ Faithful attendance // Serving // Evangelism // Hospitality // Prayer //

## Strengthening Your Grip on KEY AREAS in your Christian Life *Attitudes —Phil. 2:1-11 [Part 2]*

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\*3 key attitudes we need to develop:

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\* Biblical Examples of Complaining: \_\_\_\_\_

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\* Nobody \_\_\_\_\_ to sin – you \_\_\_\_\_ to sin!

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**Input:** What has He given us and/or will give us for the asking?

Example: \_\_\_\_\_

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### IV. Thinking Right

\* Apply this to thinking right about the following:

- \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_

⇒ \_\_\_\_\_

#### Conclusion:

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- ✓ Serving
- ✓ Evangelism
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