



# Gospel Ministry Wisdom

## Lesson 2 Attitude, Spirit and Approach

### I. ATTITUDE:

#### A. How you see yourself.

1. Will affect everything in your life. Inescapable consequences.
  - a) Your marriage, family, home, mate, friends, church.
  - b) How you treat people.
  - c) Where your emphasis in life.
  - d) How you are perceived.
2. Jesus was frank and blunt about it.
  - a) **Luke 14:11 and Luke 18:14.** How you view yourself takes you somewhere.
  - b) Jesus' emphasis on attitude is clear. **Matthew 20:25-28, Mark 10:42-45 and John 13:4-5.**

#### B. There are two options, and they're at opposite ends of the spectrum.

1. **To exalt self.** "Exalt." (**hupsoo.** hoop-so'-o. *To elevate, exalt, lift up literally or figuratively.*)
  - a) The emphasis is on self: Master, boss, in charge,
  - b) Self is the standard. Most things measured and *judged* by "me" and what "I" think. "*Rightly dividing the word of truth*" (**2 Timothy 2:15**), hermeneutics, context are not serious considerations. *This is how I see it; I'm right, my mind is made up; I have no serious interest in further discussion or consideration of the matter. Any matter. All those Scriptures about reasoning together (Isaiah 1:18) a hasty spirit (Proverbs 14:29, Ecclesiastes 7:9) and being slow to speak and swift to hear (Ecclesiastes 5:1, James 1:19) are conveniently minimized. \*Proverbs 18:13.*
  - c) These are the self-promoters, the *chest beaters*.
    - (1) Almost none of them see it in themselves (they're blind to it) or will admit it. It is simply a way of life. They see no problem with it.

- (2)** Here are some of the ways self-centered people, especially preachers, beat their chests and exalt themselves.
- (a)** They dominate conversations. They get and hold the floor, butt in and take over, cut others off and have little interest in the ideas or opinions of others. You almost never see them pick up on what someone else has to say, the idea of another.
  - (b)** They are not listeners.
  - (c)** They talk mostly about themselves. Somehow they manage to become a major part of the conversation: what they think, their experiences, where they've been, what they've accomplished, tell their stories.
  - (d)** They're almost always the *hero*: they one who looked good, who got the laughs, who put down someone, who was smart.
  - (e)** If you're around them very long, you will find out how smart they are, important people they know, famous people in their family line, the injustices they've suffered, how they were right and others were wrong.
  - (f)** They will tell you how others praised and bragged on them, fell in love with them and hated to see them go.
  - (g)** What you will rarely hear them do is genuinely admit their mistakes, weaknesses, shameful stories or ugly side.

**d)** People (preachers) whose hearts are mostly set on self "*love the chief seats in the synagogue*" (**Matthew 23:6**). The emphasis is on self, me, my opinions, what I think and believe. **\*Luke 20:46**

**2. To humble self. Selfless/unselfish. (tapeinoo. tap-i-no'-o. To depress; figuratively to humiliate in condition of heart. Abase, bring low, humble.)**

**a)** To see yourself as meek and lowly. **Matthew 11:29. \*Philippians 2:3-8.**

**b)** The emphasis is Christ and others. **1 Peter 2:21**

**c)** Life is not about me; it's about serving and exalting Christ. Self is thus abased, not exalted.

**d)** These see their self as a servant, not a Master. They are owned (*He owns me, purchased me with His blood.*) (**\*1 Corinthians 6:19-20**) The Master is always in charge, never the servant. *I have no rights; only privileges.*

**e)** Christ and His righteous lifestyle is the standard by which all things are viewed, evaluated and judged. **\*Colossians 1:18. Matthew 6:33.**

**II. SPIRIT.** From Hebrew **ruach** (roo'akh) having to do with the *air* one exudes including his expressions and functions; one's essence or disposition.

**A. A person's *spirit* grows out of his attitude or self-perception.**

1. There's an air about people. Some people come across as warm and touchable. Others are cool, cold, distant and hard to touch.
2. Others sense it. Sometimes an early perception is not correct, but usually the vibes come through pretty quickly: body language, a smile versus a hard, cold stare, sincerity versus *nasty nice*, genuine interest versus silence or self-interest.
3. The ability to lie consistently is very difficult. Who you really are will come through; it's just a matter of time. *You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time; but you can't fool all of the people all of the time.*

**B. Out of a self-exalted attitude comes a proud, haughty spirit.**

1. Aloof, condescending approach, conceit, superiority complex, haughtiness, vain, egotistical, arrogance, presumptuous, smug, overbearing and snobbish.
2. **\*Proverbs 16:18** is the very center verse of **Proverbs**. It is noteworthy that "*haughty*" is from the Hebrew word **gobahh** (go'bah) which means *elation, grandeur, arrogance, excellency, haughty, height, high, loftiness, pride*. Keil and Delitzsch point out that with it comes the idea of "*being dashed in pieces and overthrown;*" neither bursting nor shipwreck.
3. With the attitude of self-centeredness and exaltation comes the inevitable spirit of pride, and it is impossible to completely mask it.

**C. Out of a self-abased attitude comes a humble, tender spirit.**

1. Modesty, meekness, submissiveness, lowliness, unassuming, poor in spirit, modest, unpretentious, polite, courteous, kind.
2. It is noteworthy that **\*Proverbs 16:19** immediately follows **Proverbs 16:18** where *haughtiness* is addressed. In this verse *humility* is praised as infinitely better than the vanity of pride.
3. With the attitude of *selflessness* comes the inevitable spirit of humility, and it rare but beautiful, attractive and magnetic. Humility is the spirit of Christ, **\*Philippians 2:6-8**. It should be the spirit of every preacher. "*Take my yolk upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart,*" **Matthew 11:29**.
4. When *humility* is there, it will show just as *pride* will always leak through.

**III. APPROACH.** Every preacher's attitude and spirit will govern his approach to the ministry.

**A. Those whose heart is really centered on self will approach ministry as the person in charge and seek to lead by force and intimidation.**

1. Those who are self-righteous generally act as if they are above all of the rest of us, and approach ministry as nosy, pushy and heavy-handed. These are the pastors who often become very self-righteous and dictatorial.
2. Yes, there really are *spiritual bullies*. I have known a few. **3 John 9**

**B. Those whose heart is really centered on the Lord will approach ministry as though it does not really belong to him and seek to lead by the power of godliness, character and persuasion.**

1. Jesus spoke of those who love the praise of men. **Matthew 6:2-16** Solomon said, "*Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips,*" **Proverbs 27:2.**
2. They approach ministry on the basis of **earning** respect and the right to lead. **\*1 Peter 5:1-6.** That's the way Jesus and Paul did it; and Charles Thomas and Jerry Falwell.
3. For every minister, the spirit of Christ should be a lifestyle, never a performance!

Ultimately you will consciously or subconsciously decide on your attitude, spirit and approach to life and ministry. There really isn't much middle ground. We all gravitate in one direction or the other.