



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

### Attitudes

#### Introduction:

1. This is week #9 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 with people, 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've covered some rather important subjects: *Strengthening Your Grip on . . . Relationships // Missions // Aging // Purity // Discipleship // Encouragement*
5. Today, our study focuses on another KEY area in our Christian life: **Strengthening Your Grip on Attitudes** (or more specifically – the way you think, what goes on in your heart and mind)

#### Input: What impact does one's attitude have on life/ministry, and why?

[various answers]

- I think that question can be answered very specifically from Proverbs (wisdom literature)

#### ❖ **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

[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!]

- let's study 4 truths that will help us to strengthen our grip on our attitudes:

#### I. Attitudes Are Important

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

- This might surprise you, but I think the single most significant decision I can make on a day-to-day basis is my choice of attitude.

> i.e. what I'm thinking about any given situation – my 'inner man' response to the various situations (good or bad) that a sovereign God allows into my life

- the point of Proverbs 23:7 is simple – you are what you think!

- that may explain why some people are the way they are – it's the attitude of life they've chosen!

#### Input: What would be the attitude of people struggling in one of the following areas?

[have someone look up the verses and read them after the 'attitude' has been discussed]

Area	Attitude	Passages
• <b>Bitterness</b>	no hope; God can't help me;	1Cor. 10:13; 2Cor. 12:9-10; Ps. 42:5

- ❖ 1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.
- ❖ 2 Corinthians 12:9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.
- ❖ Psalm 42:5 Why are you in despair, O my **soul**? And *why* have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him *For* the help of His presence.

Area	Attitude	Passages
• <b>Submission to authority</b>	Pride; I'm right, they're wrong; I'm better than him; I'll do it my way!	Prov. 16:18; Jam. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:6-6

- ❖ Proverbs 16:18 Pride *goes* before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling.
- ❖ James 4:6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."
- ❖ 1 Peter 5:5 . . . and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.

Area	Attitude	Passages
• <b>Covetousness</b>	I don't have enough, what I have isn't good	Heb. 13:5; Matt. 16:26

- ❖ Hebrews 13:5 *Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"
- ❖ Matthew 16:26 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Area	Attitude	Passages
• <b>Sexual Sin</b>	"Just this once" – no body will know – it will be better than what I have	1 Cor 6:18-21; 1 Thes. 4:7; 1 Pet 1:16

- ❖ 1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee immorality. Every *other* sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of

the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

- ❖ 1 Thessalonians 4:7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.
- ❖ 1 Peter 1:16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

***“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***

**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)
- ⇒ Who won or lost the ball game – our team may have
- ⇒ Delays at airports – obviously God changed your schedule for some reason
- ⇒ Results of an x-ray – you don’t like it, but it’s the truth, you have a problem
- ⇒ Cost of groceries, gas, clothes – you can control the amount you spend

**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!**

## II. The Value of Attitudes: Scripture Speaks

- ❖ 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:**

### 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 a few verses from the book of 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:**

- **Church Family Night tonight** – VERY IMPROTANT – getting ready for August 20<sup>th</sup>, fall readiness, prayer time, etc.
- **August 20<sup>th</sup>** – BIG Sunday – EXPLAIN WHY? new series, Peacemakers – Learning to solve problems God's way! – Fresh start, back in the saddle, etc.

[see concluding questions]

#### 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 #7**  
**Attitudes —Phil. 2:1-11**

**Introduction:**

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

**Input:** What impact does one's attitude have on life/ministry, and why?

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

**I. Attitudes Are Important**

**Input:** What would be the attitude of people struggling in one of the following areas?

Area	Attitude	Passages
• <b>Bitterness</b>		
• <b>Submission to authority</b>		
• <b>Covetousness</b>		
• <b>Sexual Sin</b>		

*“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.” – Swindol, Strengthening Your Grip. 207*

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

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

**II. The Value of Attitudes: Scripture Speaks**

\*3 key attitudes we need to develop:

**A. Attitude of \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_)**

*“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)*

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**B. Attitude of \_\_\_\_\_**

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

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

**C. Attitude of Genuine \_\_\_\_\_**

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

**B. \_\_\_\_\_**

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

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

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

**IV. Thinking Right**

\* **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

