

Moral Issues of Our Time
Lesson 2 – Attitudes Towards Others – Pride, Bitterness and Dishonesty
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Introduction: How we view, think of and treat others reveals our relationship with God!

A. Consider the enormity of Jesus' acknowledgment of this truth. **(Mt 22:37-40)**

1. Why is it important to "love your neighbor as yourself?"
2. This is very hard. We must have a constantly tender, teachable heart.

(Isa 64:8; Rom 8:29)

B. Satan's most effective tool has been his use of relationships.

1. Most of those who fall away will cite relationships as the reason! You will hear: "Brethren mistreated me" but never "Jesus mistreated me!" **(Rom 3:4)**
2. Satan is merciless and cruel. His disciples are quick to judge and "throw away" people. When you let bitterness into your heart Satan wins! **(Heb 12:15)**

I. Are we pride centered or God centered?

A. Pride is one of the main avenues for temptation. **(1 Jn 2:15-17)**

1. How do we see ourselves? We cannot be a Christian without a grateful heart that has been broken and healed. **(Mt 5:3-4)**
2. Those that do not have this security often make up for it in pride!

B. In pride we become the flawless center of own universe. **(Jer 17:9-10)**

1. In the world we are given allowances while others are judged without mercy.
2. In the world we want others to understand us but we do not lift a finger to understand others.
3. In the world we will hold grudges and seek revenge. We will trust no one but ourselves. **(Titus 3:3)**

C. Jesus challenges us to think about our actions towards others. **(Mt 7:12)**

1. This way of thinking is found in the Old Testament. **(Ex 22:21, 23:9)**
2. How we handle and remember our hurts is crucial to how we treat others.
3. We must resist being pulled into an unjust and unmerciful mindset. It is poisonous and a form of hatred. **(1 Jn 3:15; Lev 19:18)**
4. From these thoughts you will likely give in to mistreatment of others. You will not hesitate to take from those you hate! **(Lev 19:34-37)**

II. Three key components of Satan's wisdom (Jas 3:14)

A. **Bitterness towards brethren**. **(Heb 12:15; Gal 5:19-21)**

1. We must develop a heart that can receive rebuke and correction. It is very easy to be angry especially when we are in the wrong!
2. Rather than study a matter it is easy to say "this is a church of Christ tradition." This first step can lead to rejecting many more truths! **(Deut 29:18-19)**
3. You become poison! If you stay like this it is just a matter of time before you leave "sectarian brethren" and take others with you. **(Prov 14:10)**
4. Please do not closely associate with an angry man. **(Prov 22:24-25)**

B. **Pride towards brethren**

1. Pride and bitterness are common partners. **(Lk 18:9)**

2. Pride can allow men to artificially build themselves up. Many look down on their “ignorant” brethren. (Jn 7:47-49; 1 Cor 8:1-3)
3. Pride rejoices in the faults of others. You live in the land of “throw-away” people. You write them off with no attempt to work with them.
4. They discuss the faults of brethren to build themselves up. (2 Cor 10:12, 18)
5. Ridicule and derision of others is freely shared.
(Ex. Creed Rehearsal, Hatfield’s and McCoy’s – churches of Christ)

C. **A learned dishonesty.** (Lk 20:4-7)

1. This creates a heart that cannot receive the word of God. (Lk 8:15 KJV)
2. Men of faith and conviction are open and bold. (2 Cor 4:2; 3:2; Jn 1:47)
3. One brother described a man’s preaching as “veiled subtleties that leave you uneasy after hearing the sermons.”
4. They are always “misunderstood” and love to wear martyr’s clothes. (Quote)
5. How did Jesus teach others? Why do men hide their beliefs? (Jn 18:20)

III. How can we have a heart of justice and mercy towards others?

A. We must major on seeing our forgiveness towards God. (Jam 2:13; 2 Pt 1:8-11)

1. When we do this we will be reminded of our own need of mercy and rejoice!
2. We will love mercy and want to reflect God’s character. We will reach out!
3. Without this we will become isolated and suspicious of our brethren.

B. I need to honestly test my own heart. Consider these questions:

1. Am I often dominated by critical thoughts towards my brethren?
2. Are there people I avoid or withhold a “thank you” or encouragement?
3. Do I often think of a “me versus them” situation among brethren? (1 Sam 22:8)
4. Am I spending more time with people of the world than with Christians?
5. Am I quick to be hurt by questionable actions of others or am I quick to make allowances for others? (1 Cor 13:7; Lk 23:34)

C. What does God want me to think of my brethren? (Rom 14:19; 15:1-2)

1. We must always be glad and actively seek to encourage every brother.
2. I should go out of my way to help those that I may struggle with!
3. When I really learn the love of God I will be glad to be with my brethren! I will speak well of them and heartily greet them! (Eph 4:1-2)
4. True spiritual growth will be seen here. How are we doing?

Questions

1. How do our thoughts towards others affect us spiritually?
2. Why are we tempted to be unfaithful to God when men mistreat us? Why is this illogical?
3. What is pride and how does it impact our thinking?
4. How does bitterness in time take away our ability to reason? Why is bitterness so easily shared?
5. What does it mean to show justice and mercy to others? How can we learn to do this?
6. What are some warning signs that our attitudes may be wrong towards our brethren?