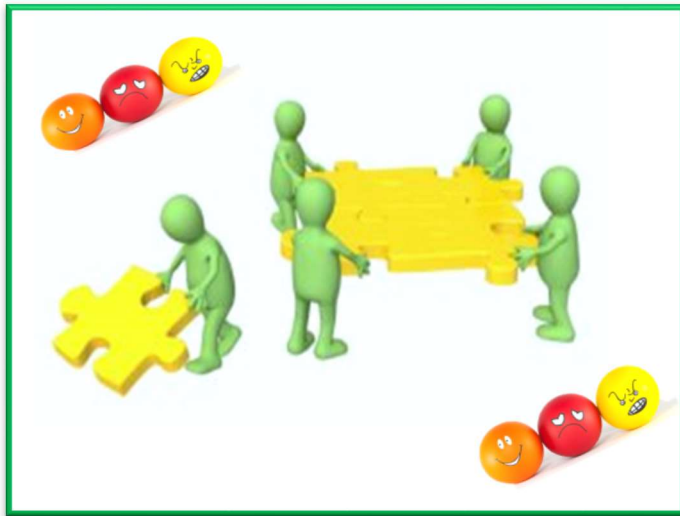


Life With God In Recovery

RELAPSE PREVENTION: ATTITUDE CHECK



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This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it ... Do all things without complaining and disputing. (Psalm 118:24, Philippians 2:14 NIV)

The story is told of two young boys who decided to play a prank on their sleeping grandfather. They crept into his bedroom and smeared blue cheese on his moustache. A short while later he awoke and declared, "This room smells!" He went into the kitchen where grandma was baking some chocolate chip cookies. But he couldn't smell the baked goods. "This room smells too," he exclaimed and headed to the porch at the back of the house. As he stood on the porch he sighed, "The whole world smells!" This story demonstrates how a bad attitude, like the smelly cheese, can influence our perception of everyday life.

Have you ever said to yourself, "If I just had more money I would be happy," or "If I had done things differently I'd be happy?" or "If this person or that person would change, everything would be fine." The error in this thinking is that external factors have very little to do with our contentment. In life we will all experience trials. Things will go wrong. Unfortunate circumstances will happen. Experiencing difficulties will either harden us to life or soften us to become more caring. At some point in life, we will need to decisively choose how we will respond to unexpected happenings. If we seek God, He will help us.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28 NIV)

In the Bible, we read the story of God's people as they left slavery in Egypt and moved towards the land God had promised them. When they bumped into difficulties on their journey they repeatedly grumbled and complained. God was clearly leading them by day and by night yet they doubted. They quickly became fearful when they faced difficult challenges. However, one man was different. His future, and the future of his family, was forever changed for good because he had a different attitude and wholeheartedly trusted God

But my servant Caleb has a different attitude than the others have. He has remained loyal to me, so I will bring him into the land he explored. His descendants will possess their full share of that land. (Numbers 14:24 NLT)

Choosing to remember God's promises and His goodness, is the foundation on which we build our confidence and maintain a positive attitude.

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:2 NIV)

Our attitude and perspective in life can be like medicine that heals or like poison that kills. When we look at our circumstances, is our instant response positive or negative? When we look at those around us, do we first see their gifts or their faults? Are we cynical? The cynic trusts no one and is suspicious even of the best intentions of others. There is no doubt we will face problem people along life's path, but if we will seek God, He will give us discernment in handling situations that we are uncertain about.

"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9 NLT)

What do we do when we find ourselves struggling with a negative perspective or bad attitude?

1) We need to recognize that a bad attitude comes from negative thinking that impacts our responses. The Bible teaches: **Throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.** (Ephesians 4:22-24 NLT) Even though someone may trigger a hostile response in us, our attitude is our own, not theirs, and we need to submit it to God.

2) When we have harmed someone by our negative response we need to make amends to that person. **Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.** (Matthew 5:23-24 NIV)

3) Together with God, we need to make every effort to uncover the root cause of our bad attitude and receive healing and release from its bondage. **Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude.** (1 Peter 3:8 NLT)

ATTITUDE CHECKLIST

What kind of attitude should a person living with God in recovery strive to have towards the following?

GOD: *And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' Humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* (Mark 12:30, James 4:7 NLT)

SIN: *"This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." Then he says, "I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds." And when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices.* (Hebrews 10:16-18 NLT)

INJUSTICE: *Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the Lord.* (Romans 12:19 NLT)

MISUNDERSTANDINGS: *Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.* (Colossians 3:13 NLT)

LEADERS: *Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.* (Hebrews 13:17 NLT)

GOVERNMENT: *For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority—whether the king as head of state, or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right.* (1 Peter 2:13-14 NLT)

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. What effect does my attitude have on my quality of life?
2. When am I most likely to have a bad attitude? How might I prepare in advance for this person or situations?
3. When I recognize I'm holding a negative or cynical attitude, what can I do about it?
4. As the challenges of life confront me, what would it take for me to be like Caleb and have, "a different attitude than the others have"?

Heavenly Father, Forgive me for my bad attitude towards You, towards others, and towards life in general. I confess that I have not loved You with my whole heart and I have not loved my neighbour as myself. Help me understand the underlying root of my bad attitude and self-centered thinking so that I may be set free from its bondage. Lord Jesus, create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me. I am forever grateful that You are faithful and will complete the work You have begun in me. I am forever grateful that You care. AMEN