

# Attitudes That Edify

**Introduction.** John Maxwell tells a great story about a woman, Thelma, who moved with her husband to a military base in the middle of the Mojave Desert. She lived in a one-room shack in unbearable heat: 125 degrees in the shade. She was lonely with no one to talk to. Thelma hated it. One day she wrote to her parents and told them she was giving up and coming home. She said she would rather be in prison. The 2-line letter her mother wrote back changed her life: “Two men looked out from prison bars. One saw the mud, the other saw the stars.”

When Thelma reread these lines a few times, she felt ashamed and decided that she would try to see the stars in her present situation. She made friends with the people who lived there and took an interest in their weaving and pottery. She learned about the their customs, different forms of cacti, and the habits of the prairie dogs. Her life transformed. The Mojave Desert hadn't changed — but she had.

I know that people sometimes “get tired of church” or “get bored with worship,” but there are great attitudes that edify, build, improve, and make a difference in the lives of others — and can establish in you a new zeal for the Lord.

## ***I. The Attitude Of Love***

- A. The Bible says, “Knowledge puffs up, but loves edifies” (1 Corinthians 8:1). Love is the basis for all other constructive attitudes. First, I have to love God with everything I have. Second, I have to love my neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40). Love says, “I care about you. I want to help you. I want to encourage you.”
- B. Love edifies when it exhibits the 15 qualities of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7:
  - 1. Love suffereth long — it shows self-restraint in the face of provocation.
  - 2. Love is kind — it does good deeds to help someone.
  - 3. Love envieth not — it does not seethe over someone else's success.
  - 4. Love vaunteth not itself and is not puffed up — it stays away from the action of pride and the attitude of pride.
  - 5. Love does not behave itself unseemly — it is always concerned over how it affects someone else.
  - 6. Love seeketh not her own — it looks to the needs of others.
  - 7. Love is not easily provoked — it does not readily or suddenly become upset or irritated.
  - 8. Love thinketh no evil — it does not keep an inventory of wrongdoing.
  - 9. Love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth — it does not compromise with error; it takes great joy in truth.
  - 10. Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things — it protects as much as possible, wants to see the best in all, hopes even in desperate circumstances, and refuses to accept failure as final.

## ***II. The Attitude Of Respect***

- A. There is a general lack of respect today among different social, economic, and racial groups. It is seen in our government (in the political climate — memes against the President and other leaders), communities (in the massive civil

unrest over the last several years), homes (in the constant turmoil of divorce and domestic violence), and too often in our churches.

- B. The attitude of respect, esteem, and honor should not only be expressed toward our leaders, but all of God's people (1 Timothy 2:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:10-13; cp. Romans 12:10, 16-17).

### **III. The Attitude Of Service**

- A. Ephesians 4:12-16 teaches that every member of the body of Christ has a function, part, and place. Every member has a means to serve. When that happens, Paul says, "the body edifies itself in love." How can we serve others?
  1. Help your family (1 Timothy 5:4).
  2. Volunteer to serve in your spiritual family (1 Peter 4:10-11).
  3. Donate items to the needy (Matthew 25:36).
  4. Send someone a note of support and hope (1 Thessalonians 5:11).
  5. Deliver a meal (Acts 20:35).
  6. Give a young couple a break and watch their kids (Hebrews 13:16).
  7. Help others shine by applauding their efforts (Philippians 2:3).
  8. Listen (James 1:19).
  9. Give to others (Proverbs 11:24-25).
- B. Every day of your life is an opportunity to do good (Galatians 6:9). Jesus loved the paradox created by saying that the greatest will become a servant (Matthew 23:11; Luke 22:26-27; John 13:14-15). It is true because serving others edifies!

### **IV. The Attitude Of Peace**

- A. Too often Christians have displayed to the world a divisive spirit — one that tears down, causes confusion, fractures fellowship, and is a breeding ground for murmuring, grumbling, and griping.
- B. The Bible exhorts for peace (Romans 14:19). Unlike little children that often delight in irritating and aggravating their siblings, brethren in Christ look for what can calm, encourage, ennoble, and provide an atmosphere of serenity, solace, and comfort (Proverbs 12:20; 29:8; Matthew 5:9). Only harmony in a church can build people up; contention will destroy them.

### **V. The Attitude Of Cooperation**

- A. One of the themes of Acts is "one accord" (Acts 1:14; 2:1, 46; 4:24; 5:12; 7:57; 8:6; 12:20; 15:25). This means one mind, one heart, and one soul (1 Corinthians 1:10). They worked together, prayed together, shared with each other, and put aside differences for the cause of Christ.
- B. What if brethren in all churches followed the biblical exhortation in Romans 15:2? Think how much more could be accomplished. And what a great spirit of unity and harmony would prevail. Paul urged even the outstanding Philippians to be of "one accord" (Philippians 2:2).

**Conclusion.** Love. Respect. Service. Peace. Cooperation. These attitudes edify. But don't wait for others to change. Let it begin with you. No matter how bleak your situation, look for the stars, edify others, and you will be blessed.

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