

# The Importance of Attitude I

Norbert Bohnert—December 30, 2017

Good morning brethren! It is a little bit of a wintry gray; winter has hit us with a vengeance.

Unfortunately, it has come true that Roy and Manola Assanti—who are visiting here from Australia—are getting a good, true, taste of Canadian winters. Probably a little bit more extreme than expected but they are coping rather well for the two days that they have been here. We'll see what happens over the week.

Also, I'd like to thank the Murphy family who have made the trip out in less than desirable roads last night to make the trip down here. Unfortunately, a lot of people had to cancel out because of road conditions and the extreme temperatures.

Today I'm going to speak on a subject that's probably very, very important but taken for granted sometime and also, not paid attention to very often. That is about *attitude*. What is attitude? Looking in the dictionary, it's defined as: *a subtle way of thinking in an individual or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior, in how he behaves, a position of the body proper to or implying an action or a mental state*, whatever the case may be.

I am sure we have come across individuals in our lifetime that have clearly *shown some form of attitude*, and it becomes very evident after speaking with them. Many times it becomes very evident after the interaction that you have with that individual over time. Sometimes it's a positive attitude, but many, many times it's a very negative attitude that comes to the forefront after discussing it with them.

Attitude is so important in our lives today, in how we react to people and the things that come our way in our daily lives, the interaction that we have with others, the interaction that we have with the brethren around us and also society around us. I'm going to concentrate today *primarily on the spiritual significance of attitude*, as God has much information in the Bible concerning that topic of attitude. We're going to examine three different aspects of attitude as they relate to our spiritual lives and the conversion process. There's three points that I want to cover today:

1. What should our attitude be toward God and Jesus Christ?
2. What should our attitude be toward our brethren, our brothers and sisters in Christ?
3. What should be our attitude be toward ourselves?

This third point may surprise you because without proper attitude toward ourselves, it is very difficult, or impossible, to have a proper attitude towards the brethren and the proper attitude toward God, toward the heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

As we go through each of these points many rhetorical questions may come up. We'll continue to examine ourselves as we continue to go on in our everyday lives, accessing our attitudes. More frequently, we should take the task to actually access our attitudes through our Christian journey to conversion.

## 1. What should our attitude be towards God?

Matthew 22:37: "And Jesus said to him, **'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'**"

We've heard this many times. This is the crux, the crux of determining what kind of an attitude we have toward God. This is the fundamental thing that we should be striving to do, to have the proper attitude toward God.

- Do we have the attitude of loving God with all our heart, all our mind and all our soul?

That's a question that we must continually ask ourselves. At the same time, we must answer that for ourselves. No one else can answer that question for us, but us individually.

- Do the actions and deeds in our lives reflect the degree of attitude of love toward our heavenly Father?
- Do our everyday deeds reflect the mindset of love toward God?

If the answer is *no*, or if the answer is, 'I'm not sure,' then we need to make adjustments as necessary in the attitude that we have toward our heavenly Father.

This is so important, and the crux of us being able to pursue the overall goal we have—*that is to be more like Christ*—the more we have to work on that attitude toward God. Of course, when I refer to the heavenly Father and God, that also includes Jesus Christ in all cases.

Along with this, we must also ask: **What about our attitude of faith in God?**

Hebrews 11:1: "Now, faith is *the* substance of *things* hoped for, *and the* conviction of things not seen. For by this *kind of faith* the elders obtained a good report. By faith we understand that the worlds

were created by *the* Word of God, so that the things that are seen were made from *things* that are invisible. By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it, though he died, *he* is yet speaking. By faith Enoch was transported so that he would not look upon death, and was not found because God had transported him; for before his departure it was testified of him that he pleased God. Now, **without faith it is impossible to please God.** For it is mandatory **for the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him**" (vs 1-6). *God rewards us!*

*Without an attitude of faith in God, we can simply not please God!*

- Do we have that attitude of faith that we should have?
- Do we have that faith?

If we are unsure of the level of faith that we have, God does give us the remedy to help us adjust our attitude.

Romans 10:17: "So then, faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing through *the* Word of God."

If our attitude is such that we lack faith to please God, we have the remedy in this Scripture. This *hearing*, the hearing of the Word of God, is not only confined to what we hear spoken on the Sabbath Day, in Sabbath services, or on personal Bible study, but that attitude of faith, that attitude of trust that we must have in God. We can reap where it says that we will be 'rewarded accordingly, if we seek God' (Heb. 11:6).

Colossians 3:17: "And *in* everything—whatever you do in word or in deed—*do* all in the name of *the* Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and *the* Father by Him."

- Do we possess the attitude of thankfulness, an attitude of gratitude for all that He does for each one of us?
- Have we assessed this carefully and thought about that?

Ephesians 5:20: "Giving thanks at all times for all things to God and the Father in *the* name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Again, we may ask that rhetorical question: Do we give God thanks for all things? This should be part of our daily prayer to thank God. A proper attitude in our relationship with the heavenly Father and Jesus Christ will enhance that likelihood of our relationship with others as well. That will only enhance it.

## **2. What should our attitude be toward our brothers and sisters in Christ?**

Matthew 22:37: "And Jesus said to him, 'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.... [he gets this instruction]: ...This is *the* first and greatest commandment; and *the* second *one* is like it: '**You shall love your neighbor as yourself**'" (vs 37-39).

*Interesting how this is actually worded! We are to have the attitude of love not only to our neighbor, but an attitude of love toward ourselves. We'll address that a little further in a few moments. What about the love we are to have for our neighbors?*

John 13:34: "A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another in the same way that I have loved you, that *is* how you are to love one another."

This is driven home to us on countless occasions of our love first toward God and then love toward our neighbor, to our brother. The proof to the world that we are brothers and sisters in Christ is shown of the love between us, the love between brothers and sisters in Christ.

1-Peter 1:22: "Having purified your lives by obedience to the Truth unto unfeigned brotherly love through *the* Spirit, **love one another fervently with a pure heart.**"

- Do we really love each other intensely with all our heart?
  - Do we have the attitude of cooperation?
  - Do we, cooperate with each other?
- or*
- Are we always at loggerheads with each other?

***Cooperation is part of developing the character that we need amongst us!***

1-Corinthians 12:12: "For even as the body is one and has many members, yet, all the members of the one body, though many, are one body; so also *is* Christ. For indeed, by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free—and we were all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body *of* Christ is not one member, but many.... [comprised of many members] ...If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,' would this then cause it not to be *part* of the body? And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,' would this then cause it not to be *part* of the body? If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would* the hearing *be*? If *the* whole *were* hearing, where *would*

the smelling *be*? But now has God Himself placed each one of the *members* in the body according to His own will. For if all were one member, where *would* the body *be*? But now *are there* many members, yet, *they are* one body. And *the eye* is not able to say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you.’ Or again, the head *is not able to say* to the feet, ‘I have no need of you’” (vs 12-21).

The analogy here, of course, is the function of the human body. It has many parts, and those parts cooperate within themselves for the good of the physical body. ***So should be the workings of the spiritual Body of Christ!*** Each of us must have that spirit and attitude of cooperation for the good of the spiritual body. We must have that cooperation amongst us.

A good example of this cooperation is found in Neh. 4. We will not go through that, but you can read it and see what Nehemiah had to say about men working together in cooperation with one another for the good of all. Cooperation brings the best out in people.

It was said by Andrew Carnegie, a rich man, ‘It marks a big step in a man’s development when he comes to realize that other men can be called on to help do a better job than he can do all by himself.’

Do we cooperate within the Body of Christ as a group for the benefit of the Body of Christ? That’s a question we must ask ourselves individually. An example of this that we may can relate to very well is represented at the Feast of Tabernacles where there are many brethren attending, not necessarily from the association or affiliation that you are necessarily attending with. We all come together in a spirit of peace, in an attitude of cooperation to enjoy what the Feast actually represents: a glimpse of the coming Kingdom of God.

No lines are drawn. No political agendas on self-righteousness. No attitudes of one organization being better than another. Simply the Body of Christ with different members, one body, coming together in an attitude of cooperation for the full eight days. It’s a true representation of what it actually means to have the proper attitude toward our brothers and sisters in Christ. This must be with peace, of course. Peace is something that each one of us is commanded to pursue, *to have a mind of peace!*

Ephesians 4:1: “Therefore, I, the prisoner of *the Lord*, am exhorting you to walk worthily of the calling to which you were called with all humility and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is* one body and one Spirit, even as you were also called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one

baptism; One God and Father of all, Who *is* over all, and through all, and in you all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (vs 1-7).

“...**forbearing one another in love; being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**” (vs 2-3).

James 3:17: “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and without hypocrisy. Now, *the* fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace” (vs 17-18).

Do we actually fulfill this part of being peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and producing good fruits? We must ask that question continually in our conversion process. Each one of us in the Spiritual Body of Christ are to be peacemakers. We are to go about our daily deeds in an atmosphere of peace.

Matthew 5:9: “Blessed *are* the peacemakers, for they shall be called *the* sons of God.” Do we, brethren, want to be called a child of God? *I know that I am sure striving to do that!* We must all live with this attribute. We must live in peace.

We have covered what our attitude should be toward God and our brothers and sisters in Christ. That leaves one very important point to cover.

### 3. What is our attitude toward ourselves?

Without this point there would be no fruits in the points of the attitude toward God and the attitude toward our brother and sisters in Christ. There are a number of sub-points on that.

The first attribute or aspect of attitude we should have toward ourselves is that of ***humility, to be humble!***

1-Peter 5:5: “In the same manner, *you* younger men be subject to *the* older men; and all of *you* be subject to one another, being clothed with humility because God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble. Be humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in *due* time; casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you” (vs 5-7).

Possessing a humble attitude of oneself is a major, major step in the relationship we have with God and our relationship with Jesus Christ *and* the brothers and sisters in Christ. Humility is so easily just put aside. Being humble is difficult for mankind generally; to be humble is a difficult thing.

Colossians 3:12: “Put on then, as *the* elect of God, Holy and beloved, deep inner affections, kindness... [to be kind] ...humility, meekness *and*

long-suffering... [all attributes that we should be working toward to possess] ...forbearing one another... [very critical] ...and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so also you *should forgive*. And above all these things *put on* love, which is *the* bond of perfection” (vs 12-14).

Ephesians 4:1: “Therefore, I, the prisoner of *the* Lord, am exhorting you to walk worthily of the calling to which you were called with all humility and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love” (vs 1-2).

We are to walk in humility. If we have that proper attitude of humility about ourselves, walking in humility, then guess Who walks with us? Not only walks with us, but actually *resides in us*? If we have the same, proper, humble attitude that we’re walking in humility, then of course, *Christ can reside in us!*

Isaiah 57:15: “For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity; Whose name is Holy; ‘I dwell in the high and Holy place, even with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.’”

That is what we should be working toward, that of *humility and a humble spirit*. In other words, we must have a teachable attitude and listen to what we are taught. Not just listen, but apply it to what we have been taught and to apply it to our daily lives. It’s not just listening to criticism. It states that, ‘If you’ll listen to constructive criticism, you will be among the wise.’ You will be home among the wise.

Proverbs 15:31: “The ear that hearkens to the reproof of life shall remain among the wise. He who refuses instruction despises his own soul, but he who hearkens to reproof gains understanding” (vs 31-32).

There is a benefit to actually hearing and to hearken to constructive criticism at times. To have an attitude *of being teachable* is so critical in our Christian walk with God.

- How teachable are we, brethren?
- How teachable are we when it comes to studying God’s Word?
- Do we study God’s Word to prove preconceived ideas that we may have of some new found truth?
- Trying to convince others of such?

or

- Do we study God’s Word fervently in a humble attitude of understanding and direction on a particular subject?

***We have to become teachable and the source is from God’s Word!***

What about our attitude toward our own character? What we’ve seen so far can all be summed up as character. Aspects such as love, cooperation, being teachable, cooperation to the point that humility and peace come to the forefront. What about our attitude toward ourselves or about ourselves, when no one else around us?

There’s a quote out there that states that ***‘the character that we have, the character that we possess, is what we do when no one is looking!’*** Along those same lines it is also stated that ***reputation is what men and women think of us.***

***Character is what God and the angels know of us!*** So, reputation is what men and women around us think of us, ***but character is what God and the angels actually know about us!***

- Who are we?
- What are we?

*That’s what we must ask ourselves!*

- What is our attitude within and towards ourselves when no one else is around us?

That’s a great question that we must continually ask ourselves. We, only ourselves, can answer that question rightfully.

Philippians 2:14: “Do all things without complaints and disputes.” Sometimes it is very difficult for us to practice that. Something comes in the way and we have something to dispute and/or complain about.

Verse 15: “So that you may be blameless and without offense, innocent children of God in *the* midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as lights in *the* world.”

That’s what we want to be. We want to be on an individual basis, a light in the world. With all the hardships and things going on, we must continue to keep that light going, as tough as it may be.

Colossians 3:12: “Put on then, as *the* elect of God, Holy and beloved, deep inner affections, kindness, humility, meekness *and* long-suffering.”

Qualities that we should all be working toward and to meet that quality that is so important in our Christian walk.

Verse 13: “Forbearing one another... [very difficult for many of us to do] ...and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so also you *should forgive*. And above all these things *put on* love... [that’s what the center of everything is] ...which is *the* bond of perfection.” It brings everything together. It makes us that much closer to perfection.

Verse 15: “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you were called into one body, and be thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And *in everything—whatever you do in word or in deed—do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him*” (vs 15-17). *Everything comes back to giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.*

These six verses speak volumes regarding our character. Without Godly character—the essence of attitude we should have towards ourselves—we would be no different than anybody else out there in this world today. It’s so critical that we work on that attitude toward ourselves.

As we can see, attitude is vitally important in our Christian calling. We actually can see that attitude is a big, big step. Proper attitude is everything in our Christian lives, in our spiritual lives. Norman Vincent Peal, who was a minister, I believe, in the faith and a famous author, once stated, *‘The secret of life isn’t what happens to you, but the secret of life is what you do with what happens to you.’* It’s actually what we do under the circumstances that we are put under. Attitude is so critical in our lives.

Here’s a comparison and we can compare what attitude is all about; Ecclesiastes 10:10: “If the iron is blunt, and he does not whet the edge, then he must put more strength to *it*. But wisdom is profitable to direct.”

We find here, that attitude can be compared to that of a dull axe. If our attitude is dull, if it’s a bad attitude, we certainly have to work on sharpening it. With that sharpening of that attitude, comes wisdom. It’s automatic! It will help us succeed in our Christian spiritual lives. Attitude is indeed important in everything in our Christian lives.

2-Timothy 2:21: “Therefore, if anyone has purged himself from these, he will be a vessel for honor, having been sanctified and *made* serviceable to the Master, *and* having been prepared for every good work. But flee youthful lusts; and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace with those who are calling on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and ignorant speculations reject, knowing that they engender arguments” (vs 21-23). *That’s what we must work toward!*

Are we developing the attitudes that are useful for our Master, as we just read here in v 21?—“**Therefore, if anyone has purged himself from these, he will be a vessel for honor, having**

**been sanctified and made serviceable to the Master, and having been prepared for every good work.**”

- Are we developing attitudes that are useful for our Master?
- Are we developing attitudes that are prepared for every good work?

Once again, we must answer that question on an individual basis. No one else can answer that question for us. It’s an individual answer that we must have for our own specific case.

Let’s have that attitude that we need to work toward, *that continual work of attitude toward:*

- our God and Jesus Christ
  - our brethren
- and most importantly and not forgotten*
- ourselves

Let’s work toward having that attitude that Christ would want us to have *to build the mind of Christ*. Let’s work on our spiritual growth using that attitude so that we may be there at the end, seeking what the ultimate goal is, *that of eternal life!* ***Attitude is everything!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 22:37
- 2) Hebrews 11:1-6
- 3) Romans 10:17
- 4) Colossians 3:17
- 5) Ephesians 5:20
- 6) Matthew 22:37-39
- 7) John 13:34
- 8) 1-Peter 1:22
- 9) 1-Corinthians 12:12-21
- 10) Ephesians 4:1-7, 2-3
- 11) James 3:17-18
- 12) Matthew 5:9
- 13) 1-Peter 5:5-7
- 14) Colossians 3:12-14
- 15) Ephesians 4:1-2
- 16) Isaiah 57:15
- 17) Proverbs 15:31-32
- 18) Philippians 2:14-15
- 19) Colossians 3:12-17
- 20) Ecclesiastes 10:10
- 21) 2-Timothy 2:21-23

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Nehemiah 4

NB: nfs  
 Transcribed: 08-07-18  
 Proofed: bo—8/12/18