

ATTITUDE: A CRITICAL QUALITY

By Jim Langley

Attitude may be one of the most critical traits or qualities for success in the business and professional world, although I did not always believe that.

As a young human resources professional, I ironically developed a negative attitude toward an emphasis on “attitudes.” One of my early tasks was to design performance evaluations for diverse employee groups. I called upon supervisors for input into what performance factors they thought needed to be assessed. Inevitably, every group felt it was important to evaluate their employees' attitudes about their work.

My problem with this was not seeing how we could possibly measure attitude, since it was not quantifiable. Yet I deferred to the notion that an assessment of attitude had value since I needed the executives and managers to buy into the system I was proposing. What bothered me most about the use of “attitude” as an evaluation criterion was my perception of the supervisors. My own attitude was not right!

Over time I realized an important truth: We each have attitudes about many kinds of things. It is human nature to form opinions, and they influence the ways we think and act. You may even be developing an attitude about this “Monday Manna” discussion or concerned about where it might be heading. We have a right to our own attitudes, but sometimes they can keep us from the truth and hinder relationships with others.

Attitudes can keep us from making valuable paradigm shifts – changes in our thinking – on how we look at life in general and the lives of those we encounter on a daily basis. It can greatly impact our business, marriage, and other personal relationships. I believe we all need to take a hard look at the way we value others and try to understand that our Father in Heaven has made each of us into unique beings for His purpose.

Diversity can be beautiful when seen through God's eyes, but from our perspective it can appear to be dysfunctional and even irritating. I would suggest the answer lies in striving to develop a “heart attitude” that is pleasing to God.

In the Bible's Old Testament, King David was described as “a man after God's own heart” (1 Samuel 13:13-14, Acts 13:22). Do not let your mind and your past experiences get in the way of seeing the beauty in God's perfect plan for each of His individual creations. Do not fall into the trap of judging others because they don't fit your perceptions of how you feel they should act. Philippians 2:3-8 speaks directly to this. Here is a portion of it:

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider each other better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus who, being in very nature God...made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant.... And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself....”

Yes, there are absolute truths, but we are not to be the judge or the jury. That is God's task and He simply desires for us to love Him with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, and to love others as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39). That is what the Bible describes as having the right attitude!

© 2015, all rights reserved. Jim Langley has been an agent and chartered life underwriter (CLU) with New York Life since 1983 and an active member of CBMC in Santa Barbara, California, U.S.A. since 1987.

CBMC INTERNATIONAL: Jim Firnstahl, President
2850 N. Swan Road, Suite 160 ▪ Tucson, Arizona 85712 ▪ U.S.A.
TEL.: 520-334-1114 ▪ E-MAIL: mmanna@cbmcint.org

Web site: www.cbmcint.org Please direct any requests or change of address to:
jmarple@cbmcint.org

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. What in your opinion is the effect of attitudes – good and bad – in the business world today? What has been the impact on you personally if you have had to work for, or with, an individual that seemed to have the wrong attitude?
2. How can we avoid having the wrong attitudes toward people that are different from us in any number of ways? How important is it to undergo an “attitude check” if we believe our thinking is out of line, especially from God’s perspective?
3. King David was described as a man with “a heart after God.” What do you think that means, and how do you think having such a heart would affect how we approach our work, as well as our relationships, both personal and professional?
4. Jesus’ statement about the two greatest commandments is recounted in Matthew 22:37-39. How difficult do you think it is to do what He asks – to love God

with everything we have, and to love our neighbors as ourselves? Explain your answer.

If you would like to look at or discuss other portions of the Bible that relate to this topic, consider the following brief sampling of passages:

Proverbs 14:29, 17:24; Romans 6:4,11, 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 2:16; Colossians 3:1-3