

# Challenges to Accept

## I. INTRODUCTION:

### A. We are either going forward, standing still or falling behind—

1. That saying is true for churches.
2. It is very easy to become complacent and comfortable (the prelude to standing still).
3. Once we stand still, everyone passes us by and we begin to fall behind.

### B. Paul believed in moving ahead—

1. **Philippians 3:13-14**, *“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”*
2. It is the only way to avoid stagnation and failure.

### C. As a church, we need to think about what it takes to move ahead—

1. In January, I will address a different issue involved in moving forward as a church.
2. We must never be satisfied with the past or believe that what we are doing in the present is all that we can or should do.
3. To achieve all that God gives the opportunity to do, we must be ready to move forward to meet the challenges of the future.

### D. Challenges to accept—

1. I don't intend to list a lot of specific things to do.
2. I do intend to list many of the different kind of things we can do.
3. We just need to accept that the challenges before us are there because God wants us to do something about them.

## II. DISCUSSION:

### A. Accepting the Challenge of Making a Difference in the World—

1. Some verses we need to focus on:
  - a. Matthew 5:13-16
  - b. 1 Peter 2:9
2. We need to accept the challenge of making a difference in our world.
  - a. That difference must come as we live rooted and grounded in the Word of God.
  - b. Christians have been silenced and made to feel unwelcome and unwanted by the world.
  - c. But we cannot let them shut us up, shut us down, shut us out, or shut us in.

3. We must show the world that we have answers to the problems plaguing mankind.
  - a. A prime example is the abortion of unborn children. We need to oppose this not because it is politically unacceptable, but because it is morally wrong.
  - b. However, those who advocate killing abortionists are just as wrong as the abortionists are.
  - c. How can someone miss this point so drastically?
  - d. We can change the world the same way God's people have always changed the world by teaching and preaching the gospel of Jesus and changing the hearts and minds of those who live around us.

### **B. Accepting the Challenge of Evangelizing Our Own Community—**

1. Everywhere I've ever been folks thought their community was not open to the Gospel.
  - a. Was that based on the failure of well planned and well financed efforts to evangelize? No.
  - b. Was it because there was so much opposition to the church that no one would listen? No.
  - c. Mostly, it was because the local church simply did not make the effort.
2. Coca Cola is so well known, that you can go into some of the most remote places in the world and there you will find bottles of Coke.
  - a. Their motto: Think globally, but act locally!
  - b. They want to be everywhere.
  - c. But, in order to succeed they know to take care of each location.
  - d. The church needs to learn this lesson (apply to Mark 16:15-16).
    - (1) Far too many congregations have no local plan of work, no budget for local evangelism, and use no media to get out in the community.
    - (2) Something is wrong with this kind of thinking.

### **C. Accepting the Challenge of Leadership Development—**

1. Have you thought about who will lead the church in 10, 20, 30 years?
2. Paul invested himself in the training of Timothy.
  - a. Timothy was to do the same with other faithful Christians (2 Timothy 2:2)
  - b. These would in turn invest themselves in yet others.
3. Godly leaders must develop future leaders.
4. Just as there is a responsibility to train, there is a responsibility to be trained.
  - a. The best leaders have always had good followers.
  - b. For example: Joseph, Joshua, David, Elisha, Peter
5. Specifically, we must develop male leadership (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23).

#### **D. The Challenge of Following God's Word—**

1. The effort to move the church forward into the future must not abandon the foundation of Scripture as our authority for what we do.
  - a. In recent years, there have been decisions made that threaten to change our worship and our work with unbiblical reasoning.
  - b. Some of those are:
    - (1) The increased use of entertainment as a replacement for worship.
    - (2) Abandoning the model of male leadership.
    - (3) Use of instrumental music in our worship.
    - (4) De-emphasis on the role of baptism in salvation.
    - (5) Compromise on various other doctrinal points for the sake of appealing to the world.
2. The importance of God's word (Deuteronomy 12:32; Revelation 22:18-19).
3. Those who believe the Bible is the word of God, must also believe all of it.
  - a. Beyond that, people simply add or subtract their own ideas and desires in place of God's.
  - b. With such changes God is not pleased.
4. We must be a people rooted in the book.
  - a. We must know what God's will is.
  - b. We must not be so tied to our traditions or customs that we fight against God's will.
  - c. We must not be so quick to look for new answers and methods that we neglect what it says.

### **III. CONCLUSION:**

#### **A. Ultimately, moving the church forward into the future involves every member—**

1. Since the church is people, the church moves only as its people move.
2. All these challenges are personal challenges to each one of us.

#### **B. This Church...**

1. It is composed of people just like me.
2. It will be friendly *if I am*.
3. It will do a great work *if I work*.
4. It will make generous gifts to many causes *if I am generous*.
5. It will bring others to Christ *if I lead them*.
6. It will be a church of loyalty love, faith and service, *if I who make it what it is, am filled with these*.
7. With God's help, *let's dedicate ourselves to the task of being all that I want the church to be*.

# Enemies to Defeat

## I. INTRODUCTION:

### A. *The church is described as a body both in its life and its function—*

1. *Romans 12:4-5, "For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another"*
2. Bodies are designed to live, to act and to work.
3. It is natural for the body to function so that life today promotes life tomorrow.
4. The same is true for the Church. Life today promotes life tomorrow.

### B. *The human body has enemies that can damage or even kill it—*

1. Disease.
2. Accidents.
3. Self-destruction (suicide, dissipation)

### C. *Likewise, the church has enemies that prevent it from moving forward—*

1. Enemies that can damage or cripple it.
2. Enemies that can kill it.
3. Therefore, we must be ready to fight the enemies if we are to move forward.

## II. DISCUSSION:

### A. *The Enemy of Ignorance—*

1. Ignorance comes in many forms.
  - a. Isaiah 45:20
    - 1) Religious ignorance of the pagan who makes his god from a tree.
    - 2) Today same: worship nature, crystals, idols, ancestors, etc.
  - b. Jeremiah 5:21
    - 1) Stubborn ignorance refuses to listen to God.
    - 2) Won't see, hear or think?
  - c. Hosea 4:1-6
    - 1) Specifically, ignorance of God's word.
    - 2) It is possible to be destroyed by our own lack of knowledge.
2. What ignorance causes:
  - a. It causes us to miss salvation.
  - b. It causes us to not obey God's will.

- c. It causes us to “practice religion” instead of Biblical faith.
- d. Cause us to fail in God’s purpose for us in the world.

### **B. The Enemy of Unbelief—**

1. Unbelief is a problem for both the alien and the Christian.
  - a. John 8:24
    - 1) It is a fact that people will die in their sins without faith in Jesus Christ.
    - 2) It is a matter of life and death.
  - b. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4
    - 1) It is a terrible thing to be blind. It is worse to be spiritually blind.
    - 2) Satan can blind people to the glory of the gospel.
  - c. Hebrews 3:12
2. Unbelief can keep the church from moving forward.
  - a. How might unbelief affect us?
    - 1) We might know, but not believe, God’s word.
    - 2) We might not believe that God cares how we live.
    - 3) We might not believe that God has a plan to save in His word.
    - 4) We might not believe it matters how we worship.
    - 5) We might not believe it matters how committed we are.
  - b. We should be like the man in Mark 9:24, *“Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”*

### **C. The Enemy of Apathy—**

1. Illustration:
  - a. A man asked: “Do you think the world’s problems are caused by ignorance or apathy?”
  - b. His wife replied, “I don’t know and I don’t care.”
2. Apathy affected the church in Laodicea, for which Jesus soundly condemned them.
  - a. Revelation 3:15-16
  - b. Someone may say, “No this church was lukewarm.”
    - 1) Well, what is apathy except lacking passion, or being “blah”?
    - 2) In a word it is being lukewarm.
3. Apathy destroys because it makes us lukewarm about the church, the lost, righteousness and about reaping the fruit of the Spirit.

### **D. The Enemy of Sin—**

1. This is the most obvious enemy.

- a. Ignorance, unbelief, and apathy all lead to sin.
  - b. If the church practices sin, how can we remain the church?
2. Consider just a few verses:
- a. Hebrews 12:1
    - 1) A runner does not run a race hampered by weights.
    - 2) Neither can we run the race of life hampered and weighted down by sin.
  - b. Hebrews 3:12-13
    - 1) One of the reasons we need each other is to help avoid hardening by sin.
    - 2) If that happens, sin can cause us to leave God.
  - c. James 5:19-20
    - 1) The error of sin can kill the soul.
    - 2) Again, we need each other to help stay on the right track.
3. What holds the Church back?
- a. Sin in my personal life
  - b. Sin in our family life
  - c. Sin in our Church life
  - d. We will not meet these challenges while sin remains.

### **III. CONCLUSION :**

#### **A. For the church to move forward, we must recognize and defeat our enemies.**

1. Long time ago, Pogo, the comic strip character, said, "We have seen the enemy and he is us."
2. Other people, the government, economics, religious prejudice, and a host of others may work against the church, but can be our own worst enemy.

#### **B. The four enemies are:**

1. Ignorance.
2. Unbelief.
3. Apathy.
4. Sin.
5. All of these are enemies that we can do something about.

#### **C. Are you under attack today?**

1. Fight!
2. Do not lose the battle.
3. Enlist help.



# Dangers to Avoid

## Philippians 3:12–14

### I. Introduction:

#### A. *The church needs to be moving forward (Philippians 3:12–14)*—

1. Looking forward.
2. Thinking forward.
3. Planning forward.

#### B. *Review*—

1. Challenges to Accept
2. Enemies to Defeat

#### C. *In this Lesson Study Consider Dangers to Avoid*—

1. What if, after you entered the building today, I discovered that we had a rattlesnake loose in the auditorium?
2. Now, I could keep quiet about it, since I wouldn't want anyone to become upset, nor would I want people to get hurt trying to get out.
3. However it might be handled, I think all would agree that if a rattler were loose under your pew, you'd want to know about it.
4. This is the reason why we must discuss dangers that lie before the Church. These will stop, or kill our ability to move into the future.

### II. DISCUSSION:

#### A. *The Danger of False Doctrine*—

1. Definitions:
  - a. *False* = that which is not true, something that is a lie.
  - b. *Doctrine* = teaching; or that which is taught with the intent of producing a body of information to be believed and used for one's basis of faith, worship, life and service to God.
  - c. *False doctrine* is any body of information that people believe and use as a basis for their relationship with God that is untrue.
  - d. If the doctrine is untrue, then it cannot actually produce what it claims, and leaves the one believing it in a dangerous position.
2. The Bible has many warnings about the dangers of false teachers who dispense false doctrine or

teaching.

- a. Matthew 7:15
- b. Matthew 7:22-23
- c. Acts 20:28-30
- d. II Timothy 4:3-4
- e. I Timothy 4:1-3
- f. I Timothy 6:3-5

3. There are several ways we might deal with this problem.

a. We could try to identify false doctrines, flag them, and then avoid them.

- (1) A very cumbersome and virtually impossible task.
- (2) If you spend all your time with that which is false, when will you learn what is true.
- (3) Obviously, we must examine some things that are false, but I'm talking about an approach that focuses on that which is false.

b. Or, you could identify that which is true, focus on that truth, learn and practice that truth, and thus eliminate all that is false.

(1) Illustration:

(a) Suppose (for argument) that I wanted to travel from Florida to California, and there were 100 highways on which I could travel.

(b) Suppose further that only one of them actually made a connection between Florida and California.

(c) Do I need to know all the ones that do not complete the journey, or do I need to know the one that does?

(2) If God gives us the truth so that we can know how to please Him in our faith, our worship, our service, the way we live our lives, etc., doesn't it make sense to focus on that truth?

(3) False doctrine is a perversion of God's truth. To overcome it, we must put the focus on what God has said.

(4) The Bible is our source book of truth.

(a) II Timothy 3:16-17

(b) II Peter 1:3

## **B. The Danger of Division—**

1. Division among brethren has plagued the church since shortly after it began.

- a. Romans 16:17-18

- b. I Corinthians 1:10-12
  - c. I Corinthians 11:17-21
2. Even Satan cannot accomplish his work if his forces were divided.
    - a. Matthew 12:25
    - b. Division will destroy every effort regardless of its merit, but it will certainly destroy the work of God.
  3. Jesus prayed specifically that his people would be unified.
    - a. John 17:20-21
    - b. Our unity is a determining factor in the world's acceptance of Jesus as the Christ.
  4. Let us determine that we will move forward into the future as a unified body of people, and that we will do all within our power to avoid the dangers of division.

### **C. The Danger of Extremism—**

1. What is "extremism"?
  - a. What I have in mind is the tendency of some to go to extremes with what they believe or practice.
  - b. It is very much the problem of the Pharisees in Jesus' time.
  - c. Extremism caused them to become unbalanced and displeasing to God (Matthew 23:24).
2. Do not think that this threat is insignificant (Galatians 2:4-5; Romans 14:15-20).
3. We use words like *liberal* and *conservative* to describe the extremes.
  - a. These are not always the best terms, for there is no solid definition on which to go.
  - b. Someone who is looser than we are on a topic is liberal and someone who is stricter than we are on a topic is conservative.
  - c. There's an old saying that states, "You can fall off the log on either end."
4. We need to be less concerned with what group we are going to tie ourselves to, and more concerned with God's will on matters.
  - a. If God's position on something is "conservative," that needs to be my position, regardless of where the rest of the brotherhood stands.
  - b. If God's position on something is "liberal," that needs to be my position, regardless of where the rest of the brotherhood stands.
  - c. And I need to balance out the whole will of God, rather than over-emphasizing one aspect.
5. Extremism is frequently the root cause of both false doctrines and division; therefore, let us beware of the dangers involved.

#### **D. The Danger of Over-Reaction—**

1. What do I mean by “over-reaction”?
  - a. Over-reactions come in response to something that someone else does.
  - b. Over-reactions often come in the guise of things that will repair a false teaching or division.
  - c. Over-reaction manifests itself as “hobby-riding”.
2. The New Testament encourages balance—
  - a. A balance between “milk” and “meat” (I Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:12).
  - b. A balance between “positive” and “negative” (II Timothy 3:15-16).
  - c. A balance between “controversy” and “tranquility” (I Timothy 2:2-3; II Timothy 4:2,3).
3. The effects of over-reaction are destructive.
  - a. Ignorant, stifled and stunted Christians
  - b. Discouragement
  - c. Skewed thinking regarding what a Christian is
  - d. No conversions
4. A balanced Church is a growing Church.
  - a. Sinners are converted.
  - b. Error is confronted.
  - c. Saints are comforted.

### **III. Conclusion:**

#### **A. In Order to Move Forward We Must Avoid These Dangers:**

1. False doctrine
2. Division
3. Extremism
4. Over-reaction

#### **B. These Dangers have the Power ...**

1. To destroy the work of God in us.
2. To make us ineffective as God's people in the world.

# Opportunities to Take

## I. INTRODUCTION:

### A. *The Church Needs to Be Moving Forward (Philippians 3:12-14)*—

1. Looking forward.
2. Thinking Forward.
3. Planning forward.

### B. *Review*—

1. Challenges to Accept (Chart)
2. Enemies to Defeat (Chart)
3. Dangers to Avoid (Chart)

### C. *In this Lesson Study Consider Opportunities to Take*—

1. As we move into the 21st century, the church should take note of the following: “The future belongs to those who see possibilities before they become obvious” (*The Marketing Imagination*).
2. **Opportunities Missed** (or *The Curse of Permanent Potential*):  
There was a very cautious man, Who never laughed or played.  
He never risked, he never tried, He never sang or prayed;  
And when one day he passed away His insurance was denied,  
For since he never really lived, They claimed he never died.
3. The church has many opportunities; we must take them and make something of them.
  - a. I want us to look at what the Bible tells us about opportunities.
  - b. I want us to think together about opportunities before us.

## II. DISCUSSION:

### A. *Principles Involved in Realizing Opportunities*—

1. The ability to see opportunities is essential to success.
  - a. Some men cannot see it (Benhadad and Ahab in 1 Kings 20; the woman at the well, John 4:10).
  - b. Others are afraid and turn away (Israel at Kadesh, Numbers 13:26–33; the rich young ruler, Matthew 19:21–22).
  - c. Some do not listen to wise counsel (Rehoboam, 1 Kings 12:1–11; Nathaniel, John 1:43–51).
2. The ability to eliminate negative thinking and attitudes.
  - a. Conviction (Romans 1:16; I Corinthians 1:18; Matthew 16:26)
  - b. Compassion (Matthew 9:36)

- c. Commitment (e.g., Bartimaeus, Mark 10:46–52)
- 3. Opportunity, in order to be realized, must be acted upon quickly.
  - a. Not saying, “Don’t think or reason about it,” but don’t analyze it to death.
  - b. Miriam did not wait to ask her mother (Exodus 2:7–8).
  - c. The woman with the issue of blood just reached (Matthew 9:19–22).
  - d. The eunuch was ready when the opportunity was presented (Acts 8:36).
  - e. “Let the dead bury their dead” (Luke 9:59–60).
- 4. Opportunity seekers are risk takers.
  - a. Failure is a distinct possibility.
  - b. Jesus was not afraid to fail (e.g. at the well, John 4:17–19).
  - c. Paul was not afraid to fail (e.g. Felix, Acts 24:24–25).
- 5. The ability to make the effort with zeal and determination.
  - a. An opportunity is not the same as a gift—there is always some work involved.
  - b. It comes and we are less than enthusiastic (e.g. Joash’s smitten arrows, II Kings 13:14–19).
  - c. We need to be like the woman and her oil (II Kings 4:1–7).
- 6. The ability to sacrifice for something greater.
  - a. This is why the rich young ruler failed (Matthew 19:21–22).
  - b. Paul knew the importance of sacrifice (Philippians 3:8).
  - c. Jesus taught this lesson about opportunity in the parables of the Pearl Merchant and the Treasure Hunter (Matthew 13:44–46).

### **B. Opportunities Before Us—**

1. We are not responsible for the past generation, and we cannot bear full responsibility for the next one; but we do have our generation. God will hold us responsible as to how well we fulfill our responsibilities to this age and take advantage of our opportunities.
2. An article in the *Harvard Business Review* called “Market Myopia” talked about how some people didn't understand what business they were in. For example, the railroad people didn't realize they were in the transportation business; they thought they were in the railroad business. Had they realized they were in the transportation business, they would have invested in the airplane. The telegraph people thought they were in the telegraph business instead of the communication business. In 1886 or so, they could have bought all the telephone patents for \$40,000. So obviously these people didn't know what business they were in.
  - a. We need to ask the same question about the church, “What business are we in?”

- b. That question should get us to the core of our purpose for existence.
  - c. It should help us focus on what we are to accomplish (Luke 16:8).
3. We are in the business of building up the kingdom of God.
- a. That involves numerous things:
    - (1) Evangelism
    - (2) Developing spiritual maturity
    - (3) Teaching God's word
    - (4) Developing men and women of godly character
    - (5) Infusing spirituality into all phases of life
  - b. To really take the opportunities before us, we must know what we are trying to accomplish.
  - c. We are not in the ... business!
    - (1) Church building business
    - (2) Preacher salary paying business
    - (3) Gospel Meeting holding business
    - (4) Bible class business
    - (5) Parking lot business
    - (6) Collection taking business
    - (7) Banking business
    - (8) You think of something else ...

### **III. CONCLUSION:**

#### ***A. There Are Plenty of Opportunities Out There for the Gospel—***

1. Can you see them?
2. What are you thinking?
3. Are you dragging your feet?
4. Are you afraid?
5. Are you willing to work?
6. Where are your priorities?

#### ***B. Does this Church Know What Business It Is In?***

1. We are in the soul saving business (Luke 19:10).
2. We are in the character building business (Hebrews 5:12–14)
3. We are in the teacher and preacher development business (Ephesians 6:11–16).

# Attitudes to Develop

## I. INTRODUCTION:

### A. *The Church Needs to Be Moving Forward (Philippians 3:12-14)*—

1. Looking forward.
2. Thinking Forward.
3. Planning forward.

### B. *Review*—

1. Challenges to Accept (Chart)
2. Enemies to Defeat (Chart)
3. Dangers to Avoid (Chart)
4. Opportunities to Take (Chart)
5. The fact is that we will move into the future regardless of how we prepare for it.

### C. *The Last Thing to Consider as We Move Forward into the Future Is the Necessary Attitude to Develop*—

1. Someone wrote this verse. It is called the “*Advance Man*.”

*Its roots are inward but its fruit is outward.*

*It is our best friend or our worst enemy.*

*It is more honest and more consistent than our words.*

*It is an outward look based on past experiences.*

*It is a thing that draws people to us or repels them.*

*It is never content until it is expressed.*

*It is the librarian of our past,*

*It is the speaker of our present,*

*It is the prophet of our future.*

*What is it?*

*It's out attitude!*

2. This morning I want to share some Biblical truths with you about the importance of attitude and how it can help us accomplish God's will.

## II. DISCUSSION:

### A. *What Is an Attitude and Why Is It So Important?*

1. Defined:
  - a. A person's prevailing tendency to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, a person, a

group, or an event.

- b. Normally, we speak either of a positive or negative attitude.
- c. Practically, it is how we think or feel about things.
- d. Attitudes are formed by what we believe to be true about things.

2. Attitudes are expressed in several ways.

- a. In our facial expressions.
- b. In our tone of voice/inflection.
- c. In our behavior or lack of it.
- d. In the way we perform at a task.
- e. In the energy we put into whatever we are doing.
- f. In the interest we have in a person, thing or activity.

3. A few thoughts about the importance of attitudes.

a. The late General Douglas MacArthur wrote something very profound on his 75th birthday: "In the central place of every heart there is a recording chamber; so long as it receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer, and courage, so long are you young. When the wires are all down and your heart is covered with the snows of pessimism and the ice of cynicism, then, and then only are you grown old."

b. "Wouldn't you hate to wear glasses all the time?" asked a small boy of his playmate. "No-o-o," the other boy answered slowly, "not if I had the kind grandma wears. She sees how to fix a lot of things, and she sees lots of nice things to do on rainy days, and she sees when folks are tired and sorry, and what will make them feel better, and she always sees what you meant to do even if you haven't got things just right. I asked her one day how she could see that way all the time, and she said it was the way she learned to look at things, as she grew older. So it must be her glasses."

3. Two frogs fell into a can of cream. The sides of the can were shiny and steep; the cream was deep and cold. "Oh, what the use?" said the first, 'tis fate, no help's around. Good-bye, my friend! Good-bye, sad world!" And weeping still, he drowned. But the second was made of sterner stuff. He dog paddled in surprise. And while he wiped his creamy face and dried his creamy eyes, he said, "I'll swim awhile, at least. It wouldn't really help the world if one more frog was dead." An hour or more he kicked and swam, not once he stopped to mutter. But kicked and swam, and swam and kicked, then hopped out, via butter.

4. The power of attitude is seen in the fact that since it reflects what we believe, it reflects what we

are, what we will do, what we will sacrifice, how hard we will work, and how much of ourselves we will give to anything.

- a. There is no doubting that attitude determines success.
- b. It is as true of the work of the church as it is with anything else.

## **B. What Does the Bible Say About Attitudes?**

1. First, English translations of the Bible use “attitude” to translate words that might also be translated as: *mind, countenance, heart*.
  - a. Translators use the word “attitude” because it accurately reflects the meaning of the passage.
  - b. Attitude is a very descriptive word that gives insight into how a person thinks or feels about something or someone.
2. Note the following examples:
  - a. **Genesis 31:2**, “And Jacob saw the attitude of Laban, and behold, it was not friendly toward him as formerly.” (NAS)
  - b. **Philippians 2:5**, “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.” (NAS)
  - c. **I Kings 11:11**, “So Jehovah said to Solomon, ‘Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates.’” (NIV) [“Since this is with you...” (NAS m.)]
  - d. **Ezra 6:22**, “For seven days they celebrated with joy the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because Jehovah had filled them with joy by changing the attitude of the king of Assyria, so that he assisted them in the work on the house of God, the God of Israel.” (NIV)
  - e. **Daniel 3:19**, “Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual.” (NIV)
  - f. **Ephesians 4:22-23**, “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds” (NIV) [“spirit of your mind...” (NAS)]
  - g. **I Peter 4:1**, “Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.” (NIV)
3. It is obvious that God's word recognizes the importance of attitude, and either commends or condemns people for the product of attitude in their lives.

### **C. Attitudes Which Positively Affect the Future of the Lord's Church—**

1. A positive attitude toward God (Hebrews 11:6; John 14:15; Romans 2:4).
  - a. It will make a difference in how interested you are in God.
  - b. It will shape your willingness to seek for spiritual growth.
  - c. It will determine the moral climate you decide to live in.
2. A positive attitude toward the Church (Acts 20:28; Romans 14:15, 20).
  - a. If we have the right attitude about the Church, we want to share it with others.
  - b. This involves several different things:
    - (1) Loving the people in the Church (I Corinthians 12:25-26; I John 3:15-16).
    - (2) Actively supporting the work of the Church (II Corinthians 8:8; 9:12-13).
    - (3) Your level of involvement with the Church (Ephesians 4:11-16).
3. A positive attitude toward the assemblies of the Church (I Corinthians 11:22)
  - a. Are assemblies important? Your attendance will answer (Hebrews 10:25)
  - b. Bringing visitors to the assemblies (1 Corinthians 14:24-25)
  - c. Participating in the worship (I Corinthians 14:14-19; Romans 1:9; John 4:24)
4. A positive attitude about being different from the world (John 17:15)
  - a. This is the difference between leading others to Christ and being led by others away from Christ (James 4:4).
  - b. Lift your head and know you are a child of the King (Galatians 3:26-27).
5. A positive attitude about life (II Peter 1:3; I Timothy 4:8).
  - a. This is the difference between overcoming the problems of life and being overcome by them (Romans 8:33-39; Hebrews 12:11; I Corinthians 10:13).
  - b. Do you see life as your opportunity to learn how to be a servant of God?

### **III. CONCLUSION:**

#### **A. You Can't Keep Your Attitude a Secret—**

1. You will show it in your face, your voice and your actions.
2. However much you are for or against something will show through to others.

#### **B. If the Church Moves Forward, then All Must Have a Good Attitude—**

1. About God
2. About the Church
3. About the Assemblies
4. About the World
5. About Life