

The Value of a Positive Attitude

by Charles R. Swindoll

Several years ago I determined to deal with my attitude. I found myself getting pretty testy, even argumentative at times. Our children were young and often had needs that required my time and attention. More often than I'd like to admit, that irritated me—to the point where my wife said I needed to think about how negative I was becoming, and then I needed to do something about it!

At first, like most husbands would, I resisted her words, but after giving them further thought, I realized that what she was observing was painfully true. To use a popular expression, I was in need of a serious attitude adjustment! I knew that if some of my emotional outbursts didn't stop, I'd not only alienate all four of my children, I would become a lonely, bitter, and crotchety old man. The realization of all that led me to come to terms with my negative attitude.

I am so grateful I did! Among other things, it led me to sit down and write out a carefully worded statement on the importance of choosing the right attitude every single day. I had no idea how God would use it in the lives of people around the world. I've come across it in the most amazing places—and I've had friends tell me of their seeing it in such places as restaurant menus and hanging on walls in machine shops and hearing it quoted in sales conferences, memorized by cadets preparing to be highway patrolmen, and learned by students in school. Here it is:

“Attitudes”

Words can never adequately convey the incredible impact of our attitude toward life. The longer I live the more convinced I become that life is 10 percent what happens to us and 90 percent how we respond to it.

I believe the single most significant decision I can make on a day-to-day basis is my choice of attitude. It is more important than my past, my education, my bankroll, my successes or failures, fame or pain, what other people think of me or say about me, my circumstances, or my position. 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.

I share this with you in hopes that it will help you as much as it has helped so many others, including *me*. Thankfully, I'm a different man today because I came to terms with my attitude a number of years ago. And because I did, as I grow older, I've become a lot easier to live with. Just ask my wife . . . and our kids . . . and their kids!

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Talking Points

Verses to reflect:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. ⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Philippians 2:3-5 (NIV)

Do everything without grumbling or arguing, ¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky ¹⁶ as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.

Philippians 2:14-16 (NIV)

Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:5-7 (NIV)

Questions to ponder:

- 1) Generally speaking what is your attitude like? _____

- 2) When you think no one is watching is your attitude or actions any different? _____

- 3) Has your wife or friends mentioned that you have a poor attitude? _____

- 4) If you spend alone time with praying and trying to hear God, have you noticed any difference in your attitude? _____

I encourage you today to begin your own, alone personal time with God, trying to hear Him. Often a little secret to help your attitude is to spend 10-15 minute alone with God learning to marinate on His words, and trying to feel His presence around you in your daily life. Try it you might be surprised!

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. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:8-9 (NIV)