

The Habits of Happiness

Habit #4: “Practice the Attitude of Jesus”

Part 4

Intro: Let's face it... practicing a good attitude consistently is just tough. One moment you're doing good and making progress with your attitude and then the next moment, something happens that just seems to destroy all that work. Isn't it amazing how fast we can lose that feeling of being positive and happy? Sometimes, it's our own fault.

- Share story – Turning on my outside faucets – forgot to turn one off....
- Maybe it was your commute to work – OR that one co-worker – Maybe it's the frustration about how expensive life is (kids-groceries-gas-taxes-etc...)

Maintaining the right attitude is a challenge. Today doesn't get any easier because the next habit is to practice the attitude of Jesus. We need to practice the same qualities that made up Jesus' attitude. The more we live like Jesus, the more joy we're going to experience. So let's go to work together on our next area of growth.

Phil. 2:3-5” Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. ⁴Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.⁵ You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

What does Jesus' attitude look like? Vs 3-4 describes the specific attitudes of Jesus. Vs 6-11 illustrates Jesus' attitude by describing Him leaving heaven, laying aside His privileges and taking on the role of a servant and then dying for us on a cross.

What does it look like to practice the attitude of Jesus in our daily lives? How does this become a habit that results in happiness? Jesus' attitude played out relationally. Let's find out.

1. Practice Being Unselfish

“Don't be selfish”

- Definition: “Having or showing concern only for yourself and not for the needs or feelings of other people.” Therefore, to be selfish is to disregard the needs and feelings of others. It is to be relationally calloused / it is to have your heart closed to others' hurts, needs and struggles. It is to be a “self-absorbed” person. All your energy and efforts in this life goes into yourself.
- Selfishness is the fast track to unhappiness. People that are consumed with themselves are some of the most unhappy people I know. God just never designed us to find our happiness in ourselves. One of the largest contributors to people's unhappiness in life is their own selfishness.
- Before we all excuse ourselves from this issue, let's all admit we all struggle with this problem to some degree. Every person here has made selfish choices and decisions

rather than being concerned about the needs, desires, feelings of another. We all have a selfish streak in us. Maybe not constantly...but it certainly manifests itself at times.

So how do I practice being unselfish? How do I grow in this?

- Admit your struggle

None of us can grow in areas where we don't admit we need to grow. All change in our life begins by admitting we have an issue. Where there is relational conflict there is selfishness. Since none of us have complete harmony every day in all our relationships, my guess is you need to grow.

➤ Selfishness can show up in so many ways. Sometimes I start feeling entitled: "I've been the Pastor here from the beginning, started this church, paid my dues, 40 years of experience... It can be tough listening to constructive criticism from someone 30 years younger than you. (Share message title conversation)

- Daily depend on God

*Gal. 5:16-17 "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.
17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other..." (ESV)*

Nobody can conquer their fleshly desires in their own strength. This is why God put the Holy Spirit inside every follower of Jesus. We now have a choice on who we rely on. We have a choice on which will dictate my attitude and behavior. Will it be my old fleshly desires or will it be the Holy Spirit in me? I need to daily ask to be filled with His Spirit. If I don't learn to depend on God's Spirit in me, I will fail miserably. The Holy Spirit will transform our selfishness.

- Get involved serving the needs of others

We have to stop insulating ourselves so much from the needs and hurts of others that we never feel their pain. If we choose to get involved, we now come face to face with brokenness. My selfishness is confronted by those who have life harder than me!

➤ Food Pantry / Back Pack / Meals on wheels / Kids Church / FSM / Guatemala – When you get close enough to real needs, soon our selfish tendencies look very petty. (Insulating yourself is an act of selfishness!) Mission trips help - share

How are you practicing not being selfish?

2. Practice Resisting Self-promotion

"don't try to impress others"

- This is such a tough one in our culture. WHY? Because our culture is obsessed with self-promotion. Social media is all about self-promotion / "selfies" / "look at me!"
 - We were in Puerto Rico – the amount of people shooting videos of themselves –
 - Bioluminescent bay – girl with her phone
- Do you know that social media actually depresses people? Studies have shown that all this self-promotion is counter productive to your happiness.

- Let's think about our behavior. How much is your behavior motivated by what others think about you? How much are you trying to influence what they think about you?
- Let's think about how we talk. Do we talk in a way that self-promotes? Do we lie to make our story better? Do we always elevate ourselves first instead of our teammates at work? Do we personally take credit for team success? Does most of my communication use "I" and Me" instead of "We" and "Us"? Do you have to "one up" someone's story?
- Are we afraid of what people think of us so that it influences our behavior and choices? Do we fear losing the approval of others? Is your self esteem connected to how many likes you get on a post?

How do we practice not promoting ourselves?

- Live to impress Jesus not others

For a follower of Jesus, living to please and promote Jesus has to be more important than living to please others and promote ourselves. You can't do both! Therefore, whose opinion means more to you? Who do you really want to impress?

- This has certainly been something God has developed in me over the years. You cannot be used by God if you're trying to impress others and promote yourself. In order to work this out of my character, God put me through a series of painful life situations where I had the choice to either please people or please Him. In fact, if I chose to please Him, I would actually lose approval.
- One of the early church splits I lived through there was a group of people leaving the church. The conversation went like this: "You'd better pick what side you're on." Basically they said that if I didn't join them I was a traitor. Share

John 12:42-43 "Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³for they loved human praise more than praise from God." (NIV)

- If you want freedom from this issue, you have to decide who you want to live to impress...Jesus or people.

- Let Jesus Promote you

Living to impress others and self- promotion are driven by our pride and insecurities. Pride makes us elevate ourselves over others. Our insecurities make us live to please others. But choosing to live for Jesus, you can relax and let Him promote you in His perfect timing.

1 Peter 5:6 "So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor." (NLT)

- Do you want a life of honor? Do you want people to admire the way you live your life? Would you like to be used in significant ways and have influence? Would you like to know that your contribution made a difference? Then you must understand God's pathway for honor. It's humility! It's the opposite of living to impress people.

- One of the ways God taught me this was by allowing me to work under a Pastor who had less skill sets than mine for 8 years. Ever been in this situation where your boss isn't a good leader? I had to humble myself before God and embrace the situation. I supported this man for 8 years. I was loyal to Him for 8 years. WHY? It wasn't my time yet. God was doing things in my character first. Humility always precedes Honor!

We live in a culture of self-promotion, but this isn't the attitude of Jesus.

3. Practice Humility in Relationships

"Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves"

- Notice it says; 'thinking of others.' Humility in our relationships begins with how we think about others. Now when it says to think of others as better than yourself it does not mean I think of myself as a loser and everyone else is better than me. He's not telling us to have a lousy self-esteem. I like to think we should think correctly about ourselves. What does this look like?

- Resist any form of superiority in our thinking

Before we excuse ourselves from this one, let's take a closer look. It is so subtle how superiority creeps into our thinking.

- Do you think you're better than someone who is homeless? What about the crack addict? What about someone with a different sexual orientation than you? How about a different race / skin color / religion? Are you better than someone who is a Muslim?
- Are you better than the person who wounded you? The person who gossiped about you? The person who disagrees with you? The loud obnoxious neighbor?

This is such an important hindrance to humility to keep in check. Any form of thinking that makes me feel superior to someone else will eventually make me miserable. That's pride.

- Acknowledge many people are better at specific things

It's just a fact that many people in this life are better than I am at a host of things. I know I am stating the obvious, but it's an important part of humility. When I recognize this simple fact, it means that I need you. I can't do everything well therefore I need you to help me. This isn't self-deprecation, it's relational reality.

- This church is a testimony to this fact. I can't do everything well. I can't play these instruments / decorate this stage / I can't even turn the sound board on. The influence God has entrusted to us as a church is because of this truth.
- Recognizing your strengths values you. I am choosing to value what you bring, what you offer / your contribution to the whole. I see you as essential not optional. If you don't use your strengths here we can't be all God wants us to be!
- Recognizing your strengths values God's design. This is how He created the church to function and operate. I'm actually agreeing with His will. When I value your strengths, I am acknowledging God in you!

- Recognizing your strengths helps me walk in humility with you WHY? Because I know I cannot be successful without you. I am acknowledging that we are interdependent. We were made for each other.

There is no possible way for us to experience consistent happiness in this life without humility in our relationships.

How are you practicing humility in relationships? Relational humility = relational happiness.

4. Practice Serving Others

“Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too”

So how do I take an interest in others? I serve them. This is going to require certain things from us. Like what?

- Initiative – “take” an interest – It begins with you taking the initiative. The needs are all around you. Choose to look! Are you actively looking for ways to serve, get involved, meet some needs? How many people have never even gone to the church’s website and looked at how many opportunities there are to serve? Have you ever visited a ministry? Have you ever talked to a ministry leader? Have you ever really listened to the announcements? It all takes initiative! Are you taking any? Are you choosing to see the needs right in front of you? How are you taking an interest?
- Sincerity – an “interest” In other words, I care about what’s happening. Let God burden your heart. Allow your emotions to be impacted. Choose to feel! Our passion for serving comes from our emotions being impacted deeply. If your emotions are never touched, then you’ll never have any passion to serve others. There’s no sincerity. There’s no authenticity to how you serve. Are you willing to feel what Jesus feels? Sincerity is a heart issue. Will you allow the needs of others to touch your heart?
- Time – There is a time commitment to serve people. If my life is so full I have no time to invest in others then I am only looking out for my own interests. My life is consumed with me...my needs, my desires, my responsibilities, my stresses, my life. In order to embrace the attitude of Jesus, many of us may need to rethink our time priorities. How do I need to look at my time differently so I can take an interest in others?
- Sacrifice – I may set aside my agenda for a while / my comfort / my needs / my finances / in order to meet your need. Example of Jesus. If you’re looking for a serving opportunity that doesn’t require sacrifice you’ll never serve. Remember, this is about the attitude of Jesus. Embracing sacrifice was His life! We also need to stop looking at the word “sacrifice” as negative. Sacrifice leads to great joy. (Sacrifice for an education / to get married / to have children / to buy a house / we are sacrificing financially to reach more people.
 - So many of you embrace this attitude of sacrifice here at Foothills. You have laid aside something personal for the sake of others. Thank you for modeling the attitude of Jesus. (Give examples – 70 volunteers for one service / over 40

different ministries / over 175 sponsor kids for Guatemala / various classes throughout the week) Because so many practice serving others, you have been used by God to make this such a great place.

I realize this is a tough one, but how can we all continue to grow in practicing the attitude of Jesus? If we desire our community to see Jesus, it begins when people come in contact with the attitude of Jesus. When those who follow Jesus reflect the attitude of Jesus, people notice.

How can we grow in being unselfish?

How can we be more aware of self - promoting?

How can we get better at practicing humility in our relationships?

How can we be more consistent at serving the needs of others?

Not only do these reflect the attitude of Jesus, these are also habits that lead to happiness.