

Attitude #4 . . . Honesty

Jesus said: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." Matthew 5:6

I honestly examine myself in the light of God's Word.

How much time do we really spend thinking about how we really are doing? We are more inclined to cover up our feelings rather than share our true feelings. It almost seems like more work to be honest than it does to just glaze over our struggles without doing anything about them. No one has ever won over their struggles by making light of them or ignoring them altogether. If we are ever going to move forward and experience a better future, we are going to have to deal with the present and in some cases deal with the past as well.

Being honest is one thing; we have all been taught the importance of that since we were children. We would all agree that just because we were taught a certain principle all our lives, it has not always been the key to us living out that principle. There are many things that need our constant, continued attention in order that we might consistently carry them out; being men of integrity is one of those areas of life that will indeed need our constant and continued attention.

Deception is at the root of addiction. When we do not believe that we have a problem when we do, and when we try to convince everyone, there is not a problem, we are deceiving ourselves. All other deception stems from there. When I begin to get honest with myself, I will then be honest with God and from there I can overcome the challenge to be honest with everyone else. The great challenge with being honest with ourselves is the fear of seeing ourselves the way that we really are. Call anyone a drug addict, just don't call me one...or call anyone an alcoholic, just don't call me one.

The key to examining ourselves in the light of God's word is accepting whatever God's word says to us and about us. When we get to the place where we begin to understand that God would never call me out and then not be willing to help me up, we are in the place where we can get His help. When we get honest about the way we feel, about the way we think, about the things we do and about the way we are, God will help us to get things turned around in a way that will glorify Him and help us.

Psalms 73:1-28 - Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. 2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. 3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 4 For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. 5 They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. 6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. 7 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. 8 They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. 9 They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. 10 Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. 11 And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? 12 Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. 13 Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. 14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. 15 If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. 16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; 17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. 18 Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. 19 How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. 20 As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image. 21 Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. 22 So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee. 23 Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. 24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. 25 Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. 26 My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. 27 For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. 28 But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.

This Psalm can be of great use to all of us in avoiding a common temptation that many people struggle with, the temptation of the envy of the prosperity of the wicked. There is a good chance all of us will need to heed to the example and instruction of this Psalm so that we are not caught off guard into thinking that God has forsaken the good and blessed the bad.

What we can learn from this Psalm:

1. Vs. 1 - A foundational truth. God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean (pure, sincere) heart.

Before Asaph ever begins to expound upon his struggle, he describes what he holds fast to; that God is good, and He is good to **"such as are of a clean heart"**.

One of the attributes of God is His goodness. God is good! However, just because God is good does not mean that He is going to extend His goodness despite our badness. God's goodness is seen throughout all areas of our lives, even in our badness when we consider His mercy and His patience. One of the reasons for His goodness is that it might lead us to repentance.

Romans 2:4 - Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

God's goodness reveals who God is and how He is and one of His objectives for us witnessing and receiving His goodness is that we might respond by seeing our need for forgiveness. Good thoughts of God will strengthen us against many of Satan's temptations. **Truly God is good;** Asaph had many thoughts in his mind concerning the divine intervention of God, but this word kept him secure: **"For all this, God is good, good to Israel, even to those that are of a clean heart."**

2. Vs. 2,3 - A personal admission. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. 3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

It should give us great relief when we see someone else who comes to terms with his own struggles without sugar coating it and/or making light of it; especially when they are struggles to which we can relate.

What did he admit?

- What he witnessed affected him personally.....**"As for me...my feet, my steps."**

If he looked around to see if it affected someone else, we do not know. What we do know is what he saw, affected him and he held it in long enough.....he was about to deal with his frustration and struggle.

- What he witnessed almost got the best of him..... **my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.**

- What he witnessed was reality..... **For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.**

This was something that he was neither making up nor being irrational about. He saw it because it was true, people who were wicked appeared to be better off than he was, and it was a great discouragement to him.

3. Vs. 4-12 - A detailed description. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. **5** They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. **6** Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. **7** Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. **8** They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. **9** They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. **10** Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. **11** And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? **12** Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.

Included in the detail:

- There seemed to be no justice..... **5** They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.
- There seemed to be no limit..... **7** Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.
- There seemed to be no reverence..... **9** They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.
- There seemed to be no fear..... **11** And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?

4. Vs. 17, 23-26,28 - An crucial awareness. Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. **23** Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. **24** Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. **25** Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. **26** My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. **28** But it is good for me

to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.

By the words of his own testimony, Asaph had climbed out of his place of disappointment. But he did not do it without the assistance of the Lord and the reassurance of his relationship with God. The key to Asaph being able to shake off the burden of despair was in his ceasing to focus on what was going on in the lives of others and began to focus on his dependence upon the Lord.

How did he do it?

- He found strength when he went to the house of God..... **Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.**
- He found strength in his relationship with God..... **Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. 24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.**
- He didn't forfeit strength by looking other places..... **Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. 26 My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.**
- He gained strength by staying close to God..... **But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.**