

Momentum For Life
Ready for Life Long Learning the Secrets of the Heart
Matthew 23:24-26
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Introduction: I remember one of the first persons I baptized was Dave, I was still in Bible College. In a personal evangelism assignment I had to share the gospel with some one who was a stranger, and I found Dave. He was so lost it took a search and rescue party by the Holy Spirit to save him. The Sunday after his baptism, he shows up to church with his best jeans and best t-shirt! The only problem was in Bold yellow letters the message was Blank starting with an s happens. I was quickly elected to educate Dave this was not socially acceptable phrase in Church. Sadly, this happens to often in the church some learn at a young age learn what is proper and improper in church and some us it takes a while to educate. Why this is sad-is we often focus on Christians trying really hard to clean up their Act, after the Power of God has saved them. What is really sad about this is what Jesus had to say to the Pharisees of his day!

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of

greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

Jesus criticizes Pharisaical leaders for outwardly appearing upright and holy but inwardly remaining full of corruption and greed. Living our Christianity merely as a show for others is like washing only the outside of a cup. When we are clean on the inside, our cleanliness on the outside won't be a sham.

The longer I am on this journey following Christ, I am finding God is teaching me to not focus on the outside, but the inside condition of the heart. God's truth to us is that we must be ready for a lifetime of learning the secrets of the heart, to become Christlike. Ready for a life time of saying yes to God: to transform our inner man or woman. So let's look at three conditions we will spend a life time of learning what needs transformed the secrets of our heart.

1. It takes a lifetime to adjust Our Attitudes

Next to knowing Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, nothing is more important than having a good positive attitude. Your attitude can:

MAKE OR BREAK YOU HEAL OR HURT YOU MAKE YOU FRIENDS OR

MAKE YOU ENEMIES MAKE YOU HAPPY OR MAKE YOU MISERABLE

MAKE YOU A SUCCESS OR MAKE YOU A FAILURE

95 times out of 100, when we begin to feel that things in life stink, the problem is not with the world or with others, but with ourselves. The problem is that our attitude has become negative. Change you negative attitudes to positive ones, and you can change your world.

Someone had rightly said that attitude not aptitude determines ones altitude in life. How important is your attitude? Your attitude is more important than: facts - circumstances - what others say - it's more important than your past - your education and your money. Your attitude is more important than anything else.

And Understand that your attitude is much deeper than just a few thoughts you might think or not think. Your attitude comes out of the core of your being. Your attitude represents your disposition, your outlook, your very character.

ILLUSTRATION;

JAR OF WATER -- PUT A LID ON IT LOOSELY -- SHAKE THE JAR VIGOROUSLY UNTIL WATER FALLS OUT. ASK PEOPLE WHY THE

WATER SPILLED? . LID LOOSE. JAR SHOOK . GRAVITY

NO, THE REASON THE WATER CAME OUT WAS BECAUSE THE JAR WAS FILLED WITH WATER. WHAT'S ON THE INSIDE IS WHAT COMES OUT.

Jesus said, *in* ***Are you still so dull?" Jesus asked them. ¹⁷"Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? ¹⁸But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. ²⁰These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.' "Matthew 15:17-20***

You see, most people who stir up trouble do so not out of right reasons but out of bad Attitudes. Often times the things that we criticize and get all stirred up about are not the problem at all. The problem is our own sour, sick, bad attitude. I've seen and you have seen; bad attitudes; Destroy; marriages/families/work environments/board meeting/ladies meeting/church services...etc You see whenever you have an individual or a group of people filled with a bad attitude and

wearing a loose lid, trouble is bound to happen, things will rapidly get negative. What is interesting and uncomfortable is the problem is your attitude not your neighbors. God wants to transform your attitude, but you need to learn how to say yes to God's power!

Learn to Choose a positive attitude

Without a doubt, the human mind is the most awesome creation of God. With it, God has given us the ability to think, to reason and to choose whether we will focus on positive thoughts or negative thoughts. In every one of our lives there is the positive and the negative. The choice as to which one we will focus on and feed, nurture is up to us.

Understand You can't choose what will happen to you today (it's beyond your control) -- but you can choose your own attitude - we each have the power to decide how we will respond to what happens to us.

Dr Victor Frankl stood under the glaring lights of the Gestapo court in a Nazi concentration camp, soldiers had taken away from Victor every earthly possession - his clothes, his watch, even his wedding ring. And as Dr Frankl stood there naked, his body shaved before those cruel men, men who tried to take every ounce of dignity from him. At that moment Frankel said that he realized he was destitute except for

one thing, . He still had something that no one could take away from him, not even the Nazi's. He still had the power to choose his own attitude. And he choose to not give that attitude to his enemies. He chose joy, he choose hope, he choose to be positive. It takes work-it take a life time of practice but we can choose to be positive.

START SPEAKING POSITIVE WORDS

The first step in becoming a more positive person is to work at learning to speak positive words. Notice, I said learn. And the reason because that speaking positively is something you have to learn by practice. It does not come naturally. It is always easier to talk negatively, to criticize. I mean most of us can do that with out even thinking, the negative words, comments and phrases just flow effortlessly from our lips.

The reality is that you help create the atmosphere in which you live by the words you speak. When your words are positive, you produce a creative, loving, accepting, positive environment. On the other hand when you speak negative words you create suspicion, mistrust and a can't do anything right atmosphere.

Therefore the task of the Christian life is to eliminate negative words, to do away with words that hurt and tear down, replacing them with

positive words, words that build up, edify and encourage other people.

Did you ever hear about the 2 guys who were in jail. Tom tried to be real positive no matter the situation. One day he sees his buddy Joe walking down the hall; Tom said to Joe; "Where are you going?" "To the electric chair," Joe replied. "More power to ya," Tom answered.

Well at least Tom was trying to speak positive words. You might say his heart was in the right place.

Beginning today, I dare you to try a little experiment with me. To everyone you meet, whether it's at a gas station, at a store, at home, at work or at church -- try to say something positive and uplifting. Do it this for one day this week and see what happens. You'll probably have a great day. Why? because positive words create a loving, creative environment in which to live.

Pray for a Christ like attitude

You know the truth of the matter is if all I left you with is trips and tricks to choose a positive attitude and how to speak positive words-I would have failed you. Because we on our own are powerless to change our self that I why Paul said: So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me Romans 7:21

Transformation always takes place at the Cross! It is impossible with us-but possible with God!

So Pray Paul's word for a Christ like attitude when he wrote. . . our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature^[a] God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature^[b] 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! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Amen

2. It Takes a lifetime to learn what our true motivations are

A young, smart-alec cowboy was riding his horse one day and saw an old man on a mule. The young cowboy decided to have a little fun, so he drew his 6-shooter and told the old man to get off the mule and dance! He said to the old man, "Have you ever danced?" Then he began to empty his revolver near the feet of the old man, laughing while he

danced! After a few minutes, the cowboy ran out of bullets!

The old man wiped his brow, then slowly reached into his belongings and pulled out a huge loaded shot gun. He points the shot gun at the young cowboy and says, "Young man, have you ever kissed a mule?"

The young cowboy said, "No, but I've always wanted to!" * That's motivation! The Lord does not put a gun to our heads, but He does give us his word, people examples, direction, & principles to motivate us in our Journey with Christ.

WHAT IS MOTIVATION? * Motivation is "that which causes action."

In regard to human behavior, it may be fear of punishment or hope of reward - or both! It may be the desire to please someone, a sense of responsibility, a product of character or attitude! Motivation is that which causes action! In the story I related, looking down the business end of a shot gun was the motive behind the action of kissing the mule!

Now when Jesus dealt with this subject, He was exceedingly clear!

Sometimes the action is right but the motive is wrong! * Listen to

Jesus in *Matt.6:1-7 Be careful not to do your 'acts of*

righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will

have no reward from your Father in heaven. "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

The action of giving is right, but the motive here was wrong - "to be seen of men." The action of prayer is right, but in this case, the motive was "to be seen and heard by men. I have found the longer I follow Christ, the hardest thing to wrestle with is my motivations. Am I tithing-serving because I love Jesus or the praise of men-Is this act for the Lord or myself? Let's be honest most human beings have hidden agenda-not just to love God and others! We need to be certain that our actions are properly motivated! Motivation is that which causes action!

Have you never noticed motivation can be a real problem? I know I need to lose some weight, I'll start next Monday. I know the grass needs to be mowed, I'll do it tomorrow. I know the house needs to be painted, I'll do that this spring. I know the Sunday school teachers

need help, I'll help next quarter. Some times motivation can be a real problem. The same is true in our lives as Christians! We sometimes get burdened down with what's going on around us, and then when God call us to Commitment, the motivation is sometimes hard to come by. This morning we will be looking at motivation, and what we as Christian can do in order to have that total Commitment to God.

WE Learn Motivation by hearing and Obeying God's Voice

Psalm 119:15 David writes "I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways, 119:23... your servant will meditate on your decrees, 119:27...I will meditate on your wonders, 119:99... I meditate on your statutes, in 119:148... I meditate on your promises.") Meditation means hearing Gods voice and listening to what He has to say!

Poem: Once there was a man who dared God to speak. Burn the bush like you did for Moses, God and I will follow. Collapse the walls like you did for Joshua, God and I will fight. Still the waters like you did on Galilee, God and I will listen. And so the man sat by a bush, near a wall, close to the sea, and waited for God to speak.

And God heard the man, so God answered. He sent fire, not from a bush, but for a church. He brought down a wall, not of brick, but of sin.

He stilled a storm, not of the sea, but of a soul.

And God waited for the man to respond. And he waited.. And he waited.. And waited. But the man was looking at bushes, not hearts; bricks and not lives, seas and not souls, he decided that had done nothing.

Finally he looked to God and asked, Have you lost your power? And God looked at him and said, Have you lost your hearing?

Some times the hustle and bustle of life keeps us from hearing God's voice. The kids need to be picked up from school, laundry has to be done and dinner won't make itself. But in the midst of the hustle and bustle, God is calling us to be motivated, he is pleading with us to meditate on His word and obey His commands. When you can't see the light at the end of the tunnel, you can always turn to prayer. Jesus before his arrest went away and he prayed! You see meditation and prayer go hand in hand. It's like making a sandwich, if I were to say Peanut Butter, you would say jelly. The same is true with prayer and meditation. (Phip 4:6-7 says, Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all

understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.)
When times are tuff, we need go away and have some quiet time with God, weather it's at home or in the car, at the office on a lunch break or wear ever it may be. We need to pray to Him, and ask Him for His peace and strength, ask for guidance and direction for our lives. We need to thank Him for His unfailing love and for His amazing grace! We need to ask God to motivate our lives and help bring us to a deeper commitment to Him!

Meditation and Prayer is how we say yes to God but left to our own devices we will fail every-time:

We still need the Grace, power and purity to restore us to the right motivation. John 14:15 cuts to the chase. . . If you love me, you will obey what I command. Here is the secret of Christian Growth and obeying- fall in love with Jesus. Don't do anything simply bask in His love. It is the love of Christ that saved us-it will be the Love of Christ that sanctify our attitude.

3. It takes a lifetime to align Our Thoughts with Christ

Psychologists teach us that there are two mental laws that contribute

heavily to our mental state of being. In other words, whether we're happy or sad. They are:

1: The Law of Concentration.

2: The Law of Substitution.

The Law of Concentration states that whatever we dwell upon grows in our life experience. Whatever we think about on a continual basis becomes a part of us. Yes, we become what we think, and the more we dwell on something, the more we have of it in our lives.

The Law of Substitution states that our conscience mind can only hold one thought at a time. It makes no difference to our mind whether the thought is "negative" or "positive," it can only hold one at a time.

However, we can choose to substitute "negative" thoughts with "positive" thoughts, thus changing our mental state of being.

The Lord understood these principles when He inserted a couple of scriptures into the Bible:

Proverbs 23:7a, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Isaiah 26:3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed

on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

Now here is where the rubber meets the road . . .

We are what we are because of what we have allowed ourselves to concentrate on!

If you find yourself an OLE crabby, miserable, negative person that nobody likes to be around . . . guess what? You're that way because you have allowed yourself to feast on a steady diet of crabby, miserable, negative thoughts.

Try substituting negative thoughts with positive ones.

And do you know what? . . .

If you'll concentrate on what's right in your life instead of what is wrong . . .

what's good instead of what's bad . . .

what's sweet instead of what's bitter . . .

you'll find that you're a totally different person . . .

and the only thing that changed . . . was you!

There are two simple mental and Spiritual laws to happiness in life, And
psychologist didn't invent them . . . God did!

1: Concentration: Proverbs 23: 7a, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is
he."

2: Substitution: Isaiah 26: 3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace,
whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

Happiness comes when we stop wailing about the troubles we have, and
offer thanks for all the troubles we don't have!

*The truth is if it was just that easy God would have sent us a
Shrink instead of a Savior. The Savior transforms his children by
Giving us a steady diet of His Word. Let me give you two or
Three verses that promise the transformation we all seek. Before
I do that let me challenge you to say today, is the day to make a
commitment to read God Word the Bible every day in the coming
year-It is how we invite the Holy Spirit to transform our lives.
Take note of These verse you may even want to memorize them. .
I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against
you. Psalm 119:11*

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual^a act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1,2

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16

Conclusion: Let's say there is a river that runs right by your house. It is wide and the water flows slow and steady. All the water is flowing to the ocean. It has a definite course and a definite destination in mind. There is a little rowboat on the bank of the river and you decide to get in the rowboat and paddle out into the middle of the river. Now once you get there you can do one of three things. Do you remember what those three things are - you can:

1. Paddle against the current.
2. Sit in the rowboat and go with the flow.
3. Paddle with the current.

If it is God's purpose for me to be made into the image of Christ I can do three things. I can fight against it. I can sit back and just hope it will happen. Or I can work with God in the process of my transformation. In other words I can be involved in my Christian

growth process. I can "grow in the grace and knowledge of my Lord Jesus Christ." I can clothe myself in "Christ-likeness". I can "put on the full armor of God." I can study to "show myself approved". I can "work out my salvation with fear and trembling". I can "submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit". I can work with God to help Him - help me - become more like Jesus. Isn't that an amazing thought? God is changing me - and He has asked me to be involved in the process. He has asked you - to be involved in your transformation as well. Music Group up Front. This transformation is a life long Journey-it takes readiness for life long learning to adjust our attitudes, motivations and thoughts to become more like Jesus. It is a Journey no one finishes until he steps into heaven. But would you take the first step today by coming up front and saying yes to Jesus, by repenting of you sin, confessing of your faith and committing your life in Christian baptism.