

Connection to Proverbs 15:33–16:11

Attitudes and actions are connected. Solomon shows us this in his writings regarding the practicing of wisdom. Paul provides a list of attitudes and actions that believers should embody and the example of One who fully embraced these characteristics.

Introduction/Opening

When someone is not feeling well, external signs reflect an internal problem. A fever reveals that something bigger is going on inside the body. When the signs reveal themselves, we are wise to search for and address the bigger issue and not just the external signs.

One's actions are a direct outgrowth of one's attitude. One's attitude is a reflection of what is taking place in one's heart. Solomon revealed actions and attitudes that are pleasing to God, and Paul echoed those same actions and attitudes in his Letter to the Philippians. As we look at Paul's letter, may we search our hearts in order to see if anything needs to be addressed.

Outline

1. Attitudes and Actions to Avoid
 - a) Paul tells the Philippians to do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit (v. 3). This is the command tied to this particular set of verses. It is also written in such a way as to show that this is an action that is taking place and needs to be stopped. God's church, and therefore God's people, need not ever do things out of selfish ambition or conceit.
 - b) Selfish ambition means to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. Conceit means to pursue our own glory. When we look at ourselves in light of Christ, then we will set aside the attitudes and actions that go along with selfishness. Selfish ambition and conceit are not merely attitudes and actions, they are reflective of a greater issue of the heart. God's people should actively seek to set their minds and hearts on the things above and not on earthly things (Col. 3:2). When this is done, our hearts become right and our attitudes and actions are transformed.
2. Attitudes and Actions to Embrace
 - a) Upon telling the church what not to do, Paul transitions with "but" and then begins to tell us what to do (v. 3). First, we are to embrace humility, and this begins in the heart. When our hearts are focused on Christ and not self, we are more apt to have attitudes and actions associated with humility.
 - b) Next, we are to look out for the interests of others (v. 4). This phrase is written as a verb, which is an action word. The phrase is also written to reflect an action that is to be embraced as a lifestyle as opposed to a one-time event. The meaning is to examine closely the needs and interests of others on a continual basis. This can only be done when one's heart is in tune with the One who shows us how to live this out.

3. The One to Follow

- a) Embracing attitudes and actions that are pleasing to God becomes a lot easier when we have an example to follow. Paul clearly articulated the model to follow in providing Christ as our example. In verse 7, Paul declared that Jesus took on the form of a servant. The word in the Greek is *doulos*, and it means the lowliest slave. The King of kings became a slave so that we would not have to be enslaved to our sin.
- b) His servitude ultimately caused Him to sacrifice Himself (v. 8). The cross today is a decoration within our churches and homes. Back then it was an instrument of shame and sacrifice. Yet, Christ humbled Himself as a servant who gave His own life so that we might have abundant and eternal life. These are His attitudes and actions, and they should be ours too.

Conclusion

Our attitudes and actions are symptomatic of the condition of our hearts. We know that Jesus' attitudes and actions were pleasing to God because He lived in perfect submission to the Father. Therefore, He is our model to follow.

As a follower of Jesus, can we examine our lives in light of Jesus' model and ask the Father to change our hearts? As one who may not know Jesus as Lord, can you see His actions on the cross and let this show you how much He loves you?

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