

How To Change Your Attitudes

By Kathy Williamson

What type of person grabs your attention and motivates you? Usually it's a person who is very passionate about what he or she is doing. She's on fire and her excitement floods the room she is in. When she talks something inside you gets stirred - the desire also to be passionate about something. Anything! You don't want to leave her presence because you hope that some of that passion will rub off on you.

When you find yourself stuck in a boring situation (whether it's your job or other circumstances), how do you change things? How do you get some hope and passion into your life? How do you find a meaningful purpose for your existence? How do you get out of the rut of negative thinking and pity parties?

To change our attitude requires us to do several things. First, realize that we choose our attitude. Even though our situation may not change, our outlook changes when we have the right attitude. We choose to change our attitude even though our mind tells us different. How many times do we listen to the negative thoughts instead of what God says about us? We can only have one thought occur at one time, although the thoughts can come very fast. So if we choose to think on the positive promises of God, then we don't allow the negative thoughts to dominate. When we choose to believe God and act accordingly, our new attitudes take root deep in our heart, making our choices automatic.

Second, our new attitude becomes permanent when we change our underlying false beliefs. Many times we believe the negative thoughts in our head and allow ourselves to meditate upon them because, believe it or not, it feels good! Some of us have beaten ourselves up mentally for so many years that we don't have any other way of thinking. We actually believe these lies and don't do anything to search out whether or not they are true.

If we want to change, then we have to take responsibility for our thoughts. We must do whatever it takes to uncover the truth about ourselves - from God's perspective. We don't turn to others to get their opinion of us; we turn to God and find out what He thinks about us. God created us and provides great promises for our future. But sometimes there are things we must do to have many of these promises fulfilled in our life. Whenever we come across a promise from God in the Bible, we need to look at surrounding Scripture to see if there is something we need to do before God will fulfill the promise.

How we view ourselves improves greatly just by consistently reading the Bible. We gain an understanding of how much God loves us and how His love is unconditional. We don't have to do anything to earn God's love, just accept it. Once we experience God's love, we find ourselves loving others with the same type of unconditional love.

Third, we become who we hang around with! The five people we spend the most time around influence us, whether we want them to or not! But there is one Person we can hang around with whose influence will override the negative attitudes bombarding us from these individuals. And that is God. By spending more time reading the Bible, praying and asking the Holy Spirit to

reveal spiritual things to us, and meditating upon what we learn, we can keep our attitudes in proper check. This is great news because this is something we can do without having to wait until we find positive people to hang around with.

Fourth, we must identify what stirs our passion and begin formulating a plan to utilize that passion on a consistent basis. We may not be able to support ourselves in a full-time job doing our passion, but we can find ways to increase how often we do that item, thereby improving our attitude..

Our first step is to ask God to reveal to us the specific purpose for which He created us. This doesn't have to be some major influence. God uses all of us in concert to accomplish His overall purposes. No matter how big or small your purpose is, when used in conjunction with the purposes of others, the whole picture develops and no part is more important than the other.

Discovering our passion and using it on a weekly basis makes a major impact on our overall attitude. The new knowledge we learn from God takes root in our heart from our actions. When this happens, a lot of our underlying self-pity dissolves as a by-product. But we need to be consistent in operating within our passion; that is why I suggest doing it at least weekly.

Here's an example from my life. I knew that I enjoyed helping people overcome their problems and also sharing God's love with them. Even though I didn't have all the answers (and still don't!) I began volunteering as a lay counselor on a Christian-based crisis hotline. At the time I started I was going through a major depression and dealing with many other problems. However, within four months my life took a dramatic turnaround and I no longer was down in the dumps. I was totally surprised by such a quick change. My momentum stirred me to continuously choose the right attitude.

By volunteering once a week it also gave me the motivation to get through the things I was struggling with each week. One key point is that I chose to volunteer at a time when I was most vulnerable (Saturday nights). I later added another shift to volunteer to cover another vulnerable time.

Through the years of doing this crisis counseling God began to mold and shape my vision for what He wanted me to do for His glory. I now write books teaching people how to apply biblical principles to their daily living. What I do coincides with what others are doing with their passion. Together we make a difference in this world for Jesus Christ.

I encourage you to make the right choices, learn God's truths about who you are because of your relationship with Jesus Christ, spend more time with God than with negative people, and find your passion in life so you too can impact this world for God's glory!