



SERIES: MY LIFE WITH GOD

Meeting Life with a Victorious Attitude

Lesson 2

Life Reference: Philippians 4:4-13

Focus Verse:

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

In Lesson One we learned that our attitude in life is a choice. Whether we live in victory or defeat is greatly determined by our attitude. In this lesson we will discover disciplines that will help us change our attitude to one of confidence and hope.

Discipline is a means of changing our attitude, but discipline can only come after we have learned how to control negative occurrences and turn them into positive situations that cause us to become better, not bitter. God can show us how to turn our frustrations into fulfillment.



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Author Richard S. Taylor tells of a professor who found himself marooned in a waiting room one afternoon with no pad to write on nor a book to read. Sensing that several hours of important work would be lost, the professor began to tighten up inside. Then *deliberately and prayerfully* he relaxed and looked around the waiting room.

Opposite him was a harried and worried mother with a child in her arms. The little girl was demanding attention and causing an uproar in the waiting room. It was an awkward situation for everyone. With a smile and in a cheerful way, the professor spoke to the child and won her confidence and had the little girl on his lap, where he kept her happily occupied until the very grateful mother was out of the doctor's office and ready to go home. His heart was strangely warmed. The afternoon had not been wasted; it had been invested.

This type of story can only be told of those who have disciplined their minds to look for raw material of a negative situation and turn it into a productive, positive situation.

If we discipline ourselves to first fill our minds with "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, and whatsoever things *are* of good report . . ." (Philippians 4:8), then there will be no room for negative thoughts, criticism, jealousy, or envy.

When we have God dwelling in us, we have the power we need to help us discipline our lives, rise above the circumstances, and change our attitudes. Paul reminds us that:

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

Discipline in Prayer

One of the areas of discipline we need to cultivate is the area of prayer. I Thessalonians 5:13 admonishes us to "pray without ceasing." There will be days when we will not feel like praying, but those are the days we need it the most. Daniel didn't wait to be thrown into the lion's den before he prayed. He prayed three times a day even on the good days (Daniel 6:10).

When we have disciplined ourselves to daily prayer and adversity *does* come, we don't have to begin our prayer by saying, "God, remember me? I haven't talked to



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You lately, but I have a problem and I need help.” Rather, we can boldly approach God.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

Daily prayer is an absolute necessity for a disciplined person and is one of the prime characteristics of a positive-minded Christian. If we fortify ourselves with daily prayer, then our minds will not be idle and become a workshop for the enemy.

This time of prayer must be focused and not a mere habit nor a performance that we go through as a routine. If only a routine, it becomes dead and ineffective. Such prayer will have no changing effect with what we are trying to accomplish—a connection with God that will daily give us strength and courage to become more positive in our spirit and attitude. Our power with God through prayer is the source of a new attitude of victory.

Life Reflection:

Do you have a set time and place for personal daily prayer? Are you consistent in keeping this appointment with God?

Describe how you feel that being disciplined in prayer has changed (or will change) your outlook on life?

Think of situations that you have encountered in the past week. Do you feel your commitment to prayer has helped you face these situations with victory?

Discipline in the Word

Our knowledge of the Scriptures can also be extremely beneficial when facing adversity, but we will not have this knowledge if we have not first disciplined ourselves to study and memorization of the Word of God. We have heard people say,



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“Pray the scripture when faced with trying situations.” This is impossible to do if we have not first committed those scriptures to memory.

If there are certain areas of your life that seem to frustrate you more than others, find scriptures that relate to that subject and memorize them. Start out by writing these verses on a card and placing them where they are visible every day. Once you have them in your mind, quote them on a regular basis so they are not soon forgotten. The Bible is a source of wisdom and principles that guide us and give us an insight into life that is not available anywhere else.

Life Reflection:

Do you combine Bible study with your daily prayer time? How do you feel the two compliment each other in helping you grow as a Christian?

Many people keep a journal in which they record thoughts and insights received from their study of the Word of God. How do you think keeping such a record would help you develop a more positive spirit and attitude about life’s difficulties?

The Bible is more than just a source of information. It goes far beyond that. There is a transforming effect through the Word of God.

**“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee”
(Psalm 119:11).**

This illumination does not just come from the principles of the Word, but from the power of God. By hiding it in our hearts, we are plugged into an eternal viewpoint of life that raises the vision from the problems of today and ennoble the Spirit.

Environmental Discipline

To discipline our attitudes includes constructing a wholesome and positive environment. The environment of our lives is made up of the simple things with which we surround ourselves every day—our friends, the books we choose to read, the music we listen to, the opinions we allow to affect us. Even the décor of our homes can affect our spirit or attitude. Dark, dreary, foreboding environments can



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create a negative, depressing attitude in us. But the opposite is also true. Bright, upbeat, affirmative environments brighten our inner lives.

When I have a "blue" day, I will make myself a cup of coffee and I will choose to use my daintiest, my most beautiful, all-time favorite cup in the cabinet. I might eat a hot dog, but I am going to get out my good china and use it for my hot dog and chips. Several years ago, when one of my special friends moved to another state, I gave her one of my "special" cups. I told her how it helped me to feel better about any negative or trying situation that I might find myself in. We have laughed together many times at how often we use those cups.

Sometimes we need new friends. If we have surrounded ourselves with friends who are negative, fault-finders, criticizers, and gossipers, then this type of environment perpetuates itself and becomes a prison where it is always dark, always negative, and no ray of sunshine can penetrate. Some people refuse to be optimistic about their lives; and if we do not have a strong personality, our positive outlook will not have an effect on them.

It isn't always necessary, though, to get new friends, but rather we can create new friends out of old friends. We can do this by lifting their attitude and spirit. It is so easy to forget that we are a part of their environment. Rather than "dump" our old friends, we become a part of the positive in their lives. There is an old saying that "rising tides lift all boats." If we can affect our friends' lives in a positive way, then we have caused that person to rise to a new dimension in life.

Life Reflection:

Can you think of a time when you realized a friend's negative attitude was affecting how you viewed life? What action did you take to counter their negative viewpoint?

Do you feel you have helped someone else become more positive in the way they respond to situations in their life?

By creating a better person within ourselves, we can influence the environment around us and help create better people. It is true; we can only throw back into the sea one star fish at a time, but let's begin with that one.



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Life Response:

Each of us has within our hands the ability to change our lives by changing our attitude. We can face the situations of life as a challenge to make us stronger and anchor us as better individuals, or we can allow these same situations to overtake us and make us live in defeat and bitterness. It is ultimately up to us. We can rise above our circumstances because even though Jesus promised that "in this world, ye shall have tribulation," He also told us that we can "be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

My Prayer:

Lord, I ask that You help me to develop the disciplines in my life that will strengthen my relationship with You. As I grow in studying Your Word and praying, my thoughts and actions will become more like You. Transform me through the power of Your Word so that I can then be a positive influence on my world.

More Life with God References:

Joshua 1:8
Psalm 28:6-9
Psalm 34:4
Romans 15:4
Ephesians 6:10-18
Colossians 1:9-15
II Timothy 3:16-17
Hebrews 13:6

(Adapted from *This Is Life . . . And I Need Answers*, ©2004, Word Aflame Press, Hazelwood, MO 63042.)



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