

LIFE QUESTIONS



Elim Church, Clapham

Attitudes

A wise man once said, "'As a man thinks in his heart so he is.'" (Prov 23:7). It's amazing how many things that we do, start with a thought. New job, change of career, buying an article, starting a relationship, and the list continues. However, an attitude is a mindset that stems from a series of previously held beliefs and determines your responses and behaviour. It can also determine how others respond and treat you! Therefore, scripture exhorts you to have the same attitudes to those of Christ, who didn't presume that He should be treated any differently because He was the Son of God.

I remember once hearing Dr Caroline Leaf, a scientist who has specialised in the working of the brain, state, 'that your attitude determines the quality of your life', thereby supporting what was said by the wise man mentioned above.

A person can get their beliefs from a variety of sources - friends, experiences, learning, upbringing, authority figures in their lives, and their own thought processes, to name but a few. However, if any of the beliefs are wrong then the attitude will be affected and so will their behaviour, particularly when they are faced with a situation that could clash with their belief system. How we respond, and or react to situations can determine the outcome.

If you're not careful you can have more of a negative than a positive thinking towards your beliefs - illhealth, negative experiences and just the pressures of life can affect us in one way or another! However, it is better to have a positive attitude for it is easier to overcome the situation you may be finding yourself in.

Paul in writing to the Philippian Christians says, "Your attitude should be the kind that was shown us by Jesus Christ, who, though he was God, did not demand and cling to his rights as God, but laid aside his mighty power and glory, taking the disguise of a slave and becoming like men. And he humbled himself even further, going so far as actually to die a criminal's death on a cross" (Phil 2:5-8 TLB). What a challenge this can be for all of us.

Having positive and healthy thoughts can help us to respond in a different manner to situations as opposed to negative thoughts! It is with our minds that we choose to accept or reject the lies and suggestions of the enemy. It is with our minds that we choose to embrace the things that God says and therefore adopt an attitude of peace irrespective of what may be going or around us.

Think for a moment, about what your attitude is like towards someone you do not like or get on with? What should it be like, and is there any way you need to change to imitate the very life of Jesus? If we were to all adopt a positive attitude instead of a selfish one - society would be a lot better wouldn't it? Towards the end of His life, Jesus had to go through a trumped-up trial, where His accusers had already determined that they wanted Him crucified. In response, Jesus never retaliated, He kept quiet and did not rise to the false accusations. Jesus knew the plans of His Father and that there was no other way, as His purpose was to do His Father's bidding. As a result, He went to the cross and was triumphant in the long run.

Having a right attitude or mindset goes a long way in helping you to respond to challenging situations, even when they are not necessarily in your favour. It helps you to feel that you have some level of control or choice in the matter to enable change to take place. Being in control, takes a lot of pressure off you and goes a long way in helping you to be more relaxed about difficult situations. It also brings personal change within reach!