

Keeping the Right Ministry Attitude

Key Verses:

Philippians 2:5 NASB - *Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus...*

Romans 15:5 NIV - *May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had...*

Ephesians 4:22-23 NIV - *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; v.23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds.*

1 Peter 4:1 - *Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin.*

Objective:

The way you think affects the way you feel about God, yourself, and others. There are many things in our discipleship journey that we cannot control. Trials will come in this life; people will reject and hurt you at times. Some prayers will sometimes feel as though they will never be answered. However, in all this, we are told to clothe ourselves with the mind and attitude of Christ. In this final lesson of Module Three, we want to help the servants of Jesus develop the attitude of endurance and joy (Romans 15:5) that was found in Christ.

On all airplanes there is an instrument called the “attitude indicator.” This instrument reveals the position of the wings, tail, and nose of the plane in relation to the ground. If your nose is up, you are climbing. If your nose is down, you are going to meet the ground.

Also, did you know that most planes are equipped with two attitude indicators? It is because it is the most important instrument for flying in the clouds or at night. The attitude indicators are powered separately. One operates on electrical current and the back-up usually operates on vacuum. So, if the power goes out on the plane, you can still keep your attitude right!

The Right Attitude for your Ministry Life

1) Be _____.

2 Corinthians 8:17 NIV - *For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative.*

Titus was sent to take collections for the Jerusalem church.

- a) Enthusiasm may be defined as looking for the best possible outcome and directing all of our energies to capitalize on that potential.
- b) Enthusiasm is a choice or a determination to make the most of an opportunity.
 - i) It is choosing to view situations with excitement rather than skepticism.
 - ii) Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.
- c) For a disciple, enthusiasm is natural, because it is a response of faith. For us, the power of positive thinking goes beyond human effort. Our positive thinking finds its foundation in our positive God.
- d) Enthusiasm capitalizes on potential instead of becoming discouraged by the odds. It looks for ways to make it work, rather than focuses on reasons why it might not work.

One writer points out that all of Israel was afraid of Goliath that he was too big to hit. David "ran toward Goliath" realizing that he was too big to miss (1 Samuel 17:48-49)!

2) Demonstrate _____.

Acts 2:46 NIV - *Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts...*

John 1:47 NIV - *When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false."*

Jesus was able to discern his sincerity! Sincerity is easily discerned.

- a) Sincerity is honesty of mind or intention. It is the opposite of hypocrisy.
- b) Sincerity involves a willingness to be transparent when ministering to others.
- c) The level of your sincerity will be revealed through your motivations and tendencies when facing challenging people and/or challenging circumstances.

In every situation, you have a choice to make... choose sincerity over falsehood or deception.

3) Be an _____.

- a) Take the initiative when you or someone you are ministering too needs a breakthrough.

Matthew 14:28 NIV – *"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."*

- i) Peter was not passive in life. He looked for opportunities and seized the moment. When he saw Jesus walking on the water, he wanted to go to Him. He took the initiative.
- ii) Other biblical examples?

(1) Blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10)

(2) The woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5)

(3) The Canaanite woman whose daughter was demon possessed (Matthew 15)

These people demonstrate faith. All things are possible with God and they went for it.

- b) To take initiative is to:

- i) See a need.
- ii) Claim responsibility.
- iii) Identify the solution.
- iv) Personally see the solution through to success.

Note: See the story of “the Good Samaritan” (Luke 10).

4) Be _____.

Acts 10:28, 29 NIV - *He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. v.29 So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"*

When Peter was asked by the Lord to go to a Gentile’s home and preach the gospel, change was required of him. He had preconceived ideas and prejudices to work through. Because he was flexible in God’s hands, however, God could use him as a leader to touch the Gentile world.

- a) Being flexible is making the most of every change by learning to bend.
 - b) Flexibility is the strength to flourish in a changing environment. It involves being obedient to new instructions even though old ones seem more favorable.
 - c) Flexibility saves us from wasting energy on useless complaining.
 - d) Flexibility is not just an openness to change, but also an invitation for it.
 - e) Failure to be flexible in times of change will produce a callous attitude.
- 5) Develop an _____ mindset.

Mark 8:2-4 NIV - *"I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. v.3 If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance." v.4 His disciples answered, "But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed*

them?"

- a) Jesus saw people and their needs, and He did something to help them because of the compassion He felt for them.
- b) Christian workers have a tendency to get so caught up in a cause or an event that they forget the people and neglect the responsibility to respond to their hurts and needs.
- c) In the training of the twelve, we find Jesus confronting this attitude over and over.

Jesus went out of His way to meet the woman at the well (John 4). His disciples were so focused on getting Him lunch that they missed one of the greatest demonstrations of compassion and miraculous discernment in the ministry of Jesus.

John 4:27 NIV - *Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"*

John 4:31-33 NIV - *Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." v.32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." v.33 Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?"*

Example from the pages of Winnie the Pooh: One day Winnie the Pooh sniffed out some honey in a cave and tried to squeeze into its narrow opening and got stuck. Piglet found him and ran and got Eeyore and Owl and Beaver to try and get Pooh Bear unstuck. One suggested this and another suggested that but nothing worked. Finally Beaver said, "I know what's holding up the project! Let's get some dynamite and pack it all around Pooh Bear and we'll blast our way through to the honey."

Piglet responded, "Dash it all Beaver, Pooh Bear IS the project!"

- 6) Be _____.

Mark 14:4-6 NIV - *Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? v.5 It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her*

harshly. v.6 "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me."

- a) It is no coincidence that Judas went out to betray Jesus after this incident. Judas did not like what happened and said so. Jesus rebuked him openly, and Judas, in turn, left angry and hurt, seeking out those who were enemies of Jesus. Judas could not take correction.
- b) In contrast, Peter who was impulsive, loud, arrogant, and misguided, was openly rebuked by Jesus on several occasions and yet, Peter humbled himself and admitted he was wrong.

Notice that both disciples (Judas and Peter) betrayed Jesus.

- i) Peter was teachable.
- ii) The unteachable, untrainable disciple named Judas killed himself.

Because Peter was teachable and trainable, he was restored when he failed and became more than an average disciple; He became a mighty foundational apostle.

God promotes teachable people.

- 7) Have a _____ heart.

John 12:24-26 NIV - Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. v.25 Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. v.26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

1 John 3:16 NIV - This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

- a) Sacrifice: the forfeiture of something highly valued for the sake of one considered to have a greater value or claim.

As true disciples of Jesus, we must be prepared to sacrifice both our time and resources for the Lord's work. It is our privilege to do so.

- b) Warning! Don't give in to resentment. The disciple who is struggling with resentment may feel that he is not being recognized, that he is being used, or that he is not appreciated.

Jesus told His disciples the story of a servant who worked hard for a master all day in the field and when the day was over the master commanded the servant to cook him a meal before he was allowed to eat. The servant gladly did what he was told.

Jesus concluded, "So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty'" (Luke 17:10 NIV).

God knows what the Army knows: The boot camp drill instructors sometimes will order a soldier to dig a hole and then turn around and tell him to fill in it. It's not about digging a hole; it's about obedience.

- 8) Be _____.

Philippians 4:8 NIV - *Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.*

Compare to the Nega-Saint's Version (NSV), "Finally, brothers, whatever is negative, whatever is pessimistic, whatever is wrong, whatever is juicy gossip, whatever is ugly, whatever is worth criticizing – if there is anything not perfect or if there is anything worth murmuring about – think about such things."

- a) Training our minds to dwell on the good and excellent is a lifelong process.
- b) Paul recognized the importance of bringing our thoughts into captivity in a way to keep negative thoughts from overpowering us emotionally.

2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV - *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make*

it obedient to Christ.

If you think you are beaten, you are. If you'd like to win but think that you can't, it's almost certain you won't. Life's battles don't always go to the strongest or fastest man, but sooner or later, the man who wins is the man who thinks he can.

- c) Don't be discouraged by the lack of results.
 - i) Everybody can catch fish when they are biting, but sometimes you go fishing and nothing is biting.
 - ii) Our focus must be on doing His will with unconditional and unshakable obedience.

Unconditional and unshakable obedience should be celebrated!

- d) For a disciple, success is never determined by the size of one's accomplishments, but it is determined by the attitude of your heart during the process.
- e) Count it all joy.

James 1:2-4 - Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

REFLECT

1. Pastor used the analogy of an airplane's two "attitude indicators" to determine whether the plane's nose is pointed up or down to avoid a crash. How about you? Is the nose of your attitude up or down? Explain how you can be in control of your own attitude.
2. Read this statement: "Sincerity involves a willingness to be transparent when ministering to others." How willing are you to be vulnerable with others?
3. Taking initiative involves four steps: 1) to see a need, 2) to claim responsibility, 3) to identify the solution, and 4) to personally see the solution through to success. Using these steps, describe a time when you took initiative to solve a problem.
4. Pasto writes: "Flexibility is the strength to flourish in a changing environment." How flexible are you?
5. Of these three components of attitude...being teachable, having a sacrificial heart, and being positive, which is the greatest growth area for you? Why?

ACT

Re-read the definition of enthusiasm in point 1a. Evaluate your own "enthusiasm factor" on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the lowest level and 10 being the highest. Rate yourself in the following five key areas of your life. Circle the number that best identifies where you feel passion, zeal, and enthusiasm.

My Marriage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
My Family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
My Career	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
My Ministry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
My Self-image	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10