THE MUSIC

IT GROOVES YOU

During their “funky” years, the Bar-Kays, an American rhythm and blues, soul, and funk band, composed an excellent perspective song titled “Attitude”. What is a perspective song? It’s a song that may make you get up and bop, but the words will stay with you. Here are just a few lines of that song’s lyrics.

**Your attitude is what describes you. What you want to be.**

**It just may not be what the people see.**

**It`s up to your attitude to show the real you.**

**Because it's in your eyes; that`s where the truth resides.**

**Here come the changes!**

“Your attitude is what describes you.” An unusual but quite memorable hook. Nothing truly indicates your attitude louder than your actions along with your words. That said, how a person feels may be completely different then their actions portray. Just because someone *does* or *says* nice things doesn’t necessarily mean they are a nice person. Today’s message from God’s Word demonstrates how some early Christians didn’t feel their attitudes had any connection to their Christian walk.

MESSAGE

IT MYSTIFIES YOU

Imagine you're enjoying a nice dinner with family and close friends. Some of those friends are very important people. As on prior occasions, everyone is having a good time. Then suddenly, people you’ve never seen before walk in. Abruptly, the most admired person at your table gets up, disassociating himself with you and your companions to join these newcomers at another table. You find that odd, but then another prominent person at your table removes himself as well. Getting strange, right? But it doesn’t stop there. Others get up, making you and the other remaining people at your table feel as though you no longer exist to them. This is particularly painful because you’ve thought of these people as good friends and part of a close-knit Christian fellowship.  
  
Has this or something similar ever happened to you? Let's cruise along and see what God's Word says about such behavior.

**Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. (Colossians 3:12-14, NKJV)**

**When Peter came to Antioch, I [the apostle Paul] told him face to face that he was wrong. He used to eat with Gentile followers of the Lord, until James sent some Jewish followers. Peter was afraid of the Jews and soon stopped eating with Gentiles. He and the other Jews hid their true feelings so well that even Barnabas was fooled. But when I saw that they were not really obeying the truth that is in the good news, I corrected Peter in front of everyone and said: Peter, you are a Jew, but you live like a Gentile. So how can you force Gentiles to live like Jews? We are Jews by birth and are not sinners like Gentiles. But we know that God accepts only those who have faith in Jesus Christ. (Galatians 2:11-16, CEV)**

Jesus commissioned Peter to spread the good news of the gospel to all people. Peter was not only one of Jesus`s devoted followers but one of His best friends. Except for a short period after Jesus’s arrest when Peter swore he had no idea who Jesus was out of fear the religious groups wanting to kill Jesus might want to kill him too. Other than that, they were good friends. In the second scripture passage above, the apostle Paul is upset with Peter. If expressed in twenty-first century language, Paul might have said something like the following.  
  
“Yo, Bro, what are you doing? You of all people should know better than to act like this, especially towards our new Christian believers. Jesus trusted you with His people in spite of your personal faults. You were an ordinary fisherman, quick to speak and not always wise with your words, including being quick to deny our Lord when trouble came. Yet Jesus chose you as one of His closest confidants. Now you are disrespecting people because they are not Jewish by birth as we are. What’s wrong with you? Peter, you know better!”  
  
The apostle Peter was one of the early Christian community's most influential leaders. But on this occasion, his behavior was way out of line. Paul had to call Peter out because as part of “the elect of God,” he most definitely was not putting on “tender mercies” or “kindness.” Peter had enjoyed eating with these people many times before. So what was the problem now?  
  
Surprisingly, the above passage from Galatians makes clear that Peter acted as he did because he was “afraid of the Jews.” Definitely not the Peter we know who jumped from the boat to walk on water, blurted out both truth and denial of Jesus, was first to race to the tomb when told Jesus was alive, preached so powerfully that thousands were saved, and did so many impressive miracles. But “afraid of the Jews” doesn’t necessarily mean Peter was frightened. It means Peter was being true to Peter. He was intimidated. These friends of James may have been like some of ours—you know, the ones we try to impress. The ones we feel have influence or power. All Peter knew was that he didn’t want James’ friends to see him associating with Gentile believers whom these influential Jewish church leaders considered unworthy of their company.  
  
Before we address why Paul was so heated that he felt compelled to publicly reprimand Peter, let's take a brief look at the backstory of both Peter and Paul. Both men had their problems. Peter, one of the greatest early preachers of the gospel, had led many to become followers of Christ. But we’ve already talked about his faults. Paul became the first great missionary evangelist and church planter, a man who wrote a sizeable percentage of the New Testament. But he started out as a tormenter and even murderer of early Jewish Christians for their faith in Jesus Christ. You may wonder what in the world Jesus saw in these men, but they became the two greatest preachers of the gospel mentioned in the New Testament.  
  
So exactly what is the gospel? There are so many beautiful and detailed explanations that I've created my own from my personal studies about Jesus Christ. The gospel is the best news about a life of solidarity. It’s educating yourself and valuing all the scripture-based facts or events on how to survive in a hurting, pain-filled world. It’s dedicating every day to sharing that unconditional love freely given to all by Jesus Christ.  
  
Paul was not only livid with Peter's attitude but angry at what was happening to his trusted friend Barnabas, who had helped him get started in ministry. Now Barnabas was participating in this un-Christlike legalism. When the other Jewish Christians saw how their leaders were behaving towards the Gentile converts, they too began acting hypocritically. Not good!  
  
In his early days as leader of the Jerusalem church, Peter had originally struggled with the concept that pagan Gentiles could become Christians as well as God`s chosen people, the Jews. But Peter had received a personal vision from God, making clear that God accepts all, both Jews and Gentiles. Once Peter changed his perspective, God sent him to a Gentile household to proclaim the gospel, where Peter stated:

**I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. (Acts 10:34-35)**

From that point, Peter had outwardly welcomed Gentiles as equals. But his behavior in Antioch makes clear his heart was not completely surrendered to the idea. Just because we are introduced to new things—people of different races, cultures, socioeconomic backgrounds, etc.—doesn’t mean our old inward attitudes disappear. This is the problem with attitudes. They tend to show the real, true you. Peter and Barnabas weren’t just experiencing a cultural peer pressure moment. This was a terrible leadership decision that caused a domino effect of bad behavior. God's Word reminds us:

**Above all else, you must live in a way that brings honor to the good news about Christ. (Philippians 1:27a)**

But Peter's attitude showed no “honor” for the feelings of these Gentile Christians. Peter had been down this road before when he'd denied knowing Jesus. Though a disciple and close friend of Jesus, he’d been afraid of how others would perceive him if he admitted he knew Jesus. In the same way, Peter reverted back to his original attitude toward non-Jews out of fear of James’ Jewish friends. How could this be, considering such behavior toward the Antioch Gentile Christians occurred *after* Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit ? *After* he became a new person in Christ, as God's Word describes:

**I have been crucified with Christ – it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me – and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)**

What is clear here is that being baptized with the Holy Spirit did not make Peter perfect. It doesn't make those who proclaim the gospel today or any other Christian perfect either. The apostle Paul expressed his confidence to the early church . . .

**. . . that you are working together and that you are struggling side by side to get others to believe the good news. (Philippians 1:27b)**

That is what we should be doing as well. Didn't Jesus Christ go out of His way, in fact, all the way to the cross, to make all people feel loved and wanted? Whether there is little we may have in common or agree on with another person, building up Christ’s kingdom is not a pick and choose. It’s about spreading the love Christ has for everyone. No matter the intention, motive, concern, we are to “have this same attitude in yourselves which was in Christ Jesus,” (Philippians 2:5). In other words, look to Jesus as our example in selfless humility. Let me offer a brief paraphrase of the Bar-Kays' impactful lyrics on the importance of attitude.

**How you portray your smile may be just a style.**

**Styles come and go.**

**But the true heart of a Christian, everyone knows.**

**Sing it with Peters of the world: Here come the changes!**

**Here come the changes!**

Be aware of your attitude. People feel the results.

MEET MS. MESSY



A young mother is sitting in church, an infant in her arms. The baby coughs just once. But three adult sisters sitting nearby immediately get up and move, complaining that they`ve come to church to hear God's Word, not a baby. The mother feels awful and is left wondering if she should have come to church. The three sisters reseat themselves a few rows up. As the pastor starts preaching, one sister falls asleep, one sister starts texting, and the third pulls up a game up on her tablet.

Best reason in the world to go to church is to get a good feeling from the Word of God. Making people feel bad is just an added bonus. 🤪 No, I’m just messing with you!

So glad, Jesus addresses our mess!

IT CONNECTS YOU!

To the Throne of Mercy

Lord, my desire is to follow you. What has developed in me, does not always represent you. You showed no concern when your reputation was questioned for eating with whom some consider degenerates. I want the same mindset. Lord, I need you to create in me a clean heart. Lower my nose if at any time it goes upward. Correct my eyes if they begin to appear side-eyed. Give my body language an overhaul if it expresses disapproval. When you fix these things. My attitude will be what describes You. Pure, lovely, and honorable. In Jesus Name…Amen

Next time you hear “Attitude” …let me know what YOU hear!

ABOUT DARLENE



Darlene, the creator of “Brospel” a twist on blues & rhythm (R&B) that sends a Gospel message, was born and raised in Connecticut. She’s a homebody who loves her family, music, New England’s seasons, and anything and everything to do with Christmas. She is president of Tiny Hearts, a nonprofit organization that teaches young children God’s Word via the internet. Darlene also teaches two self-help classes for women and is a life coach. Her side passion is creating, floral arrangements, DJing, or decorating her home. She’s studied the Bible her whole life and still finds it absolutely fascinating. A true lover of music. Darlene believes, “Just like the Word of God, there’s such a natural connecting beautiful message you find in music!” Especially where you least expect it! So, Open Your Ears and…Listen Here.

REACHOUT

Darlene would be happy to connect and obtain feedback via her email at TAMITM.2021@gmail.com