

Attitudes and Information

John 4:23-24

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** We often talk of the importance of attitude, and rightly so:

Prov. 23:7: “For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

Matt. 15:18-20: “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. 20 These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”; Lk. 6:43-45

2. It is critical for us to have the proper attitude toward the truth, the authority of God’s word, and for one another. Def. “Where you are in relation to where you should be.”

3. **3** We also often talk of the importance of the truth.

A. It is critical for us to understand the difference between what is true and what is false.

B. But recognition of truth alone is not going far enough.

C. It is critical to combine the proper attitude with the proper information.

(1) Medicine: need the right medicine and believe in the power of that medicine enough to take it.

(2) Business: need the right business plan and the belief in that plan to the point you will carry it out.

4. **4** The same is true if we seek to please God. It is essential that we have the right attitude toward Him and His word as well as the proper information (2 Thess. 2:10-12: NIV: “they refused to love the truth”; Jn. 17:17; 8:32).

5. **5** Recall Rom. 15:4 & 1 Cor. 10:11? Israel was taken into captivity because they reached the point of ignorance of God’s will (**Isa. 5:13:** “Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge...”; **Hos. 4:6:** “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee...”).

6. They had arrived at this point because they had developed the wrong attitude toward God and his word (i.e., information) (**Jer. 8:12:** “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.”).

7. **6** Jesus taught the same principles about acceptable worship (Jn. 4:23-24).

8. **7** Paul said, that in the gospel age, that which avails is faith (based on the right information, Rom. 10:17) which works by love (with the right attitude, **Gal. 5:6:** “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.”; **1 Cor. 13:2:** “...but have not love, it profits me nothing.”).

9. **8** Attitudes and information are like a lock and key; alone they are useless. They must be combined to be truly effective.

A. **** Attitude:** No amount of sincerity and uprightness of purpose compensates for a lack of truth.

B. **** Information:** Neither will an abundance of truth compensate for a lack of sincerity and uprightness of purpose.

10. **9** When we consider **Attitudes and Information**, there are four possibilities. Let's examine all four in today's lesson.

II. DISCUSSION:

1. **10** Wrong attitude + wrong information:

- A. Most people are in religious error for these very reasons (2 Thess. 2:10-12: NIV: "they refused to love the truth").
- B. **11** They have voluntarily closed their eyes and stopped their ears (Matt. 13:14-15).
- C. Someone has rightly said that, "No one is so blind as he who will not see."
- D. **12** Those in this category rejoice in error and not in the truth (**1 Cor. 13:6**: "does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;").
Jn. 3:20: "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."
Eph. 4:17-21: "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But you have not so learned Christ, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:"
- E. There are some who are not only ignorant of the truth but who are arrogantly proud of that ignorance (Matt. 3:9; Jn. 8:33).
- F. There is no hope for such a person, unless they decide to change their attitude first (**Acts 6:7**: "Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.").

2. **13** Wrong attitude + right information:

- A. Every case in the New Testament where the truth was preached, but rejected by those who heard, was of this kind.
 - (1) Rich young ruler learned the right information but his attitude toward the truth was of such nature that he prized his riches more than the truth (Matt. 19:16-22).
 - (2) **14** The Jews to which Stephen preached the truth were of this sort; they heard the truth, but due to the wrong attitude they rejected it (Acts 7:51-59).
 - (3) **15** The Jews in Antioch were of this same category: received the right information, but had the wrong attitude toward it (Acts 13:44-46).
 - (4) **16** The Jews in Rome were of this sort (Acts 28:17-28: **vv. 28:23-24**: "he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved."; quotes Isa. 6:9-10).
- B. **17** Most people we seek to convert are of this sort: they hate the truth! ****Lk. 8:5, 12; **Prov. 14:12; **28:26; **3:5**
- C. **18** Unfortunately, some in the church are in this category (Jer. 6:16; ****Jas. 4:17**). **19** This attitude is manifested in many areas:
 - (1) Attendance (Heb. 10:24ff).
 - (2) Giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6).

- (3) Personal evangelism (1 Tim. 2:4; Acts 8:4; Ezek. 3:18-19).
 - (4) Living godly lives (Titus 2:11-14).
 - (5) **20** Issues and problems that arise in the church such as institutionalism, social gospel, MDR, etc. (Jer. 6:16).
 - (a) “Well I know what that Bible passages says, but I think _____.
 - (b) “I know what you’re saying is the truth but you can’t preach it here because we’ve had problems with that, or that will upset so and so.”
 - (c) “But God wants me to be happy!”
 - D. **21** Whether we are teaching the alien sinner or the erring saint we must impart the right information and teach in the right spirit (Jer. 10:23; Psa. 37:23; Prov. 23:23).
 - E. **22** To maximize the opportunity for success, our appeal must ever be to the Scriptures (Jn. 17:17; 8:32; 1 Pet. 4:11) and we must always manifest a spirit of “*meekness and fear*” (1 Pet. 3:15; 2 Cor. 5:10-11a).
3. **23** Right attitude + wrong information:
- A. It appears to me that every case of conversion in the Bible falls into this category.
 - (1) Here were people who wanted to do right but who simply did not have a knowledge of the truth.
 - (2) But when they learned the truth they readily accepted it, without reservation or quibble, because their hearts or attitudes were right (honestly mistaken).
 - (a) **24** Pentecostians (Acts 2:37, 41).
 - (b) Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:36).
 - (c) Saul of Tarsus (**Acts 9:6**: “*Lord, what do You want me to do?*”; **Acts 26:19**: “*I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.*”).
 - (d) Cornelius (**Acts 10:33**: “*So I sent to you immediately...Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.*”).
 - (e) Philippian jailor (**Acts 16:30**: “*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*”; **Acts 16:33**: “*And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.*”).
 - B. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if all people everywhere, whenever they hear the truth preached, would have the same willing attitude toward truth manifested by these examples?
3. **25** Right attitude + right information: unfortunately the rarest combination of all!
- A. ****** The Thessalonian brethren (1 Thess. 2:13-16).
 - B. **26** The Bereans (Acts 17:11-12a).
 - C. **27** Final analysis: this is the only condition in which we can be saved (Lk. 10:16; Lk. 8:15).

III. CONCLUSION: **28**

- 1. If we stand before God in judgment, having either the wrong attitude or the wrong information, we will be lost.
- 2. **29** Let each of us examine our hearts to determine our attitudes, and then keep our minds open and receptive to the truth, the right information.

Adapted from an original outline by Jim Sasser.