

# Men's Bible Study

January 31, 2024

Romans: A study for understanding God.

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Years ago, I was a wholesale meatcutter and a butcher. I stood along a long moving conveyer belt that would bring pieces of meat that each cutter would in turn take off the belt and cut, slice, bone, separated into specific portions. There were twelve of us six on a side doing this beef disassembly line. We would work continuously for two hours, fifteen minutes then another two hours and take a half hour lunch. Time worn meat dance would be repeated in the afternoon. We would continually talk and banter about the latest news of the world and our families, all the while soft music would play in the background to keep from going out of our minds.

As we approached quitting time we would look down the line of pieces of meat and know we had to get the conveyer belt empty before cleaning up. If we would work real hard the boss would just add more big pieces of meat.

One of my fellow butcher workman would, at the appropriate time would say under his breath "Twenty Degrees." He had his pilot license and he was referring to the attitude of the plane. If you raised the nose of his little Cessna to twenty degrees above level, the plan would ultimately stall and fall out of the sky. It was how we paced ourselves at the meat line became empty at the exact time when the clock said it was time to go home.

As he explained it to me, "**In flight the attitude determines your altitude.**"

Your attitude determines your behavior.

Your attitudes determine our actions.

Your PNEUMO (Spirit) and your SOMA (Soul (decision maker) determines your SARX.

## Attitude

The word in **Greek** to describe your attitude is **phronéō** meaning:

- 1) to have understanding, be wise
- 2) to feel, to think
  - a) to have an opinion of one's self, think of one's self, to be modest, not let one's opinion (though just) of himself exceed the bounds of modesty
  - b) to think or judge what one's opinion is
  - c) to be of the same mind i.e. agreed together, cherish the same views, be harmonious
- 3) to direct one's mind to a thing, to seek, to strive for
  - a) to seek one's interest or advantage
  - b) to be of one's party, side with him (in public affairs)

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Webster:

**A settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior.**

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Attitudes are a learned tendency. It is what our mind uses to evaluate situations, people, events. Our attitudes are the evaluation portion of our thought processes.

## Characteristics of Attitudes.

- ✓ Attitudes can change
  - Attitudes can change quickly in response to dramatic experiences. Such as a family member's death because of drugs will cause a change in attitude to the use of prescriptions.
  - Attitudes can change slowly in response to teaching, social pressure, and persuasion. The longer you are associated with a small group such as ours, an attitude tolerance, acceptance and preference develops.
  
- ✓ Attitudes can have different levels of strength.
  - Attitudes can increase in the effect in your lives as we become more familiar with the subject. We have this attitude in us as we study more and more about grace and we therefore will have more grace for others. We practice what we preach.
  - Attitudes can increase when we become more dependent on what we believe. If we have seen grace and healing in others who have believed similar your belief we can exhibit faith, and belief all the more. We become more expectant of change in our belief.
  - Attitudes can grow and shrink in direct proportion to personal experience. If I believe in the quality of a GMC pickup, yet it continually breaks down in the most inopportune times my attitude will slowly lessen.
  - Attitudes can grow and shrink when the risk of failure increases. I believe and have an attitude of God's protection, but I will also not jump of a cliff to prove it.
  - Attitudes grow and shrink in direct proportion of use. If I do not test my attitude it will shrink. If I increasingly depend upon my attitude it will grow.
  
- ✓ Attitudes have three components. ABC
  - Attitudes are **affective**, they change your view of a person, object or idea, depending on how you feel. An emotional response. An attitude of remorse and feelings of loss when a friend dies or is injured. When you see a dead deer on the road, there is an emotional response. **An affectual attitude to the presence of a large spider is fear.**
  - Attitudes are **behavioral**. Our attitudes are one of the primary reasons we do things. We give a hug to someone that needs it, as an expression of our attitude. **An behavioral attitude to the presence of a large spider I avoidance.**
  - Attitudes are **cognitive**. We have to evaluate most every act in relationship to our attitudes. We act on feelings without thought, but we make decisions that require thought one of the factors is an established attitude. **A cognitive attitude toward the presence of a large spider is they are dangerous.**
  
- ✓ Attitudes are timely
  - I can have an attitude that is **explicit**. It is something that I am well aware of. I have a preference for cherry ice cream. I can eat other ice cream flavors but I have a bias for cherry. It is not something I think about all the time, but when Bonnie buys

vanilla I can tell her, “I don’t like Vanilla.” But better in an effort to make Bonnie feel good about her choice, I say, “Next time could you get some Cherry.” Explicit attitudes are voiced and consciously rationalized.

- I can also have an attitude that is **implicit**. It is an attitude that expresses itself without thought, without out conscious evaluation. That can get you into trouble. To speak before the mind is engaged.

## So what forms our attitudes?

Where do our attitudes come from?

- ✓ **Experience and observation.** Attitudes come from our own lives. If we experienced the joy of really good cherry ice cream, that perfect balance of creaminess, and fruit, served at the optimum temperature of 34 degrees. We develop a attitude of preference.
- ✓ **Social interaction.** We all live in peer relationships. We come early to Men’s Bible study because we don’t want to be called on to pray. We set in the back so I will not call you out. There is an expectation within groups. We don’t take the last piece of candy from the bowl. We react in social settings with an attitude of appropriateness.
- ✓ **Learning.** Learning is divided into four segments.
  - **Learning through advertisement.** The claims of the huckster is that it is new and improved. It is better than the other guy. We see others enjoying themselves with some beverage and we develop an attitude that social gatherings must include Mountain Dew.
  - **Learning through teaching.** For most in our culture learning slows to a grinding halt in our mid-twenties. It takes a cognitive decision a mind changing attitude to place yourself in a environment to be taught. It take effort to learn through teaching. It is much easier to learn of things that interest you or of things you are required to learn for your job, or to conform to community standards. It requires an attitude of learning.
  - **Learning through conditioning.** We all have negative feedback. We all have had experiences where you were graded in school. We don’t like the feelings when we brought our report cards home to be signed. Every day we try to live up to standards set by others. It is like being nibbled to death by a duck: a very slow death. There are micro aggressions that when noticed develop into attitudes.
  - **Learning through observation.** In any association with other people we have our radar on for what we should be doing. People watching looking for what is normal.

## Associative attitudes.

All attitudes have context. They can and often are different in relation to the proximity or presence of the motivation. At home, after 9 PM, I can take an attitude of relaxation and find entertainment in YouTube videos about fishing and camping. But to take my phone to church and watch YouTube videos in my pajamas, not so much. In the scripture before us there are three places of context:

- ✓ Self – Intrinsic attitudes which we conform to in all settings. What you see is what you get no matter what. This attitude of self is constantly in need of improvement.

- **“I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”** Philippians 4:13
- **“Have this attitude in yourselves which is also in Christ Jesus, who, as He already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.”** Philippians 2:5
- ✓ Church – The social attitude which we conform to in the presence of other Christians. These are acts to be seen by others of the same belief structures and similar experiences.
- ✓ World – The external social attitude which we conform to the presence of persons who are easily identifiable as Christians.

## Cognitive dissonance

Cognitive dissonance is when our actions do not align with our attitudes. We have an inner attitude, a well thought out decision that is made, it was a promise given to yourself, an absolute intrinsic and extrinsic belief can complete an expected action, BUT, we don't do it.

Illustration: Bonnie has been hinting at replacing her 2016 Mazda four door. We made the decision to buy this existing car based upon hundreds of criteria and with much thought. We have in the last five years developed an attitude about the quality of Mazda. It has never failed us, everything works as expected. We have observed the usefulness of Mazda to meet our needs. So, my attitude is that I will only look at Mazda as a replacement vehicle. BUT Honda has a great hybrid available. That very thought is cognitive dissonance. To have an Mazda attitude, but willing to do something else.

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For eleven chapters Paul has been explaining what God in his mercy has done, and will yet do, for repentant sinners. Now he reminds those who have experienced this mercy that the most fitting act of worship by which they can show their thanks is to offer themselves as living sacrifices to God. No longer are they to think and act like non-Christians. Their minds must be changed so that they see issues from a different point of view, God's point of view. As they learn to think in a more Christian way, they will know God's will better and their actions will be more pleasing to him.

Paul lists **attitudes** of life of the Christian in Romans 12:9-21. Here we find the **BEATITUDES** of Paul. We are to be something based upon our unified life with God. It starts with internal attitudes of self.

### Romans 12:9-21 attitudes of self.

I have listed in this table only those attitudes which are directly related to the SELF context. We have covered the first three and are noted with a Check in the fifth column. Tonight, we need to examine the rest of the self-attitudes.

VS	Text	Object	Qualifier	Done
9	Let your love be without hypocrisy,	Love	Genuine	✓
	Abhor what is evil,	Evil	Abhor	✓
	Cling to what is good,	Good	Cling	✓

11	<i>Not lagging behind in diligence,</i>	<i>Diligence</i>	<i>Not lagging</i>	
	<i>Fervent in spirit,</i>	<i>Spirit</i>	<i>Fervent</i>	
	<i>Serving the Lord,</i>	<i>The Lord</i>	<i>Service</i>	
12	<i>Rejoicing in hope,</i>	<i>Hope</i>	<i>Rejoice</i>	
	<i>Persevering in tribulation,</i>	<i>Tribulation</i>	<i>Persevere</i>	
	<i>Devoted in prayer.</i>	<i>Prayer</i>	<i>Devoted</i>	
21	<i>Do not be overcome by evil</i>	<i>Evil</i>	<i>Victory</i>	
	<i>Be overcome evil with good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Success</i>	

As a group within the attitudes expressed by Paul in Romans 12:9-21 ones that need to be fundamentally and personally held are nine in number.

**We addressed the first three last week:**

- 1) LOVE that is genuine – Life of selfless love.
- 2) EVIL that is hated – Life of abstinence. Not just avoided but to an active removal of self from any shadow of evil.
- 3) GOOD attachments – Life of sticking to good. Adhesive, stuck to without possibility of being torn off.

**Tonight**

- 4) Diligence not behind – Life keeping in step.
- 5) Spirit that is excited – Life boiling hot in action.
- 6) Service pointed – Life consistently pointed.
- 7) Hope that is full of joy – Life that is positive.
- 8) Holding on in tribulation – Life of resolve.
- 9) Prayer in devotion – Life as a prayer.
- 10) Overcome Evil with Good – Life as a winner.

**Diligence not falling behind – Life keeping in step.**

**spoudé ----Dilligence:** With haste, earnestness, diligence, earnestness in accomplishing, promoting, or striving after anything, to give all diligence, interest one's self most earnest.

In the King James Bible it uses the word in “BUSINESS” with the meaning all that you do. There is monkey business and person business.

- (1) It teaches the value of time. This attitude is simply to see an urgency or timeliness to all we do. This attitude is full of intensity, continual set of personal resolve. There is no stopping in Christianity; either you are growing, or you are lagging behind.
- (2) It presents numerous and important things to be done. It is about setting an attitude of priority. Yes, there are times for rest and refreshment. But these rest stops are not an end to themselves. Even slowing to catch your breath is to see the things that need to be done and improved.

A lazy Christian is a contradiction of terms. Having been saved from the guilt and ravages of sin, the Christian is man at the zenith of his best powers. Strength, zeal, enthusiasm, vigor, and the full thrust of his total energy should distinguish the Christian’s performance in business, trade, profession, study, artistic creation, or in anything else that he pursues

as a vocation; and, above everything, such qualities should characterize his devotion and service in the church. The opposite of what Paul commanded here is lukewarmness, a negative condition represented as disgusting to God himself (Revelation 3:16).

The word in the NASB uses “lagging” is describes “a person showing hesitation ... through weariness, sloth, fear, bashfulness, or reserve”. **An idle, slothful person can never be a Christian very long.**

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### Fervent in spirit - Life boiling hot in action

This word is usually applied to water, or to metals so heated as to bubble, or boil. It is used to denote passion, intensity, or as we express it, a glow,—meaning intense zeal, The spirit here is not some ecstatic, uncontrollable or mindless enthusiasm, but a conscious, decision to set our spirit in one direction. That is, the human spirit, in your heart.

We must not be sluggish in zeal. There is a certain intensity in the Christian life; there is no room for lethargy in it. The Christian cannot take things in an easy-going way, for the world is always a battleground between good and evil, the time is short, and life is a preparation for eternity. **The Christian may burn out, but he must never rust out.**

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### Serving the Lord – Life consistently pointed

This one is tightly coupled with our spiritual worship, our continual, habitual, and internal understanding of the relationship between service and who you are providing that service. Of all the admonitions in Romans 12:9-21 this is the only one that can fit in all three contexts. It is an internal attitude of intentionality. It is discovering ultimate and all-encompassing life of a Christian is about service. Internally it is the reason for our salvation and we serve out of gratitude. In the church it is the primary environment of our worship of service. This service is also a part of our reasonable service to the world. **The motive of all the internal is a spiritual relationship to the eternal.**

This phrase is not to be understood in a negative sense that is limited by time or effort. The King James Version “serve the time” and infers that we are to take every opportunity. This difference is caused by the translation of one word in the Greek that when copied can either be Lord (Κυριω) or time (καιρω). My best research is based upon the earliest manuscripts and tend to point to, service to the Lord and not service of the time or opportunity.

Further, I do not set the context of service as being only in church. It is not an accommodation to set aside a specific time and place. It is not reserved for specific events and sacraments. This service is not to escape the wrath of God. It is not a work you do to make God love you.

It is a redemption of time, improving every moment to do good, and taking every opportunity of serving God. "The Lord" is here meant either perfectly unified God who is only object of divine service and religious worship; or the Lord Jesus Christ, who most frequently goes by the name of Lord in the New Testament. Either interpretation may well be used with little difference to the admonition to continually serve, being under the greatest obligations to him, not only as our Creator, but as our head, husband, and Redeemer.

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## Rejoicing in hope– Life that is positive

The glorious hope of the Christian is more than enough to overwhelm the soul with rejoicing, even in the midst of abounding disappointments, provided it is kept in focus by the mind. This hope is the anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:19) which enables the child of God to endure whatever storms may come, but not, however, without prayer. Prayer is the breathing of the redeemed soul, and the cessation or neglect of it will smother and destroy spiritual life.

**Christians are to be joyful in hope because our hope is rooted in Christ** (Ephesians 1:3) and Jesus has authority over all things (Matthew 28:18). He is the King, we are His people, and we will share in His kingdom. Part of our joyful hope is also found in the glory that will one day be given to faithful Christians (8:18). Our hope is so great it allows God's people to boast (5:2). Wuest (1:214) noted how "when earthly prospects are dark, the Christian's rejoicing should be in the sphere of hope that the Lord will send deliverance, and in the meantime take care of His afflicted child."

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## Persevering in Tribulation - Life of resolve

**Our difficulty lies not in comprehending but in obeying.** At issue is we find ourselves analyzing our problems rather than simply living in the glow of God. to persevere.

In affliction patiently enduring all that maybe appointed. Christians may be enabled to do this by the sustaining influence of their hope of future glory; of being admitted to that world where there shall be no more death, and where all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes,

Because Christians have a joyful hope, they are able to be "patient." Literally this term meant "'to remain under,' that is, to remain under the test in a God-honoring manner, not seeking to escape it but eager to learn the lessons it was sent to teach. That is patience. Thayer defines the word, 'to remain, abide, not recede or flee, to persevere, to endure, bear bravely and calmly'". While waiting is usually not much fun, the Christian is someone who waits with confidence and joy. No matter what comes our way, we continue to wait for the Lord's return and the complete fulfillment of His promises.

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## Devoted in Prayer - Life as a prayer

We are to persevere in prayer. The thought here is we do not let the trials and problems stack up until it is unbearable. It is we are to be in a constant communication with our guide and fellow runner. Prayer is not reserved for special times like church and before meals. When a man ceases to pray, he restricts himself from the strength of Almighty God. **No man should be surprised when life collapses if he insists on living it alone.**

The meaning of this direction is, that in order to discharge the duties of the Christian life, and especially to maintain a joyful hope, and to be sustained in the midst of afflictions, it is necessary to cherish a spirit of prayer, and to live near to God. The number of prayers a Christian might pray to check the box of holiness is not made. David prayed seven times a day Psalms 119:164; of Daniel, that he was accustomed to pray three times a day Daniel

6:10; of our Saviour we have repeated instances of his praying mentioned; and the same of the apostles. The following rules, perhaps, may guide us in this.

(1) Every Christian should have some time allotted for this service, and some place where he may be alone with God.

(2) It is not easy, perhaps not possible, to maintain a life of piety without regular habits of secret devotion.

(3) The morning, when we have experienced God's protecting care, when the mind is fresh, and the thoughts are as yet clear and unoccupied with the world, when we go forth to the duties, trials, and temptations of the day; and the evening, when we have again experienced his goodness, and are about to commit ourselves to his protecting care, and when we need his pardoning mercy for the errors and follies of the day, seem to be times which commend themselves to all as appropriate seasons for private devotion.

(4) Every person will also find other times when private prayer will be needful, and when he will be inclined to it. In affliction, in perplexity, in moments of despondency, in danger, and want, and disappointment, and in the loss of friends, we shall feel the propriety of drawing near to God, and of pouring out the heart before him.

(5) Besides this, every Christian is probably conscious of times when he feels especially inclined to pray; he feels just like praying; he has a spirit of supplication; and nothing but prayer will meet the instinctive desires of his prayerful attitude.

We are often conscious of an earnest desire to see and converse with an absent friend, to have fellowship with those we love; and we value such fellowship as among the happiest moments of life. This internal need, this earnest desire to have communion with God, this attitude of heart pants for it; and he cannot resist the propensity to seek him, and pour out his desires before him.

(6) In addition to all this, Christians may be in the habit of praying to God without the formality of stopping and falling on our knees. God does work dynamically within the spirit of man at His will. I may be urged within my heart to whisper a prayer. When I am at desk. Behind the wheel of my car. Even a casual thought of my friends and family may well send you to contact God. Thus, the Christian may live a life of prayer; and it should be one of the characteristics of his life that he prays! By this he shall be known; and in this he shall learn the way to possess peace in religion:

## Conclusion

- 1) LOVE that is genuine – Life of selfless love.
- 2) EVIL that is hated – Life of abstinence.
- 3) GOOD attachments – Life of sticking to good
- 4) Diligence not behind – Life keeping in step.
- 5) Spirit that is excited – Life boiling hot in action.
- 6) Service pointed – Life consistently pointed.
- 7) Hope that is full of joy – Life that is positive.



- 8) Holding on in tribulation – Life of resolve.
  - 9) Prayer in devotion – Life as a prayer.
  - 10) Champion over evil – Life as a winner.
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Each of these admonitions of attitude builds upon each other.

You first must keep it real. No pretense, no mask, no deception, completely honest with my internal love for God. This perfect agape love is only possible when we stay out of the grey area between good and bad. We have to hate everything that even hints of evil and be so stuck on Jesus the perfect good. When we have eliminated the phony and drawn the line never to be crossed between good and evil, we set our sights on the goals to be moved toward.

As God becomes our first priority in our lives. We cannot fall behind. From personal experience there have been times when Jesus seems to sprint when I am most tired. Not to loose me, but to show me it is possible. And once we are caught up and keeping pace with God we feel an internal excitement that seems to boil over into all areas of life. It sets a new resolve to keep up but to now carry the water of the Spirit of life for all those in the same journey. This service brings me a joy unspeakable and full of glory. It is an attitude that sees the inevitability of God's care and love. Our journey together may well encounter tough times, tumultuous times, times when I would, in my own strength simply give up. But I will move on. I will hold on. I will set my resolve to continue no matter how difficult it might be. Why, because when I am in constant and continual contact with God my path mate, my helper, my hope, my redeemer, my Lord, my keeper, my excitement, my genuine picture of love, is an act of prayer. With all these attitudes will come victory over any evil.

## Appendix

- Memorize this verse: **Have this attitude in yourselves which is also in Christ Jesus, who, as He already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.**” Philippians 2:5
- Write down any words that seem difficult.
- Pray for your resolve to live in your thoughtful attitudes.