

Managing My Attitude, Priorities and Health

*"They have made me caretaker of the vineyards,
but I have not taken care of my own vineyard."*

Song of Solomon 1:6

Three of the most difficult areas to master are our own attitude, time and health. How do we steward these possessions? As leaders in ministry, we feel it is noble to spend our lives for the sake of others. And, it is noble. Unfortunately, we often do it at the expense of our own well-being. This session will focus on leading yourself—how to rule your attitude, calendar and physical health. Let's begin by examining our attitudes as leaders.

Our Attitudes: Today's Attitude Gives Me Possibilities

My attitude today gives me possibilities. Is it possible for a leader to be successful without a good attitude? Yes, it is. However, their attitude will determine how much they will enjoy the success. Further, a poor or negative attitude can actually diminish the fruit we bear because it opposes an attitude of faith. Dr. Paul Y. Cho once studied pastors worldwide and discovered that the greatest leaders were also men of great faith. In Scripture, we see three attitudes that great leaders possessed consistently:

- a. A Positive Attitude (Leaders believed God could use them to do anything.)
- b. A Servant Attitude (Leaders generously served God and others.)
- c. A Determined Attitude (Leaders worked persistently and would not quit.)

Biblical Case Study: Paul's Attitude (Philippians 1:12-18)

Paul wrote the book of Philippians from a Roman prison while chained to a palace guard, awaiting a trial from Caesar. Sitting in the prison, fully aware that his ministry might be shortened, Paul's attitude was on display, loud and clear, before the Philippian church.

Paul's Attitude...

1. Enabled him to _____ what others could not see (v.12-13).
2. Enabled him to remain _____ in the face of negativism (v.14-17).
3. Enabled him to stay on _____ regardless of the circumstances (v.18).

Why Your Attitude Matters Today

Your success in leadership isn't only about your gifts, talents, intelligence, or budget. More than these, it is about the attitude you possess, year in and year out. Here is why your attitude matters to your leadership:

1. Your attitude at the beginning of a task affects its _____.

Take responsibility for your attitude. Philippians 2:5 tells us to share the same attitude that Christ had when He came to earth. Christ's attitude as He began His earthly ministry was essential, given all of the challenges He faced. A healthy attitude helps us as we begin and continue leading people and projects.

2. Your attitude toward others often determines their attitude toward _____.

Place high value on people. Jesus did this. We must do this, as well, despite our opinions of people. Romans 12:10 teaches us to be devoted to each other, and outdo one another in showing honor. The New Testament actually tells us to treat others as more important than ourselves.

3. Your attitude can give you a _____ perspective.

Decide to change your bad attitude areas. Proverbs 23:7 reminds us: *“As a man thinks in his heart, so he is.”* If we don’t change our bad attitudes, we will begin moving in the direction they lead us. Attitudes lead to action. One prominent doctor reminds us that each of us has a “Reticular Activating System” in our brains. Its primary function is to cause us to move in the direction of the dominant thought of the moment. What dominates your thought life?

4. Your attitude—not your achievements—provides you _____.

Develop an appreciation for life. Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out. Be grateful for little things in your life. Read Psalm 139 several times, and rediscover the tremendous way God fashioned each person, even the smallest detail.

5. Your attitude is _____.

Find something and someone positive in every situation. In Philippians 4:11, Paul wrote: *“I have learned to be content in any and every situation.”* He called this a secret. Very few people discover it. Mother Teresa was asked what requirement she had for her workers in Calcutta. She said they must be hard workers and possess a joyful attitude, regardless of the situation.

Think about it:

1. When you begin a new assignment or project, what is your usual attitude?
(Circle the number that most accurately reflects your attitude.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Excited</i>					<i>Apathetic</i>				
<i>Positive</i>					<i>Negative</i>				
<i>I see it as a new opportunity.</i>					<i>I see it as more work.</i>				

2. Why did you give yourself this score? What is your greatest challenge when it comes to possessing a positive attitude?

Discussion:

- What are the primary factors that affect your attitude?
- List the negative attitudes you have struggled with this last month.
- What is the one discipline you must practice in order to maintain a positive attitude?

Our Priorities: Today’s Priorities Give Me Focus

Given the choice, would you rather save time or money? Most people focus on money. However, time may be more valuable than money. You can always get more money when it is lost, but you can never get more time. Consequently, effective leaders focus on establishing priorities in order to get the most out of their time.

*“Therefore be careful how you live, not as unwise but as wise,
making the most of your time because the days are evil.” (Ephesians 5:16)*

It has been said, “Devoting a little of yourself to everything means committing a great deal of yourself to nothing.” We must learn to focus. The art of being wise is the art of knowing what to overlook. Truths we learn from the early church are crucial to maximize your priorities.

Biblical Case Study: The Early Church (Acts 6:1-4)

In this text, the early Church was growing, and it began to experience conflict among the members for the first time. The apostles step forward and declare their priorities, sharing just how they planned to deal with the demands on them:

1. _____ is our most precious commodity (v.1).
The needs of a growing population forced the apostles to declare their priorities.
2. **We cannot change time, only our _____** (v.2).
They looked at their options to compare and contrast what they should do.
3. **Leaders can do most things but not _____** (v.2).
They used common sense and good judgment to discern their top priorities.
4. **We _____ our life by how we spend our time** (v.3).
They laid out criteria for how they would delegate lower priorities.
5. **Priorities help us to choose _____** (v.4).
They declared to everyone what their top two priorities were.

Discussion: How do you make decisions on your priorities right now?

Making the Decision to Choose and Act on Our Top Priorities

1. Ask yourself three questions:

- a. What is _____ of me? (What tasks must I assume in light of my work?)
- b. What gives me the greatest _____? (What produces the most results?)
- c. What gives me the greatest _____? (What is most fulfilling to me?)

2. Remain and work in your areas of _____.

You can discover your strength areas by listening to the counsel of others, by experimenting with tasks and by watching what you continually are asked to do. William Gladstone said, *"He is a wise man who wastes no energy on pursuits for which he is not fitted; and he is wiser still who from among the things he can do well, chooses and resolutely follows the best."*

3. Evaluate and _____ your priorities daily.

According to a survey, only one third of workers plan their daily schedules, and only 9% actually follow through and complete what they planned. Too often, we do easy things first or quick things first or fun things first or loud things first, instead of first things first. This is the task of the leader.

4. _____ whenever possible.

Leaders usually go through stages. They move from doing it all themselves, to dumping work on others, to eventually delegating appropriate work to gifted team members. By delegating well, leaders actually can develop those team members. This makes the leader even stronger. Peter Drucker gave this advice: *"No leader has ever suffered because his subordinates were strong and effective."*

5. Invest in the _____ people daily.

Often, we find ourselves spending much of our time with problem people, instead of productive people who can advance the vision. Evaluate who you invest time in based on their value to the team, their strengths, their responsibility and their potential.

Discussion:

- What are your top priorities?
- What present tasks should you delegate?

Our Health: Today's Health Gives Me Strength

Leaders often neglect this issue because of their busy schedule. To spend time on our health, whether it is eating right or exercising or resting, seems so selfish. However, if our bodies cannot perform the leadership tasks we've been given, then our health suddenly becomes a high priority! Listen to God's wisdom concerning our bodies:

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your body." (I Corinthians 6:19-20)

Why is Your Health So Important to God?

1. Our bodies _____ the Holy Spirit (v.19).
2. We do not _____ to ourselves, but to Him (v. 19).
3. We've been _____ with a huge price—the blood of Jesus (v. 20).
4. We were designed to _____ Him in all we do (v. 20).

Why Your Health Should Matter to You

1. Your health _____ you emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.
2. Health often determines _____ as well as quantity of life.
3. It is easier to _____ health than to regain it.

Making Decisions to Follow Healthy Guidelines

1. Eat healthy foods as often as you can.
2. Have a purpose worth living for—do work you enjoy.
3. Find your pace in life.
4. Get physical exercise regularly.
5. Accept your personal worth.
6. Laugh often.
7. Handle stress effectively—communicate well, delegate well, pray well.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)

Assessment and Application

Assessment: Where do you succeed at caring for yourself? Where do you fail?

Application: List one action you can take with your attitude, priorities and health.