

The Danger of Anti-Group Attitudes

by Denny Kenaston

Having an anti-group attitude can prevent us from helping others and hinder our witness, but by seeking balance and considering the feelings of others, we can overcome this attitude and love those we serve.

Duration: 57:34

Scripture: Matthew 5:16, Matthew 7:1, Matthew 16:24, Matthew 22:39, Romans 10:1, Romans 12:2, Romans 14:13

Topics: "Judging"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of walking in the steps of Jesus and using His example as a guideline for making decisions. The speaker acknowledges that it is easy to talk about following Jesus, but it is important to actually live it out. The sermon also addresses the issue of holding onto past hurts and encourages forgiveness as a way to overcome negative attitudes. The speaker urges listeners to open their hearts to biblical truths and to purposefully strive to have the same attitude as Jesus, even towards those who may reject or oppose them.

Transcript

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A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Well, praise the Lord, that's a good lifelong challenge for each one of us, isn't it? To walk in the steps of the Savior in everything we do. We could use that as a guideline.

We could use that to evaluate all the decisions we need to make. What would Jesus do in this situation that I am in right now? How would He respond? What choice would He make? Well, we greet you this morning in the name of that one that we're trying to walk in His steps and follow His paths and walk the way He walked while we're here on the earth. We greet you in Jesus' name.

It's been a blessing to be here already this morning, and I trust the Lord can help us even yet for the remainder of the service and give us some direction for our lives. I'd like to speak this morning on a subject that has been in time past a real hindrance to the kingdom of God. I think it's a subject this morning that is pertinent to maybe not everyone in this room, but most everyone in this room because I speak to the remnant and I realize that, that you've come from many different directions and you come from many different experiences, church experiences, those that are in this room.

I'd like to speak on a subject this morning that has been a real hindrance to spiritual growth in many people's lives, and it may be this morning that your own spiritual life has not been growing, has not been prospering the way that you would want it to simply because of what I'd like to speak about this morning. The subject this morning has caused many a shipwreck. As I begin to speak this morning about this subject this morning, they'll come to your mind.

People will come to your mind. Shipwrecks will come up before your own mind. Spiritual tragedies, spiritual extremities will come up before your mind as I speak this morning.

And many times it's caused by this subject that I'd like to speak on. The title of my message is one that I've waited a long time to share with you. The dangers of anti-groupism.

Now I chose that name because I'd like to keep it general. You can put whatever name you want in there. I'd like to share the principles and the dangers that flow out of anyone who has an anti-group attitude toward maybe some church group in your past or some church group around you.

There's some real dangers that lie within the attitude of an anti-groupism. I'll keep the title general and you can make the applications as wide as you want to. We could say this morning that we're concerned about attitudes of anti-Amishism.

We could say this morning that we're concerned about attitudes of anti-Mennonitism. We could say this morning that we're concerned with attitudes of anti-Hutterite or anti-Brethren or anti-Baptists or anti-Charismatic or anti-Pentecostal or anti-put whatever name you want to put in there. Because I know this morning that I speak to a group of people in this room that come from many different places and many different religious experiences and I know that as different ones listen to the tape that that spectrum gets even broader yet.

Now anti-groupism stems from many different things. There may be several different reasons here this morning why you have developed that attitude that says Mennonites. There may be very many different reasons why you've developed an attitude this morning and you know that attitude if it's down there in your heart that says Baptists, Amish or whatever name you want to put in there.

There's some real dangers behind that attitude. It could be that you had a traumatic experience in your past church life. I know of one young man that I spoke to on the telephone not too long ago.

He went through a church split. Now church splits are not good. It's unfortunate when there's a church split.

But usually when there's a church split, somebody gets hurt and it's usually young people who are confused and they don't understand and they're not sure which way they're supposed to go and who they're supposed to follow. And they get hurt in the middle of church splits. And this young man had been hurt in the middle of a church split and because he'd been hurt in the middle of that church split and it

happened to be a Mennonite church that split, his attitude was Mennonites.

I never want to see another one. I never want to hear of one. And I'm never going to go to one as long as I live.

He had a traumatic experience in his life and it caused him to develop an attitude that is not good for him. It's not going to come out right. It will not be to his benefit.

And I would say he's about half shipwrecked already because of it. You may have been hurt in a church experience in the past. Maybe someone dealt with you wrongly.

Maybe the administration of a church that you were in was not right and they were hard on you and they sort of kicked you around spiritually and maybe you were even driven out of that church. Maybe you were even excommunicated from that church. And because of that, you've developed that anti-groupism attitude within you.

Sometimes people grow up in a church setting and they're taught all their lives that this is the way we do it. If you keep the rules of the church and get baptized, you'll go to heaven when you die. Some were taught that.

Oh, and when the day came when they realized that salvation was by faith in Christ Jesus alone, just like we heard this morning, and they put their faith in Jesus and immediately an assurance came within their soul that they never had before, then many times their immediate response is to develop an anti-groupism attitude about that church that taught them those wrong things all their life. Maybe you were in a group somewhere that took an extreme position on some certain truth of the Bible. And because of that extreme position, after you saw that it was too far, that it was extreme, that it was actually a heresy, because it is when you take truth way out of balance, it becomes a heresy.

Maybe it was that that developed that anti-groupism attitude in you. Well, I'd like this morning just to put a little diagram here on the board. I'm drawing on the board a pendulum.

And we all know what a pendulum is. We know that a pendulum swings. You take a point.

You take yourself a piece of string or rope. You tie a heavy object on the end of it. And you let go of that heavy object and it will begin to swing.

And we all know that when a pendulum swings, it doesn't just swing to the middle and go back. It swings all the way over to the other side equidistant from what it was on this side. A little science lesson here this morning.

Well, that pendulum that we have on the board here this morning has some very real applications for us that are in this room. Because we, just like a pendulum, in our human nature, we tend to overreact to something. When we see something that was wrong, we tend to swing all the way over to the other side.

We see that this over here may be wrong. We don't want to have anything to do with it anymore. And we get as far away from it as we can.

And usually when we get as far away from it as we can, we're usually way over here. And praise God for the balancing of the Word and the balancing of brothers and sisters and the balancing of those gentle promptings of the Spirit of God, because God has many times brought us back to the middle, hasn't He?

But we would all have to give that testimony this morning that the old pendulum has swung a few times in our spiritual experience and our attitudes went too far the wrong way and God had to bring them back to the middle. Well, those are not good.

And they hurt us. And they hinder us. If I could just share a little bit of my own testimony, after going through a traumatic experience in my past church life, the old pendulum swung real good on me and I just wrote off everything from my past church experience.

I wrote it all off. I just said in my mind, they hurt me. It confused me.

They ruined me. They've taken care of my opportunities to minister. It must be totally wrong.

I'm coming way over here. And there was a time in my experience that I wouldn't go out and tell anybody about Jesus. I wouldn't go knock on a door and tell a soul about Christ Jesus or anything.

I just wrote off my whole past church experience. That was called anti-groupism. Now, we all have different groups that we've reacted against, but I believe the principles will apply no matter what group it is.

Now, God was very gracious to me in that past experience. He kept me right there in the midst of the setting that I was in until the pendulum came back and truth was looked at properly and the right balance was looked at and God worked out all of the anti-groupism that was in my heart toward those people where I was. And I thank God for that.

In fact, many times I've shocked friends of mine as they've asked me about my past church experience and I tell them, oh yes, we go back there once a year and visit. Wouldn't miss it. Do it every year.

Have a good relationship with the pastor. Enjoy seeing a lot of the people that are there. And they can't quite understand that.

But it's because that anti-groupism attitude got worked out of my heart. And I would just encourage each one of you this morning to open your heart to this meditation this morning about what some of the dangers are to anti-groupism. First of all, and this is a big one, one of the dangers or the pitfalls of having an anti-attitude toward a group that you may have grown up in or left is that you will not be able to help them at all.

You will not be able to help them at all. It is God's will that we be able to minister to those who are within our circle of influence. You may be an Amish.

You may be Amish in this room this morning and you have Amish contacts that I do not have. You may be Baptist this morning and have Baptist contacts that I don't have. You might be Old Order Mennonite.

You might be Mennonite. You might be Brethren. You might be Pentecostal.

I don't know what you are. But you have a circle of influence that I do not have. And God wants to use each one of us in the circle of influence where we are and where we've come from.

If you have that attitude that says anti that group, and by the way, the word anti means against. It's a Greek word. Anti is a Greek word which means against.

And you can see it in that attitude that says Mennonites. Against. You'll never be able to minister to those people where you used to be if you have that anti attitude about them.

That's one thing that we're very keen to around here is that attitude that says I'm against those people where I used to be. It will ruin you. And your influence will be squelched.

And you know what's very interesting to me that many times, those are the very, very people that you would like to go back and help, and they're the very people that you cannot reach because of your attitude toward them. And you know what happens? You go and try to help them and you get a reaction. They sense there's something wrong in you.

They don't receive what you have to say. They begin to find fault with you. And I realized this morning that all of these things can happen in a right way with a pure heart and a right attitude.

But many times I've seen people overreact with an anti-against attitude toward a certain religious group where they were from. And then try to go back in there and minister to those very people and they cannot do it. And you know what we so easily do at a time like that? And I believe many times it's a cop-out.

We'll quote the Apostle Paul's words and say, then I go to the Gentiles. But many times, it's our own reactionary attitudes. It's our own bad attitude toward whatever that group is.

And they pick that up and it's down inside there and they can sense it and then they do not receive. It's pretty hard to pray for that group that you're so disgusted with. It's pretty hard to have a burden for them if you're so disgusted with them for whatever the reason may be.

It's pretty hard to pray for them. Turn over to Romans. And we want to read a few verses here out of the Apostle Paul's life which may I just say, before we read these verses, Paul should have had an anti-Jewish spirit.

Paul should have had one. Listen to his credentials. He was deceived in his rearing to believe that the Jews had all the answers and that their religion was the right religion.

He was deceived in his rearing to believe that. And all of his life he grew up believing that he was going the right way. He was so convinced he was going the right way that he would put Christians to death for the sake of doing right.

He was deceived in his rearing. He surely should have overreacted because he was deceived in his rearing. He was criticized after he found faith in Jesus Christ.

They chased him everywhere he went. When he'd go to one city, they'd chase him out of the city. If the Jews found out where Paul was going, they'd go to the city where he was going and make trouble for him there also.

They resisted him everywhere he went. His name was a household name among many Jewish homes, only it was in a negative way. They stoned him and left him outside the city for dead.

They argued with him in all the public places. They had him thrown in prison. And not only that, but he was even called to the Gentiles and could have easily said, Jews, I'm done with them.

I've had enough of them. Somebody else do it. I'm called to the Gentiles.

But here, the Apostle Paul's heart. Here is heart this morning in Romans 9, verse 1. I say the truth in Christ. I lie not.

My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh. Oh, I wished that I could be accursed from Christ for the sake of my people. That's what Paul was saying.

Amazing attitude. Why, there was no pendulum there in his life. He had the attitude and the Spirit of Christ in the whole thing.

Though they beat him, he still loved them. Though they criticized him, he did not overreact. Though they persecuted him, he continued to love them and he would not allow that anti-group attitude to rise up in his heart.

Turn over again to chapter 10. And we read a little bit more about Paul's heart toward the Jews. By the way, have you thought of anybody yet that you know of that has been shipwrecked by this very attitude that we're speaking about this morning? Have you thought of anyone? Let me see your hands if you have thought of somebody that has been shipwrecked by this very attitude.

I thought so. There are many. Let's read on here.

In chapter 10, verse 1, Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves under the righteousness of God.

Oh, we can hear the burdened heart of the Apostle Paul as again he ponders his people. And we sense no reactionary spirit in him. We sense no overreaction in him, but just a clear, pure, loving burden and desire that those Jews would come to the light and the understanding of God that He has come to through faith in Jesus Christ.

That was his attitude. So, one of the first and foremost dangers of this anti-group attitude is you will not be able to help them. You will not.

They will sense it. And they will not receive the things that you have to say. I think we would all agree that when we look at this anti-group attitude in the context of reaching out to others, it's contrary to the basics of Christianity, which is love.

We would all agree. And even though Paul said those very words, I go to the Gentiles, hear his heart at the same time. I don't think it's wrong to say, okay, I go to the Gentiles, but let us have the heart attitude that the Apostle Paul had, who, even though he did go to the Gentiles, when it was time to go back to Jerusalem, all of a sudden, his mind was alert to the realities of the Jewish people and he was willing to shave his head and take a vow and go to the temple in the way that was recommended by the elders there at the church at Jerusalem.

He was willing to do that. That was no problem to him at all. If he would have had an anti-Jewish attitude when James came and said, Paul, I want you to shave your head and go on a fast so that while you're here in Jerusalem, it won't make trouble.

If he would have had that anti-attitude, what do you suppose his response would have been? Why, he probably would have said something real holy like, I'm free from the law. I don't have to do those things. He would have had some good scriptural principles that he could have given right back to James.

But yet, his love for those people which were his people caused him to do some very unusual things. Number two, another danger of having that anti-attitude is it will cause you to do things that offend those very people. You will offend them.

You will do things that offend them. You will not consider them when you're making choices in your life. Paul was not that way, was he? Paul's testimony was to the Jew, I'm going to be like a Jew.

To the Greek, I'm going to be like the Greek. But to the Jew, I'm going to be like the Jew. And I don't believe that the Apostle Paul had an uncaring, unconsiderate attitude when it was time to make choices, and he thought about his own people, the Jewish people.

But I believe that Paul considered... Now, I don't believe that he compromised during those times, but Paul considered there was that process of thought in his heart that said, is this going to be alright? Is this going to add to the furtherance of the Gospel among the Jewish people? And he run those things through his mind that way when he made his choices. If you have an anti-Amish attitude, or an anti-Mennonite attitude, or any other group attitude like that, you won't be thinking those kind of thoughts. Those thoughts won't even come into your mind.

In fact, even if someone would bring one your way a little bit and challenge you and say, well, how do you think this is going to be to the people that live around you? Then usually you'll come up with one of those righteous answers, you know. And there are times to come up with those righteous answers, but this morning, I just challenge you to consider your attitude toward the group that you came from. It doesn't matter which one it is.

Consider what your attitude is and ask yourself when it's time to make decisions, will this hurt my opportunity to help those people? Will this hinder my witness among those people? Is this worth doing? Can I put it on a scale and weigh it out? Which one will be the best for those people? There are things we need to consider. And in many cases, it may even be your brother. Not just some group.

It may be a brother in the Lord. It may be a sister in the Lord. And when we get into that area, oh my, there's many, many verses in the New Testament.

Hear the words of the Apostle Paul. If meat maketh my brother to offend, I will eat no meat as long as the world standeth. Such a testimony of the Apostle Paul.

Have that anti-attitude. It will make you do things that will offend those people. You won't see.

Your eyes will be shut to them, to their realities. You make choices, buy things, go places, wear things, say things, do things that will offend those very people that you may be trying to win. Number three, this anti-group attitude, it will also hurt the next generation.

Desperately hurt them. Maybe you've already noticed some of it in your own home. And you have that little twinge of conscience when you heard those words come out of one of your children.

That anti-attitude, it will hurt the next generation. In many ways, they're at our mercy. They're making their evaluations according to our attitudes.

The statement has been made before, and it's true. What we do wrong in moderation, our children will do wrong in excess. Ponder that one this morning.

Maybe for you it's just a... Mennonites. Maybe that's all it is for you. But for your children, it may be a whole lot more than that.

Maybe they'll just write off the whole thing and go to some Protestant church because of that anti-attitude that is down in your heart. If we have a reactionary spirit toward a certain group of people or a certain set of values, our children will usually react even stronger than we do. You've heard it before.

I've heard the words, watch out, you'll lose your children. How many heard those words before? Let me see your hands. Do you think that those words are just words that were thrown out into the air? Do you think that those words of warning were words of warning that have emptiness in them? I say to you this morning, not brothers and sisters.

Those are words of warning that have been given by observation. And I believe that this is the root of the problem. Many times, when somebody does leave the Amish, if I can just use that one for an example this morning, that anti-Amish attitude causes a reaction in those children and they do lose their children.

Now yeah, that old Amish bishop does have some wisdom when he says those words. He has watched. He has seen it happen.

Now the answer is not don't leave the Amish church, but the answer is let's develop a Christ-like attitude toward that group where we used to be. That's the answer. Or we will have a reaction which will hurt the next generation.

Just like the old Amish bishop said, it's not all scare. Number four. Here's another danger that can surface if you have this attitude anti-I'm against whatever group.

It will cause you to throw away truth. I mean, just pitch it. And we could ask for another raise of hands this morning on this one, couldn't we? People that we know that through an overreaction they have absolutely thrown away some beautiful Bible principles that they had in their lives.

And I tell you this morning, it comes from that anti-attitude that says, I've had enough of that. They hurt me, or they deceive me, or they taught me wrong, or they were unfair with me, and I'm getting away from there. And that reactionary anti-against attitude has caused people to do some amazing things that have shocked every one of us in this room.

Caused you to throw away truth. Caused you to throw away good traditions with good Bible truths to back them up. People have thrown them away.

It will cause people to go from a church where there was strong authority, maybe too strong of authority, to no authority. Have you seen it? It will cause people to go where there was a strong emphasis on church life and submitting one to another and submitting to the voice of the church to no church at all. Do you know anybody like that? I mean, there is no church now for them.

That anti-attitude caused the pendulum to swing in their own heart to such a degree that now they don't even go to church. They just have church at home. And then the second generation is hurting tremendously for it.

The hills are filled with individual people. Individualists, we call them. Who can't find anybody to go to church with.

Who can't find anybody else to fellowship with. Who can't find anybody who agrees with them. Who can't find anybody who has enough of truth to match up with the truth that they have.

And there they sit all by themselves. No church. What happened? There was back there, a few years back in their experiences with some religious group, a reactionary, an overreaction to them which caused their pendulum to swing way over to the other side.

And there they sit in the hills somewhere having church with their children and no one else. And I want to recognize this morning that with the remnant that's scattered around this country, there are some cases where they need to have church with just their children. But in many of these cases, they're not even looking for a church anymore.

Fifteen years have gone by and there is no church for them. People have gone where there was a strong overemphasis on outward to a reactionary swing on that thing to where it's the swimsuits and immodesty and hairdo and makeup and perfume and the whole thing. Just a swing from one end all the way over to the other.

And they've thrown away many powerful Bible truths. The Scriptures would say, let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

I'll tell you what happens. We get a blind spot. Because of that attitude, we get us a blind spot.

Close. I'm so sick of hearing about clothes. I'm so sick of hearing about this plain suit.

I'm so sick of hearing about this caped dress. The whole thing gets thrown away. And a blindness comes over the conscience.

And we're amazed at what they end up doing. It comes from that against, that anti, that reactionary attitude. May I remind you that truth that is out of balance is heresy.

Whether it's on this side of the pendulum or this side of the pendulum, it's still heresy. Truth that is taken to the extreme becomes a heresy. And it's no longer good.

And it's no longer of a benefit. Another thing that will happen. It fosters pride and deception inside of our hearts.

Here's what it does. Looking up here at the pendulum again. They're wrong and I'm right.

There's something within inside of us that says if I'm right, then they're wrong. And I've got to be right, and I've got to prove that they're wrong. In order for me to be right, I must show that they're wrong.

And that whole attitude is not good. It's not good for us if we have that. That attitude that says, we're right, we have the answers, we've found it, and they're wrong.

You all know the insecurity of human nature. Human nature doesn't like to be insecure. So human nature will convince itself that it's secure by all kinds of means.

And one of them is the pride of the heart that says, I'm right and they're wrong. I made the right choice and they've made the wrong choice. It was very interesting to me a few years back now, I sat in a church service and I heard a preacher stand in the pulpit and say, we don't need revival.

We've already got revival. And I sat in that church service and I'd been in a few of those church services and I knew that they didn't have any revival. But he, I believe, he honestly thought that they had revival.

What was that? Spiritual pride had so risen up inside of his heart that spiritual pride was so darkened his mind that they were right even when they were wrong. May God help us in those things. May God help us not to overreact with pride in some of these areas.

I know of a certain church in its history took some very clear, sound, good, biblical stands against apostasy and it was right to do it. It was the right thing to do and it had God's blessing upon it. But that danger of spiritual pride was there.

And now, that same church is so convinced that they're right that it's got to be exactly the way we do it or it's not right. May God help us in those things. May God help us.

What happens is, slowly, little by little, begins to develop the attitude in the congregation that we are it. We're it. This is the place to come.

This is where everyone needs to be. We are it. Do you know, I've heard that criticism about us, about this congregation right here.

I've heard that criticism that people think or they say about us. Well, they think that they're the only ones over there. Now, I don't know if that's how we feel, but I think it's good for us to take heed to those kind of warnings when the input starts coming back.

Oh, well, they're okay, but they think they're the only ones. They think that they're better than we are. Lord, deliver us from all of that kind of stuff.

We are not better than they are. Let God open up our eyes for just a few minutes. Let us sit and gaze upon His glory for just a few minutes.

And every one of us must hang our head in shame for all the needs that we have among us and in our own lives. But that's what it does. That anti-attitude causes us to swing in the other direction and we start building up a case in our minds.

We're it. We've got the answers. And it's not good.

Another thing that can happen. We can build our fellowship around anti-attitudes. Have you ever had fellowship that way about them and what they said and what they did and what they meant and what's happening over there? Did you ever have fellowship like that on Sunday afternoon? Well, I have.

It's not very edifying. What a terrible foundation to build a church on. But it happens all the time because of that anti-attitude that so easily just comes up on a Sunday afternoon.

Did you hear? You know what they said? They said this and they said... Did you hear what so-and-so did? Did you hear what that preacher said over there? And on and on it goes. Brothers and sisters, that will not build up. It won't do it.

Now, it's easy to talk about. It's good talking material, isn't it, on a Sunday afternoon. I mean, you've got the inside story and everybody's listening to what you have to say about what that preacher said or about what they did.

But that is not going to build church. That's not after Christ, is it? There came a time in our church experience, and it was back in the beginning of the founding of this fellowship right here when we were under the gun almost every week. It seemed like somebody was after us with this or that.

We found ourselves building fellowship on those kind of things. Until finally, Brother Moses and I, we sat down one afternoon. I believe it was over in the living room of his house and his wife was there and my wife was there and we just said, wait a minute.

Wait a minute! This isn't going to edify us. What kind of a church will we have if we build church on all those kind of things? And I would recommend it to each and every one of you this morning if you're building your fellowship on those anti-attitudes about that group that you used to be in. If you find it real easy to open up and just start shooting from the hip about them and how they do and what they said and all those things, I would encourage you this morning to just open up your heart and get rid of those things and put them away because they're a detriment to you.

They'll make you shipwrecked. They won't build your life. They do not edify.

Instead, let's talk about Jesus. That's just fine. We can talk about Him all afternoon.

One man recently, giving a little criticism to someone, he said this, he said, I don't mind you talking spiritual things, but I just assume you not be talking about charity every time I see you. And I thought, well, that's a good admonition. Just go back and talk about Jesus.

All you want to. Talk about Jesus. Then if somebody has a problem with that, they can take it up with God at the judgment day.

Well, here's a question that you can ask yourself this morning. Do I have an anti-group attitude? Do I have one? I think this morning that if you do, you probably know it this morning by now. From all the different points that I've covered, you probably know whether you have one or not.

But if you still wonder, ask a few people that know you real well. Ask the ones that know you real well. The ones that know you well enough that you're free around them and you just share.

And that which is inside of your heart comes out of your mouth when you're around them. Ask them. Do I have a bad attitude toward the Amish people that I used to be with? Do I have a bad attitude toward the Mennonites where I used to come from? Ask somebody that knows you real well and let them evaluate.

Are you from the Mennonites? Are you from the Amish? Are you from the Hutterites? Or all the other ites? And all the other isms? Remember this. I learned it the hard way. God puts truth into our lives.

And He doesn't give it to us all at once. We get it little by little through many years of experiences. And God doesn't want us to throw away any of the truth that He gave us.

He wants us to hold on to everything which is good and right and sound and biblical. And He wants us to lay aside everything which is tradition without Bible principle behind it, whether it be an Amish tradition or whether it be a Baptist tradition. They have them too, you know.

God wants us to lay aside all those traditions that have nothing in them. But God wants us to hold on to everything that is good and sound and right. Don't fall into the trap that many have fallen into and throw away the very things that others are picking up and enjoying the freedom of.

It happens all the time. I meet people all over this county that are throwing away the very things that I've grabbed ahold of, seen them, seen the Bible principle behind them, adapted them to my life, found the freedom from them, and they're throwing them away. How can that be? Do I have an anti-group attitude? How can I get rid of my anti-group attitude? Number one, you need to acknowledge it.

You need to acknowledge it. That's the first step to recovery. You need to acknowledge it.

Number two, you need to forgive in some cases. In some cases, you need to forgive. That anti is in there because you got hurt, or you got squelched, or you got pushed, or you got forced, or you got coerced.

And you need to forgive. Number three, what can I do to overcome this attitude? You need to open your heart up to hold on to anything that's Bible-based in your past experience. You need to open up your heart.

Some of you are reactionary to the point you won't even consider certain Bible truths. Some are reactionary to the point where if you asked them to have a message on a certain subject, they wouldn't know what to say. That shows me that there's a blinder over your heart in a certain area.

And you need to open that heart back up again. And number four, you need a purpose to overcome those reactionary attitudes. They don't just go away just like that.

But you need a purpose to overcome them. And just remember the guidelines of the Apostle Paul, and also remember the example of our Lord Jesus who came unto His own, but His own received Him not. He came unto His own, but His own received Him not.

But what did He do with those who received Him not? He laid Himself down on the cross and He died for them. That's what He did. And I believe that's the kind of attitude that God would want us to foster toward whatever group that is, toward whatever background we may have come from.

God would want us to foster that same kind of an attitude. Though we come unto them and they receive us not, let us lay down our lives and die for them that they may hear the blessed truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That they may come into a living reality and a walk with God.

These are good and right things. Let's follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ in these areas. May I end with my beginning.

The subject at hand has been a real hindrance to the Kingdom of God, hasn't it? The subject at hand has been a real hindrance to the spiritual growth of many believers. The subject at hand has caused many to shipwreck their spiritual lives. What is it? Anti-groupism.

An overreaction to a group, to a certain train of thought, a certain idealism. An overreaction has caused many to shipwreck. Let's make sure that we're not doing that, that we're not overreacting and finding

ourselves shipwrecked or maybe blinded in one eye and not able to see clearly some beautiful spiritual truth because of an anti-group attitude.

Let's make sure we're not that way this morning. Let's kneel together for prayer. Father, we come to You in Jesus' name.

We thank You, Lord, for Your love. Thank You, Father, for Your watch-care over us. O God, we just pray this morning that You'll fill our hearts with wisdom.

We pray this morning that You'll protect us, Lord, from danger. We pray this morning, Lord, that You'll protect our children from the danger of wrong attitudes that may be in our own hearts. O Father, I pray, God, this morning, deliver us from reactionary attitudes.

Deliver us, Lord, from those unloving attitudes that are hindering us from witnessing to our neighbor, that are hindering us from witnessing to those people, our people. O Father, how many times I've heard the prayers prayed for my people. But O God, I pray that You give us the heart attitude that the Apostle Paul had for his people.

Dear God, we just want to trust the rest of the service into Your hands, Father. And I just pray, God, You lead and guide by Your Spirit. If there are those here this morning who need to begin this road to recovery by standing and saying, I have this attitude in my heart.

God, help them this morning to get up on their feet and acknowledge it, that they may be free from it. And God, we just want to commit all things into Your hands. Lord, would You deliver us from all of those anti-attitudes.

Father, the criticisms that come, may they be not founded. May they be unfounded in our fellowship. God, may instead those people, whoever they are, whatever group it is, may they sense love and acceptance and blessing and encouragement from us as we meet with them.

God, I know that is Your will. And I pray that Your will would be done in each one of our lives concerning these things, Lord. I trust it into Your hands and I pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Alright, I do feel led this morning just to open it up.

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