

Letting Go of Joy-Stealers

June 4, 2024

Letting Go of Wrong Attitudes

"Attitudes are contagious. Would anyone want to catch yours?"

What are some of the blame-shifting explanations people use as an excuse for their negative attitudes?

The simple truth is no one or nothing can cause you to have a bad attitude if you decide not to have one; and conversely, no one or nothing can make you have a good attitude if you choose to remain negative.

General Attitude

Do you have a positive or negative attitude toward life?

Do you typically see the glass as half empty or half full?

How would you rate your attitude in general?

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Totally Negative				Half and Half				Totally Positive		

What are the "negative pulls" that tend to ruin your positive attitude?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

A Victim Attitude

Life is not fair and it's one of the hardest things for us to accept. But allowing yourself to wallow in the unfairness or inequity of your life's situation is a recipe for unhappiness.

Attitude toward Work

Many people have the attitude that work is something they have to do in order to acquire all the things they want or need. Work is more often seen as a curse rather than a blessing.

If ever there was a time that Christians can and should shine on the job, it is in our attitude toward work and the way we live it out. Here are two suggestions to help you get over any wrong attitude you may have acquired toward work in general or toward the specific job you now have.

- Work for the Lord, not for people.
Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.
(Colossians 3:23)
- Do your work well.
Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might ... (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

A Controlling Attitude

Have you noticed how often you get upset over things which are totally out of your control? What are some of those out-of-our-control things that can cause you to have a bad attitude?

While fretting over things that you cannot control, you lose control of the things you can control.

For example,

- You can control your words, but when you're trying to control the uncontrollable, you often say things that are hurtful.
- You can control how you think, but when you're trying to control the uncontrollable, you start thinking all kinds of negative and untrue things.
- You can control how you choose to respond to a person or a situation, but when you try to control the uncontrollable, then you're likely to react in regretful ways to that person or situation.

Remember this: If you will control the controllable, you can cope with the uncontrollable.

Matthew 6:27: *Jesus said: "Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?"*

Philippians 4:6: *The Apostle Paul wrote: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. "*

Negative Self-Talk

How much negative self-talk do you utter in a typical day? How often do you say things like:

- Will it ever stop raining? I hate rainy weather.
- I just don't feel good today.
- She/he never does their job right.
- I'm tired of . . . (some job you do, like taking out the trash.)
- I'll never get this work done.

We are wired by our sin natures to lean toward the negative, to identify the negative, to talk about the negative.

Challenge: Set aside one day and determine that you will say nothing negative during that day. Ask someone to do it with you, so you'll be accountable.

Our Challenge

In thinking of our attitudes, here are some passages that speak directly to us.

Romans 15:5-6

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:22-24

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; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Philippians 2:5-8

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something 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!

These passages teach us important principles about our attitudes:

- We need to develop an attitude like Jesus had.
- Our attitudes are formed in our minds, in our thoughts, and therefore our minds need to be cleansed from wrong attitudes.
- The Word of God is the tool God uses to help us get over wrong attitudes.
- To have an attitude like Jesus, we must have a servant attitude.

What are the "negative pulls" (people/circumstances/happenings) that tend to ruin your positive attitude?

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_____	_____
_____	_____

Plan of Action:

- Stop trying to control these uncontrollable things/people.
- Focus on controlling controllable things.
- Avoid negative self-talk.
- Don't spend any more time than necessary with really negative people.
- Pray! Pray! Pray!

Letting Go of Petty Fears

Fear comes in many shapes and sizes. Let's address those smaller ones, those petty joy-stealing fears that are truly unnecessary.

- **Fear of a Dreaded Outcome**

These are the fears that something bad just might happen, so to avoid that possibility we limit our activities and set unnecessary boundaries on our lives. Give some examples of these kinds of fears.

In most cases, these petty fears don't rise to the level of phobias or fixations, but they interfere with our everyday life, they limit where we go and what we do, they keep us from experiences that are often enriching and delightful.

- **Fear of Change**

"That's the way we've always done it" can be a verbal cover-up for petty fear. Change can truly bring petty fears out of the closet!

Getting over petty fears doesn't mean that you get rid of the emotion that accompanies these fears. It means you go forward in spite of them:

- You get on that airplane with your knees knocking, but you get on.
- You drive at night, slowly and cautiously with your heart beating a little faster, but you drive.
- You say, "Sure, I'll try" when asked to step out of your comfort zone, while you try to hide your shaking hands.
- You agree to a change in procedures, even though you wonder how in the world you'll ever learn to do it differently, but you agree.

Once you take that first courageous step to overcome that fear of change, you begin to see new avenues of interest, new opportunities, things to learn and do that were hidden to you before. And conquering fear in one area gives you strength to tackle other areas of petty fears.

- **Fear of Looking Foolish**

For those of us who are “control freaks” and who base far too much of our self- image on how we look, it is really important for us to get over this petty fear for, truly, we look more foolish when we try to avoid looking foolish.

Remember, people are not focusing on you nearly as much as you think they are.

The Antidote for Fear

We know from Scripture that these petty fears are not from God.

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. (2 Timothy 1:7, ESV)

So how do we combat these petty fears?

First, fears must be acknowledged for what they are before you will ever get over them. Getting specific is very important. Call them by name!

The cure for fear is the Word of God. So, memorize or put on cards some verses about fear. Here is a very small sample of passages in the Bible that address our fears:

Hebrews 13:6: *So we say with confidence,, ‘The Lord is my helper. I will not fear. What can man do to me?’*

Joshua 1:9: *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*

Psalms 56:3: *When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.*

Psalms 56:11: *In God I trust and am not afraid. What can man do to me?*

Psalms 118:6: *The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?*

Isaiah 12:2: *Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.*

A Challenge to Get Over Your Petty Fears

Galatians 5:1:

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

What are the "petty fears" that tend to keep you in bondage and/or ruin your positive attitude?

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_____	_____

Christ has come to set you free from every fear. You will be amazed at the freedom that will be yours when you get over your petty fears.