

# Leadership Begins with an Attitude

**(Leaders Think and Perceive the World Differently Than Followers Do)**

*“As a man thinks in his heart, so he is.”* (Proverbs 23:7)

It is common to assume that leadership is all about skills and techniques. In reality, our leadership begins when we possess the right attitude about our circumstances and ourselves. This is where all change takes place. William James, the father of modern psychology, wrote: “The greatest discovery of my generation is that humans can alter their lives by altering their attitude of mind.” Your attitude will determine your action. Your action will determine your accomplishments. Jesus emphasized this principle by teaching that we must get our *heart* in order before we can get our *life* in order. He said that when there are evil treasures in a man's heart, evil emerges. When there are good treasures in a man's heart, good emerges. It's all about what's inside. Real change occurs from the inside out.

BIBLICAL  
BASIS

**Exercise:** Write the name of a person you greatly admire. Then write down what it is that causes you to admire that person.

Now, consider the qualities you wrote down. Do they have more to do with attitude, aptitude or appearance? (Circle one) Can you see how important attitude is?

## Biblical Principles about Attitudes

**1. My attitude as I begin a task will affect its \_\_\_\_\_ more than anything else.**

*“As a man thinks in his heart, so he is.”* (Proverbs 23:7)

In so many situations, the battle is won before the battle has begun. It all has to do with the frame of mind with which we enter the battle. Are we full of faith, hope and optimism? Or, are we negative and doubtful of getting results? This principle was illustrated when Moses sent the twelve spies into the Promised Land. Joshua and Caleb came back with a positive report. The other ten spies returned with a negative report. Their attitude prevailed, and that generation of people never got to enter the land.

### Joshua and Caleb

- Saw the fruit in the land
- Saw themselves in God's hands
- Were optimistic about the future
- Encouraged stepping out in faith

### The Other Ten Spies

- Saw the problems in the land
- Saw themselves as small and weak
- Were pessimistic about the future
- Prevented the people from progress

CHECK YOUR  
HEART

### Attitude Checklist:

- What is my usual attitude at the beginning of a new experience?
- Are there certain new experiences that cause me to feel negative?
- Do these areas help determine my success with God, family, or ministry?

### 2. My attitude toward \_\_\_\_\_ determines their attitude toward \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.” (Luke 6:38)*

EXAMINE THE  
WORD

Generally speaking, people are mirrors. They will reflect the attitude of their leader. You must initiate the attitude you want in return. Leaders must understand this to get results. Jesus said, *“And just as you want people to treat you, treat them in the same way”* (Luke 6:31).

Researchers at a major university reported that a person's success on the job is:

- 13% due to understanding the product
- 87% due to understanding the people

### Four Important Leadership Steps with People:

- Remember their name. Nothing makes a person feel more important.
- Recognize their potential. Nothing makes a person feel more unique.
- Request their help. Nothing makes a person feel more useful.
- Reward their efforts. Nothing makes a person feel more valuable.

### 3. My attitude is the major difference between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Watch over your heart and guard it with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.” (Proverbs 4:23)*

The book of Proverbs reminds us of how important our attitude is toward life. Out of our hearts flow the springs of life. Think about it – you are only an attitude away from victory. An Olympic gold medal winner once said, *“I believe the only difference between gold and silver medal winners is their attitude, not their ability.”*

Proverbs also lists some abominations to the Lord. Consider them for a moment: pride, coveting, lust, envy, anger, gluttony and slothfulness. All are matters of the attitude.

Conversely, a right attitude can make up for what you may lack in resources. Many leaders in the past have accomplished great things without any resources other than a positive attitude of faith.

### 4. My attitude can turn my \_\_\_\_\_ into \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Have this attitude in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking on the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name...” (Philippians 2:5-9)*

### Three Phases of a Problem:

- a. Awareness: We have a problem.
- b. Evaluation: What went wrong?
- c. Choice: This is where attitude steps in!

We can begin dreaming or become disappointed. We can start building or start blaming. We can get busy or get angry. We can conquer or quit. Whether the problem becomes a blessing depends on you more than God. He desires to turn all things into blessings (Romans 8:28). Remember that much of the Bible was written by prisoners, oppressed minorities, and those in captivity. The writers rose above their circumstances.

### 5. My attitude can give me an uncommon \_\_\_\_\_ on life.

*“All things are possible to him who believes.”* (Mark 9:23)

A political leader once remarked, “Some people see things as they are and say, ‘why?’ I look at things that are not and say, ‘why not?’”

A shoe salesman was sent to a faraway country, and after a few days, he sent back the message: “Coming home; nobody wears shoes here.” Another salesman from the shoe company visited the same country. He wrote back to the home office after a few days: “Send more shoes! Nobody has them yet over here!” It was the same situation, but it was seen from a different perspective. Dr. J. Robert Clinton once remarked, “The primary difference between a follower and a leader is perspective. The primary difference between a leader and an effective leader is better perspective.”

EXAMINE THE  
WORD

### 6. My attitude is my best \_\_\_\_\_ or my worst \_\_\_\_\_.

*“The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”* (Luke 6:46)

Attitudes create momentum – positive or negative – for your ministry. Leaders know this. Business executives say the most important elements for potential employees are:

- 5% availability
- 5% adaptability
- 10% ability
- 0% appearance
- 70% attitude

Note the importance of attitude in both leaders and team members. Practicing psychologists list five rules for evaluating people considered for job promotion: (1) ambition, (2) attitudes toward policy, (3) attitudes toward colleagues, (4) leadership skills, (5) attitudes to pressure on the job.

A survey was taken among customers to discover why they quit buying goods from certain stores. Here is what they discovered: 1% die; 3% move away; 5% other friendships; 9% competitive reasons; 14% product dissatisfaction; and 68% because of an attitude of indifference shown to them by an employee.

**7. My attitude, not my \_\_\_\_\_, will give me happiness.**

**EXAMINE THE WORD**

*“I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold it was vanity and striving after the wind and there was no profit under the sun...I know there's nothing better for men than to rejoice and do good in one's lifetime; moreover that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor – it is a gift from God.”*  
(Ecclesiastes 2:11, 3:12-13)

The thoughts in your mind are more important than the things in your life. Too many leaders think if they just could move to a new place or have different circumstances, they would be happy. We call this “destination disease.” Leaders must be cured of it.

**Personal Evaluation:** Have you ever thought these thoughts?

- a. If I could just serve in a different place, I'd be happier.
- b. If I just knew that person, I'd be satisfied.
- c. If things were different here, I would be okay.
- d. If I would not have done that, I'd feel better about myself.

**8. My attitude will change when I \_\_\_\_\_ to change it.**

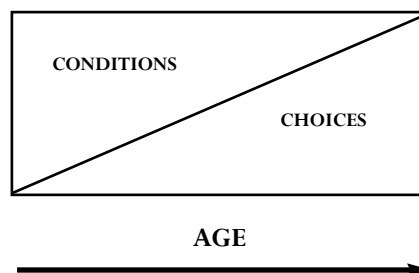
*“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore, choose life in order that you may live.”*  
(Deuteronomy 30:19)

We cannot tailor-make the situations of our life and leadership, but we can tailor-make the attitudes to fit them before they arrive. Here is how to tailor-make your attitude:

**ACTION PLAN**

- a. Believe it is not what happens *to* you but what happens *in* you that matters most.
- b. Stop blaming something or someone else for your attitude.
- c. Evaluate your present attitudes.
- d. Recognize that faith is stronger than fear.
- e. Request God to fill you with His Holy Spirit.
- f. Uncover and write out a statement of purpose.
- g. Enlist the help of an accountability partner.
- h. Spend time with the right people.
- i. Select a model to follow.
- j. Consume the truth. Soak yourself in the Scriptures!

**TRUTH IN A PICTURE**



As you mature, life is governed more by your choices than by your conditions or circumstances.

## 9. My attitude needs continual \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Finally, my brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good reputation, if there is any excellence and if anything is worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.” (Philippians 4:8)*

Even though the Apostle Paul wrote to mature believers, he still exhorted them to work on their attitudes and watch what filled their minds. Our lives are like sailing a boat or flying a plane. We have a plan for our destination, but there is a need for constant adjustment along the way.

### Indicators for Attitude Adjustments

- I have not had enough time with God or myself.
- My family notices and tells me about my attitude.
- My relationship with co-workers becomes strained.
- My view of people begins to lower.
- My perspective on life becomes cynical.

CHECK  
YOUR HEART

## 10. My attitude is \_\_\_\_\_.

People catch our attitudes like they catch a cold from us by getting close to us!

**Question:** What positive attitudes do people catch from you?

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**Question:** What negative attitudes do people catch from you?

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**ASSESSMENT:** List the top three attitude problems within your church or organization:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

ACTION PLAN

*Why do you think these attitudes exist within the majority of the people?*

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*How deeply are these attitudes entrenched within the people?*

*(How many years? How many people? How many leaders? Is this a problem in you?)*

**APPLICATION:** Develop a strategy for changing these attitudes:

- Model the right attitude for the people.
- Identify and connect them with leaders.
- Disciple leaders in this subject of attitude.
- Preach these truths.
- Hold the people accountable for their attitudes.