

Three Killer Attitudes

On Sunday, we completed our “Mastering Your Mind” series by discussing three killer attitudes.

1. Warm up question: Robert Ferguson’s Grandmother always told him, “Your attitude determines your altitude.” As you look back over this past week, when has your altitude been lowest? When were you most tempted to cop a bad attitude?

2. Read Exodus 14:5-12. This story takes place shortly after the people of Israel fled slavery in Egypt. After the escape, they were riding high. Free at last! Free at last! Verse 6 says, “They were going out boldly.” But then they looked up and saw the Egyptian army bearing down on them. In verse 11, they turned against Moses, basically saying, “This is all your fault!” They blamed Moses and, by implication, God. Their reaction was very human. Whenever bad things happen in our lives, it’s easy to invest all our emotional energy in looking for someone to blame. **This is Killer Attitude No 1 – “It’s not my fault!”**
 - a. Why is blaming others such a powerful impulse inside us?
 - b. Why is it so dangerous to invest our emotional energy in blaming when things go bad? What’s the downside? How did a “blaming attitude” hurt the Israelites?
 - c. Think of a time in your life when something bad happened. What happened? Whose fault was it?
 - d. Sometimes when bad things happen, it’s not our fault. Sometimes other people (or circumstances) do bad things to us. “When something bad happens,” Jeff said, “it may not be my fault, but how I respond is always my responsibility.” What do you think Jeff meant? Do you agree or disagree?
 - e. Tell us about a time when something bad happened to you, but you responded with courage and responsibility? What happened? How did your positive attitude help you?

3. **Killer Attitude No. 2 – “I’ll be happy when. . . .”** In her book, “Battlefield Of The Mind,” Joyce Meyer tells how, for much of her life, she kept thinking happiness would be just around the corner once her circumstances got better. With each new phase in life, she’d focus on the struggles and put off happiness until those struggles were resolved. “I’ll be happy when I don’t have to work,” she thought. But then when she wasn’t working, she realized she was bored and found herself thinking, “If I could just get out of the house more, then I’d be happy.” Another time, she thought, “If we just owned our home, I’d be happy.” But after buying a home, she thought, “If we didn’t have so many bills, then I’d be happy.” It’s an easy trap to fall into.

- a. Right now in your life, in your low moments, how are you tempted to finish this sentence: “I’ll be happy when _____.” Do you think it’s true? Do you really think you’ll be happy when the thing you said happens?
 - b. Carol Burnett says her deceased daughter is her hero. Though her daughter lived a difficult life, every morning when she woke up she said aloud, “I choose to love my life today.” Envision yourself doing that. How do you think it might affect you?
 - c. Psalm 118:24 says, “This is a day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” What do you think that verse means? Suppose you wake up on the morning of your parent’s funeral. Does this verse apply to a day like that? If so, how?
 - d. Proverbs 15:15 says, “All the days of the poor are hard, but he/she who has a merry heart has a continual feast.” What do you think that verse means? Suppose you lost your job and experienced financial difficulties. What might it look like to apply this verse in that situation?
 - e. Jeff said, “If you put your happiness on hold while you struggle in life, you’re not going to have much of a life, because so much of life is struggle.” Do you buy that?
4. **Killer Attitude No. 3 – “I am not worthy of God’s love and blessings.”** Joyce Meyer says, “I am convinced, after many years of ministry, that about 85 percent of our problems stem from the way we feel about ourselves.” She goes on to point out that, as people of faith, about 85 percent of how we feel about ourselves turns on how we believe God feels about us. Do you agree or disagree – and why?
- a. When talking with college students who are Christians, Skye Jethani was stunned to hear virtually all of them expressed the deep belief that God was disappointed in them. Why is this so common? Where do you think it comes from?
 - b. Galatians 4:7 says, “You are no longer a slave, but a child [of God], and if a child then also an heir, through God.” What’s the difference? How does a slave gain the master’s favor? How does a child gain a good parent’s favor?
 - c. As you walk around from day to day, what unspoken assumptions do you carry with you about how God feels about you? Before hearing Sunday’s sermon or engaging in tonight’s conversation, how would you have instinctively finished this sentence: “The way God mostly feels about me is . . .”? Don’t censor yourself, what first leaps to mind? Where does your answer come from?
 - d. Note: If you struggle with this third attitude, consider making this your breath prayer: “God loves me with an everlasting love, God delights in me, even when I fall short.” (Based on Jeremiah 31:3.)