

Contending With Attitude

by Anton Bosch

To effectively deal with those in error, we must approach them with a heart of meekness, humility, love, compassion, and pity, recognizing that only God can change people's minds, theology, or attitudes.

Scripture: Psalm 127:1, Luke 18:12, John 19:11, Galatians 6:1, Ephesians 6:12, 2 Timothy 2:24-25, Titus 3:1

Topics: "Christian Humility", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Anton Bosch emphasizes the importance of meekness in correcting those in opposition to the truth, highlighting that meekness stems from recognizing God's mercy, our own faults, and the inability to change others without God's intervention. He explains that those in opposition are ensnared by the devil and can only be freed through God's intervention, not through human efforts. Bosch stresses the need for a humble, compassionate, and merciful approach when dealing with those in error, leaving the outcome to God's sovereign work of granting repentance and revealing the truth.

Transcript

" But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." (2Timothy 2:23-26 KJV).

In the previous article we looked at the first three aspects of the attitude of those who wish to bring correction to those who are in opposition. These are gentleness, an ability to teach and patience.

The fourth essential is humility or meekness. (Most translations use the word "gentleness" or "meekness"). Meekness is an aspect of the fruit of the Spirit as listed in Galatians 5:23. It is not weakness but flows from a life which is fully surrendered to the will of God. Those who strive in their own strength, trying to establish their own purposes are not meek, but are constantly agitated, arrogant, aggressive and antagonistic. Jonah is the best example of such a man. Paul before his conversion was also such and the Lord described him as kicking against the pricks.

Those who are meek have recognized their own weaknesses, are broken before Him and have come to a point of full surrender to the Lord. They do not have to prove anything but are simply instruments in the hands of the Almighty. Meekness flows first from an awareness of God's mercy towards us and a

recognition of the fact that He has saved us and kept us by His grace alone: "Put them in mind to... speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another" (Titus 3:1-3 KJV).

Secondly meekness flows from an awareness of our own faults and potential for sin and error. Those who arrogantly strive with others act as though they themselves never make mistakes and as though they have all Truth: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted... For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Galatians 6:1,3 KJV).

Thirdly, meekness is a result of recognizing that we cannot change other people's minds, theology or attitudes. It is God alone who can do so (with the individual's cooperation). When we are deluded and overconfident and think that we can win the argument, prove how wrong the other person is and get him to change his thinking - we are arrogant and far from meek. This is typical of the schoolyard bully who twists his opponent's arm behind his back, forcing him to submit. Spouses do the same in marriage because they have not learnt that there is not a single person on this earth who can change the heart, mind or attitude of someone else. God alone has that power.

Those who are in opposition (to the Truth) are "in the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will" (2Timothy 2:26). They are not free agents to change their minds as they choose, but are trapped in a web of deceit, lies and error. (How they got there is another story). According to the Bible they are imprisoned and bound. To get angry with such people is a waste of time; they sold their freedom for expediency, popularity or money. They cannot change unless the Lord intervenes. When we understand that, our attitude towards them has to change from one of judgment to one of pity and mercy.

Why did Jesus not debate Pilate? Surely He could prove His innocence and the illegality of the trial. Yet, He said nothing. The key lies in Jesus' words to Pilate: "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above" (John 19:11). Jesus recognized where the true power lay. Those who fight with men have forgotten that "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places "(Ephesians 6:12).

This does not mean that we should just sit back and wait for things to happen. The Lord uses men to work as His co-workers. Some of us plant, others water but the Lord gives the increase - and unless He does, nothing will happen in the lives of others. "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain" (Psalm 127:1).

In dealing with those in error, we need to give a sound, logical and Biblical reason for the Truth. We need to be skilled workmen who divide the Word correctly. But the rest is up to the Lord: "...if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil" (2Timothy 2:25).

We cannot claim that God must deliver them or that he has to honor our word and cause the seed to grow. Paul uses the word "perhaps / peradventure" indicating that it is entirely up to God. Having sown the seed, we need to leave the rest up to Him. He has to give them repentance. Once they find repentance, then they will know the truth. Once they know the truth they need to come to their senses and escape the Devil's trap. Sadly, many do come to know the truth but choose to stay in the snare of the Devil for the

same reasons they were entrapped in the first place.

Thus we have three people in the equation: The speaker of truth, God, and the individual in error. Even if the first two do everything necessary, the person in error may still choose to remain in bondage. The speaker of Truth is only one third of the equation and we must understand and accept that we cannot control, manipulate, cajole or force people to change.

Our true attitude and motive is often revealed when people choose to continue in error, even once they have been given Truth. Only those who weep and mourn for those who choose to continue in error had the right to speak in the first place. Those who hurl accusations, malign, slander and feel a sense of justification had no right to speak.

Should we then not point out error and name those who propagate error? What about Jesus cleansing the temple and his comments about the Pharisees? I will get to these questions in the next article but for now, let's check our attitude. Are we speaking from a heart of brokenness, humility, love, compassion and pity or from a platform of pride and superiority - "God, I thank You that I am not like other men - extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector" (Luke 18:12).

(To be continued)

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/anton-bosch/contending-with-attitude/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net

