

# HOME BIBLE STUDIES

by H.L. Collett

## YOUR ATTITUDE

**Many excuses are overcome by changing attitudes.** In everyday life, we change our attitude and accomplish many tasks which seem to be almost impossible. This is all accomplished by necessity or the love that we can generate in our lives. If we could realize the necessity of not saying only “Lord, Lord”, but do the things that he has commanded, we would accomplish many tasks for the Lord that seem almost impossible at first. If we can truly realize that it is a necessity of saving our own souls and the souls of others, and then realize the love that we have for God, we will be prompted to do ALL He has taught us we must do. John 14:15 reads, “If ye love me, keep my commandments,” and Philippians 4:13 we read, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Excuses never strengthened anyone, but the Lord will strengthen when we with love keep his commands—even bearing fruit when we think the situation is impossible for us to do personal work.

**The personal worker’s attitude toward the lost and dying world is important.** Christians should love souls and especially lost souls. John 15:13: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Certainly allotting a few hours to study with a friend is not laying down your life for him, but it is better than taking no time out to talk to him at all. Love demonstrates the value we have for the soul of man. What do you see in an individual when you think about his spiritual status? Do you think here is a man who lives upon the earth that is growing older and someday will be buried? Do you think that it is none of your business to talk to him if he differs with you? We should see in every temple (body) a precious soul that will spend eternity somewhere—either in the presence of God or with the devil and his angels. Jesus saw a soul in the woman at the well. He saw a soul that was full of sin and unacceptable to God. His attitude was that he must talk to her and that day. If some individual felt he had the truth and you did not—wouldn’t you want him to tell you about it? If you were living in sin, and even though it might hurt your pride, wouldn’t you want to know it? God made man after his image, but notice that the body was not a living soul until he breathed into it the breath of life. It is that soul, that eternal part of man that lives on after the return of the body to the dust from whence it came. If we see in man an eternal soul and work with that soul, we have done a work that will endure more than any other work. Why? Because that saved soul lives in eternity: immortal, not annihilated, without end. That is the endurance of our soul-winning work. We cannot be like the newspaper reporter who called the mortuary one day and asked the mortician, “Did anybody important die today?” He thought people important only if they were “headline material,” but to the Christian, all souls are important.

**Our attitude is reflected in our actions toward another soul.** Matthew 7:12 reads, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.” If we argue and wrangle, we can expect them to argue with us. If we mention Christ to them in the right manner, we can expect them to talk with the right attitude, too. If we allow them to talk, then we can expect them to let us be the conversationalist at the right time. Someone has said a good conversationalist must be a good LISTENER. If we listen, we can expect them to listen. 11 Timothy 2:24-26 states, “and the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all man, 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.” There are a number of attitudes that will be reflected properly or improperly toward another by our actions. We must not strive, but rather be gentle, meek, patient—yet instructing in the gospel so that an individual will repent and acknowledge the truth. When Paul was talking with Agrippa, Festus and Felix, he reasoned with them and told them of their sins, but certainly there is no evidence that he quarreled with them.

**Our attitude will be reflected in our daily living.** “If a man therefore purge himself ... he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” (11 Timothy 2:21). People in glass houses should not throw bricks. Christians that are not living the Christian life should not go forth proclaiming the word of God until they have straightened out their own lives. As Christians should love and live the Christian life, they should shine forth the happiness that Christ gives. Of cheerfulness and joy, Henry Ward Beecher wrote, “It is a light in the window of the face, by which the heart signifies it is at home and waiting. A face that cannot smile is like a bud that cannot blossom. Laughter is day and sobriety is night, and a smile is the twilight that hovers gently between both.” Galatians 5:22-23 states, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Let the Christian reflect this kind of fruit that will make others want to inherit the Christian life.

**Our attitude must glorify Christ.** We know that advertising is a must but in modern day advertising there is one famous exception to the rule. Hershey Chocolate Company does not advertise and has never spent a cent on advertising. We might ask, “How do they sell and continue to remain the number one chocolate seller in the country?” Good samples and consistency is the answer. The personal worker must also be consistent and give a good sample of his Christian living. Christ asked that his followers let their lights shine so that he may be glorified. People do not make a trail to your door unless they know what is there, therefore, we should so live that people will ask us to show them what is there—that is, what makes us the happy people we are. If we profess to be Christians but others know of the rotten kind of lives we live, we will not be able to feast with them upon God’s word for they will excuse themselves. In Solomon 1:6 we read, “Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother’s children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.” The Christian could very well adopt the following statement as his motto: “Be careful how you live, for you may be the only Bible some people ever read.” In 1932, Camay soap advertised “You’re in a beauty contest every minute of your life”—so Christians are in view of others with their lives. Sometimes the individual is prompted to be “on his toes,” so to speak, just before the prospect with whom he is studying. Mark 12:28-34 brings to light that we live with people and that we should live neighborly at all times, “thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” No person is just going to love himself part of the time, therefore, as he loves himself all the time, let the Christian at all times live and love the Christian life. We will be assisted in reflecting good lights by other Scriptural teachings. Colossians 4:5 says, “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.” When I first began preaching, I thought it was my duty to purge every error encountered at the time it was met, but “redeeming the

time” is a much better way. We should strive to win confidence and build the kind of ground work that will cause the individual to not be offended when error is pointed out, but rather to accept it. “Redeeming the time” is a phrase that would be wonderful to see practiced more. Another Scripture that might help to teach us how to redeem the time is Matthew 10:16: “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” No servant of the Lord should be harmful to the cause of Christ, even if the individual does not accept the truth, therefore let us learn the movement of serpents and doves in their work.

**The personal evangelist should keep himself out of the way.** Jesus said in Matthew 16:24, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me.” We should forget our own interests. Peter denied the Lord, trying to forget Jesus and think of his own safety. The Christian thinks of himself and his own presentation and many times forgets the true effort to be put forth. A man was visiting in a neighboring congregation and was called up-on to lead the public prayer. After the prayer and sermon, he asked the preacher how he sounded—and was it all right. The preacher had a ready and right answer for him. He said “It does not make any difference how it sounded if the heart was right.” You see, he was not denying himself, but thinking of getting himself in the way of his prayer to God for the benefit of sounding good. We should say with Paul, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” (Galatians 2:20) Let all who talk to others about Christ get themselves out of the way first. We get ourselves in the way with our own temper many times, when we strive to just win an argument and not watch the main track and the guiding of the precious soul. We become side-tracked because of our rise and fall of temper. II Timothy 2:23 says, “But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.” Again, Titus 3:9 says the same thing thusly: “but avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.” The same should be true of us causing the strife. God’s word is to be presented through reasoning. Isaiah 1:18 says “come now, and let us reason together.” This does not mean that we should refuse to correct (II Timothy 3:16-17) but it does mean that we should watch our temper. We can and should be guided through prayer prior to and during the study session.

(adapted from “House to House”) H.L.