



Mom's Connect – The Balanced Life
November 2nd, 2020
Balance in our Attitudes

What is balance?

Balance is an even distribution of weight enabling someone or something to remain upright and steady.

Balancing Act – an attempt to handle or deal with two or more things (such as obligations) at one time, so as to satisfy often competing requirements.

The

- B = Boundaries
- A = Attitudes
- L = Labor/Laziness
- A = Authenticity
- N = Needs
- C = Communication
- E = Emotions
- D = Disciplines

Life

Balance in Attitudes

Definition of attitude: a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior.

Simpler definition: An attitude is how you think about and respond to something or someone.

Synonyms: point of view; frame of mind; way of thinking; outlook; perspective; standpoint; inclination; opinion; beliefs; conviction; feelings; thoughts; interpretation

Moms who are living in the ever-repeating cycle of what seem to be mundane tasks, can struggle to have a good attitude. But everything we do on our family's behalf is a labor of love to our family. Moms have to deal with lots of hard things: your preschooler spills the milk, you burn dinner, your toddler finds the Sharpie. These types of things happen frequently, they aggravate us, and they can heighten our poor attitudes. As moms we need to accept the fact that no day will ever be perfect. There is a meme going around that says: The funny thing about kids is: They are the reason we lose it and the reason we hold it together.

It is important to remember that we are in control of our attitudes. When God brings us into a relationship with Him, we come with a heart already tainted with self—selfish motives, desires, and **attitudes**. Then begins the process of sanctification -- which prunes our sinful desires that seek to find their pleasure outside of the will and ways of God.

Though it is usually easy to see a poor attitude in our own children, we often don't see our own poor attitudes. We might mistakenly believe that a poor attitude is not of much consequence, but that is simply not true. Here are some things we might consider acceptable or something we might overlook: an inward bad attitude regarding our spouse, a judgmental thought, a rolling of the eyes, impatience, or self-pity.

Consider both your inward and outward responses to people who sin against you. When we are sinned against, we can instantly change our attitude from gracious to ungracious. How do you respond when sinned against? Is your thinking God-honoring? Are your actions towards that person reflecting the character of God? Do you allow your feelings to dictate your attitude? Do you trust God when faced with an ongoing difficult situation or do you allow anxiety and bitterness to consume you? Do you accept what God brings into your life without complaining? Do you show your husband you cherish and delight in him even when his actions frustrate you? Does your husband see and experience your respectful attitude even if he has a poor attitude? Do your children observe you losing your cool when you are tired or when they are pushing your buttons?

Why Does It Matter?

As a mom, shepherding your children in the ways to deal with a poor attitude is very important. As you know, they are little sponges, sucking up both the good and the bad things we do as moms. We live in a culture that encourages shifting blame, but God NEVER excuses our behavior because of something someone else has done. We are ALWAYS responsible for our own actions and we are to PLEASE GOD. In a marriage class we taught at the end of 2019, we shared that couples should avoid “always and never” statements. For example: You always forget my birthday. You never listen to me. You're always late. Rarely are these types of statements helpful and they aren't likely true – no one gets it wrong 100% of the time. Ladies, we must learn to be charitable in the way we process the things that happen in our life – even the frustrating things. In a similar way, we as moms, should use these same words and apply the NEVER and ALWAYS principle to help our children understand this: We must NEVER excuse our behavior because of something someone else has done and we must ALWAYS take responsibility for our own actions.

So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. (2 Corinthians 5:9)

Teaching this to yourself and then to your children is of paramount importance.

Steve Lawson says this: “If you please God, it does not matter whom you displease. And if you displease Him, it does not matter whom you please.”

Everything we think and do is in plain view of the Almighty and Holy God. If we are commanded to act or think in a certain way and we don't, it is sin. God commands Christlikeness not only in our actions but in our thinking! Big or small, sin is heinous in God's eyes.

So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin. (James 4:17).

Facts about Attitudes:

- Bad attitudes can be learned behaviors. For example, you may have been raised in a perfectionistic or critical environment, so you develop tendencies toward being a perfectionist or being overly critical. However, although this is what you may have learned in your childhood home, you are still responsible for your attitudes. Learned behaviors do not give us an excuse. We must retrain our habits to desire the things that please God.
- God is concerned about our attitudes. The Fruit of the Spirit is to be manifested in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
- We have unrealistic expectations. The expectations we have for our husbands or our children cannot be the driving force in whether we have a good or a bad attitude. We often have unrealistic expectations of our husbands. We are probably guilty of having unrealistic expectations at times. Most of us realize that there is a choice to be made to let go of these unrealistic expectations, but others only see one path—that their desires need to be fulfilled. They feel so justified in getting what they want, that they are blind to the effects their demands have on others. This sense of entitlement even leads to the punishment of those who stand in the way of their demands. This is NOT how God wants us to live. We must die to self!
- Our attitude should always be Christ-like. In any circumstance and towards any person, a believer should always strive for a positive, Christlike attitude. Our sinful hearts don't always make this possible, but it is our goal. Remember 2 Corinthians 5:9 from above.

Why do our attitudes matter?

Because the way we think affects the way we act. An *attitude* is a mindset that influences behavior. Attitudes can be changed, but our attitudes often stand in the way of solving issues or bringing peace to a conflict. Negative attitudes may prejudice one person against another, therefore making significant communication and problem solving difficult or even impossible.

Attitudes usually involve habits of thought – which are habitual ways of thinking. Changes in attitude, like changes in behavior patterns, require habit changes that stem from the put off/put on dynamic of Ephesians 4:22-24 and Colossians 3:8-14. As you read the verses below, underline the put off's and the put on's.

Ephesians 4:22-24

To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Colossians 3:8-14

But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one

another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

Did you make note of the put off's and put on's? The passage goes on to say in Colossians 3:15-17:

¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Now to better understand why we struggle so much with our attitudes, I'm going to take a little detour and discuss our battle with sin.

Do you ever feel the weariness and burden of the seemingly impossible battle with sin? Saying no to sin daily is commanded but we can grow weary in the battle. Spiritual maturity doesn't come easy, but as Christ-followers we have an obligation to live alert to and fight aggressively against all sin, big and small.

The Problem of Sin

Sin is what we do when our hearts are not satisfied with God. We sin because we believe there is some promise of happiness. Sin promises freedom, joy, and unending happiness but it never delivers on its promises. But sin is a liar – it never tells the truth!

John Owen said “Be killing sin or it will be killing you.”

When God brings us into a relationship with Him, we come with a heart already tainted with self—selfish motives and desires. So begins the process of sanctification, which prunes our sinful desires that seek to find their pleasure outside of the will and ways of God. Our relationship with Christ is not about changing our behavior, rather it is about God changing us inwardly to be like Him.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:2)

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Romans 8:29)

This inward change then changes our behavior. Our words and deeds tell us what we really are. None of us can live in a way that honors Christ on our own, but as believers we now have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us giving us the desire and ability to do what is right.

The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. (Luke 6:45)

Philippians 2:13 says: ¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.

Therefore, increasing in your hatred for sin and longing to fight the battle against sin is one clear evidence that you are truly saved.

Steve Lawson says this about sin, "We will never know how great God's love is until we first see how great our sin is."

Questions for Self-Examination regarding sin:

1. Are you comfortable with where you are in "saying no" to sin in your life?
2. Do you justify sin by convincing your heart that you are not so bad because of the "greater" sins of others?
3. Do you regularly assess your words, conduct, attitudes, and the heart desires producing them?
4. Do you respond to "seemingly small" sins with repentance and sorrow?

How to Deal with Poor Attitudes:

- Take responsibility for your attitudes. You will never be able to conquer sinful attitudes until you stop blaming them on others.
- Ask forgiveness for bad attitudes. Ask God to forgive you and ask forgiveness from those who were impacted by your negative attitudes.
- Ask God to develop the Fruit of the Spirit in your life (see above). Put off your bad attitudes and put these on!

Changing our sinful attitudes must begin with one goal; a desire to glorify, honor, and reflect the character of our Savior.

"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

A true believer will desire to fight daily to bring glory to God by dying to self, turning from sin, and running hard after Him each day.

Helpful Tips:

- It is nearly impossible to fill your mind with right worshipful thoughts about God, and maintain a sour, complaining, irritated, pessimistic, angry, or discouraged heart attitude. Let me give you several examples to illuminate how the process can work.
- If you study and memorize God's Word, you will begin to see all the treasures available to you in the Word of God. In 2 Timothy 2:15 it says: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." Steve Lawson said this about the study of the Word of God. "The lamp of divine, written revelation reveals the will of God for the believer. Whether it is expressed by biblical command or precept, by scriptural example or principle, the Word illumines the path every believer must take. This divine light in Scripture is not a mere option, but an absolute necessity for every follower of Christ."

- If you praise God for his sovereignty, you are reminded that he is in control even of the difficult situation you have found yourself in. How can you stay upset when you are praising and thanking the One who sovereignly allowed the problem into your life for an ultimately GOOD purpose? (James 1:2-6, Romans 8:28-30 and 1 Corinthians 10:13)
- Listen and sing along with songs of praise to God. Many of the older and many of the newer hymns are full of rich theology and will point your thoughts and mind to Christ. As an added benefit, the words will become familiar to you and you will remember them when you are struggling with your attitude. They will also be a help in times of sadness or grief.
- When you ponder God's goodness, it is hard not to think that within God's plan he has some good purpose in your present problem. His goodness also reminds you of how many good things God has done in the past and inspires your confidence that he will be good in the future (remember the song "Count your Blessings?"). Praise God by keeping a gratitude journal of God's faithfulness to you and your family, you will begin to see the blessings you have right in front of you. Sometimes it just takes a little work to remind ourselves of these things.
- Think about the justice of God. God sees every sin which you commit in any situation. (Maybe I provoked the problem or didn't respond rightly to the sins committed against me or am harboring bitterness instead of being willing to forgive all that was done to me.) Think about God's justice towards the sins of his children that was satisfied by the death of the Son of God, Jesus Christ on the cross. On the basis of Jesus' substitutionary death, God justly removes all condemnation off of those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Any thoughts of bitterness or even discontentment in tough circumstances melt in light of how God has graciously forgiven all of our sins. Compared to eternity in hell, no situation on earth should ever be a source of a single complaint. Praising God for his mercy helps you to refocus your heart on these realities and adjust your attitudes accordingly.

Our Part in the Battle

Knowing what has been accomplished for us is only half the battle. A life that is consistently fighting the flesh will:

- God must rule your life in every area. (1 Corinthians 10:31)
- Pursue and cultivate a love for God so that he comes to be first in all things. (Colossians 1:15-17)
- Let the Word of God constantly renew and renovate your heart and motives (Hebrews 4:12) and then submit to and obey his Word (Colossians 3:16) in everything.
- Think rightly about God. How we think affects every aspect of our lives. (Proverbs 4:23) Think Christlike. Be intentional with your thoughts.
- See sin as God does, through the lens of truth. The battle is fought first in the mind. (Mark 7:21-23; Romans 12:2) Sin separates. Sin deceives. Sin never satisfies.
- Identify both sinful attitudes and actions and say "no." (Romans 6; Titus 2:11-14) (Impatience, worldliness, worry, self-righteousness, perfectionism)
- Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Run from and avoid situations that draw you to sin. Recognize factors that weaken your inner resolve and increase temptation to sin -- idleness, physical weariness, suffering, prosperity. (1 Timothy 6:11)

- Grow to hate your sin as God does. (Psalm 26:5, 119:104; Proverbs 8:13)
- PRAY!
 - That the Spirit will remind you of the truths you need to remember in times of temptation.
 - For wisdom to understand and clearly “preach” truth to yourself as you face temptations.
 - For God to be renewing your mind as you immerse in truth daily for the purpose of change.
 - For increased love of truth and hatred of sin.

We cannot do this on our own. We must rely on the Holy Spirit.

“Illumination is the process whereby the Holy Spirit so impresses, convinces, and convicts the believer as to the truthfulness and significance of the author’s intended meaning in the text that a change in action, attitude, or belief occurs, resulting in a more transformed, Spirit-filled life.” Bob Stein, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Additional Scriptural References Regarding Attitudes

Attitudes in the home

Wives, submit to your husband as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. (Ephesians 5:22-29)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” – which is the first commandment with a promise—“that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:1-4)

Attitudes towards Christian brothers and sisters

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus... (Philippians 2:3-5).

Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity. (1 Timothy 5:1-2)

Attitudes toward authority

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. (Romans 13:1-3)

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who much give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

Attitudes toward those who have wronged you

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Matthew 6:14-15)

Discussion Questions:

1. Are there attitudes that you let slide or accept because everyone does them? These are the ones that may not even make the category of “sin” in your mind because they have become so comfortable. Can you think of an example of this type of attitude?
2. Are you honest and sensitive to these “little” sins of attitude you do many times a day? It is easy to think sin is only the big things, but in God’s eyes, even a bad attitude or a rolling of the eyes is offensive to his holy character. What makes some of your attitudes seem acceptable? Do you have an intentional way to address those “little” sins in your life?
3. Are there situations where you need to change your attitude, but you are purposefully not doing the hard work required to change? Being unthankful, prideful, impatient, frustrated, harboring resentment, discontent, angry, worried, worldly, selfish, sinning with your tongue, lack of submission, etc. Be specific.
4. When are you likely to struggle most with your attitude? (Examples: Overtired, busy) Consider changes you could make to avoid these situations. Discuss with your table.
5. Thinking of Matthew 7:3: “Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?” Do you find it easier to recognize other people’s poor attitudes, but have trouble recognizing them in yourself? Why do you think this is?
6. Do you have someone in your life that you can ask about sinful attitudes in your life? This could be a friend, mentor or your spouse. If you don’t have anyone in your life, consider asking someone to help you in this area.

For further reflection on your own:

1. Take a moment to reflect on these questions: Do you see a growing hatred of sin? Do you see a growing desire to repent and change daily? Are you comfortable with where you are in “saying no” to sin in your life? Think of ways you can personally attempt to “kill sin.”
2. Would those who know you best (spouse, children, co-workers, friends) say your life is characterized by growth in godliness and Christlikeness, or by selfishness and sin?
3. Is everything in your life driven by the desire to honor God, or please self?