

# Attitude

by Anton Bosch

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*Our attitude is a reflection of our heart's attitude towards God and needs to be changed through the power of the Gospel.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 21:28

**Topics:** "Heart Examination", "Spiritual Repentance"

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## Description

Anton Bosch emphasizes the importance of examining our attitudes, highlighting how it is often easier to judge actions and doctrines than attitudes, which can be subjective and harder to detect. He points out that bad attitudes can be rooted in various sins like pride, bitterness, and rebellion, and need to be repented of and changed. Bosch stresses that God constantly examines our attitudes, as they reveal our true feelings, and references Jeremiah 12:3 to illustrate God's scrutiny of our hearts.

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## Transcript

It is easy to be lulled into believing that as long as we believe the right theology and do the right things we are OK and that nothing else matters. But what about your attitude?

It is easy to point to young people and accuse them of "BA" (bad attitude) and we think that as adults we don't have attitude problems. Of course the problem is that it is very hard to define or prove that someone has a bad attitude. We can easily judge actions and doctrines but attitudes are a lot harder to get a handle on. It is also a lot easier to see BA in others rather than in ourselves. A while back I was in a supermarket and a mother was scolding her daughter to "drop the attitude". But I had been observing them for a while and the mother was the one with the attitude!

It seems that many Christians feel they can get away with a bad attitude because it is hard for anyone to confront them on an attitude since so much of "reading" someone's attitude is subjective. Some people will detect the bad attitude of someone else while others don't even notice it.

It also seems that many people feel that they can hide their bad attitudes and that no one else will notice. But people do notice and often they notice more than we like to think. What we think is carefully hidden under a front of niceness often sticks out like a sore thumb and anyone who gets close will notice. And the fact that no one has ever said anything does not make it right or mean that it does not exist. Most of the time people do not wish to confront the person with the BA because people with attitude tend to be very aggressive and the attitude is often just the tip of the iceberg.

Small children are very fast at discerning someone who has a bad attitude because they are much more sensitive to the small tell-tale signs and the non-verbal cues that evidence a bad attitude. Just look at how toddlers and babies gravitate to certain people and shy away from others or even cry the moment such a person picks them up. That is not coincidence - babies "sense" the good or bad attitude and respond accordingly.

If we are able to read each other's attitudes and if even babies are aware of attitudes, how much more does God, who knows and sees all, not see our bad attitudes? Jeremiah said: "But You ■■■know me, O Lord; You see me; And You examine my heart's attitude toward You" (Jeremiah 12:3 NASV). God is constantly examining our attitudes and often, He is more interested in our attitude than in what we say or do because our attitude reveal our real feelings about things.

Jesus told a parable about a man who had two sons. He told the first to work in the vineyard and that son said he would not, but later repented and went. The father asked the second son to go and he said he would but did not go (Matthew 21:28-30). It seems to me that both these young men had bad attitudes but the first recognised his bad attitude and adjusted his behaviour.

A bad attitude can be rooted in any number of sins. It could be evidence of pride, bitterness, unforgiveness, rebellion, unthankfulness, discontent and many more. Yes, bad attitude is nothing less than the evidence of sin that has not been dealt with. It is not something minor, to be overlooked. It needs to be repented of and needs to be changed.

Such change cannot just be a different face, mask or some other superficial cover-up. The real problem needs to be identified, repented of and rooted out. As I said earlier, those attitudes cannot be hidden and cannot be veneered over. They are visible and shout your sins to everyone with whom you come into contact.

But attitudes are not just negative, they can also be positive. Just as people are repulsed by a bad attitude, they are drawn to a good attitude. This explains why we are often just drawn to someone, even before they say or do anything. Paul says: "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5, NASV).

Some people check their actions by the question "what would Jesus do". But maybe we should also ask the question whether we have Jesus' attitude. Do we have His attitude to others, suffering, sin, the Father, truth and error, material things and so on? A right attitude to any of these things will result in right actions. But more than right actions, a right attitude will result in right reactions.

The problem with our reactions and responses is that we often do not have time to prepare a nice "sanitized" response. And so, our attitude will most often become visible in those quick reactions to the unexpected surprises and challenges we face every day. Sometimes we refer to someone's reaction as being "out of character". But have you ever wondered if those "out of character" responses are not glimpses into the true character of the person? Personally, I think the "out of character" reactions are those moments when the mask slips and the underlying attitude become visible. The "normal character" is simply a front and a cover.

The power of the Gospel lies in its ability to change the real person and our underlying attitudes. Religion simply changes the mask.

"Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you" (Philippians 3:15, NASV).

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