

I've been thinking a whole lot about my father in law this past two weeks. We had some good times together and did some interesting things. One time, back around 2000, he asked me if I wanted to fly with him down to S. Texas in a Cessna 210 his friend owned and piloted. I got sick on the way. But on the way back it was fun and he said, "Kris if you will get your pilot's license, I will buy us a plane." So, I started the next week. It was a scary but fun experience. But just before I was to fly my first cross country flight, our same friend ran out of fuel and crashed his Cessna. He lived, but that was enough for Sommer and her mom. They gave us "the talk." I never flew again. But I remember some of the training and one particular instrument I want to show you this morning.

It's called an "Attitude Indicator." It is an instrument in an aircraft *"to inform the pilot of the orientation of the aircraft relative to the Earth's horizon."* This little guy is very important – especially on cloudy, rainy days or in the darkness. It is a true source of where you are with respect to where you ought to be – an attitude indicator.

The spiritual connections abound. You are flying an airplane – **living your life**. You have an attitude, often shifting, that dominates **the way you correspond with and interact with the world daily**. And it is very, very important. It can **make the difference** between success and failure. But **the Word**, the standard is the only trustworthy instrument, the true measure, to determine if that attitude is right.

I want you to think about a few of the connections between the airplane and you, but first let's flesh out the concept of attitude from the Bible. The word is translated in the NT only 4 times in the NASB, none in the NKJV, but both versions will be helpful in understanding what Attitude is.

Luke 1:17 – "to the attitude of the righteous" NASB NKJV – "wisdom of the just"

English Definition: *"a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something"*

So it's a simple idea – how your thoughts and emotions process an environment: person or event.

Phil. 2:5 – "this attitude in yourselves ... also in Christ" NASB NKJV "mind"

Phi. 3:15 – "as many as are perfect, have this attitude" NASB NKJV "be thus minded"

As I'll argue a bit momentarily, attitude is more about MIND than FEELING. Sure, you want to feel correctly about a situation, but those can swing wildly and be irrational at times. But where is your HEAD, your MIND, your WISDOM – this dictates attitude. You can't always control feeling, but you can control attitude. Though there is no doubt THOUGHT and FEELING will both contribute. (Note: If intellectual, WE HAVE CONTROL!)

G5424 – *"to exercise the mind" "entertain or have a sentiment or opinion" "to be mentally disposed" "set the affection on"* - I think, understand, and then feel. BTW – there is no difference between heart and mind – there is logic and emotion, but they work together to produce a flight pattern: attitude.

So, there is an "attitude of the righteous" to which we should always turn. This is an attitude that is in Christ, the mind of Christ, that understands his orientation to the world and what is needed. And it involves an understanding of our purpose and goal and calling and strives to fly that course

Okay, with that information in tow, let me share with you a few things I learned from instrument flight training and how it helps me understand the plane I'm flying around every day. We'll use a little words study to link the will of God to our observations. Each point will include a passage from the New Testament that uses the same Greek word translated "Attitude" in the above text. #5424

1) **Attitude is at least as important as everything else!**

- a. In an airplane you can have a lot of things right. Important things like speed, elevation, etc. They are important. But if you have all of the technical data right, but are trending off course, (attitude is off), banking away, nosing down, off angle, it will be deadly. Attitude matters.
- b. This is true of our faith. I used to say "attitude is everything." But that's not true. Belief in God, and previous walk and hope for the future, those things matter. But they can all lead to naught if our attitude (mental disposition about a person or thing) is off. (And God reads minds too!)
- c. **Matthew 16:23** – Peter had a lot of things right, but in this case, he let his mind get set on physical outcomes and not spiritual outcomes and he said the wrong thing. This phrase "setting your mind" IS our word. He later got his mind right and all corrected.

- d. So, take special note of what you think about a situation. How that translates into feelings. Be it life issues, earned or not, people problem, earned or not. Because you can have a lot of spiritual ducks in a row, but ATTITUDE will dominate the scene.

("Yeah but life just creates some circumstances where I just lose it and can't approach it rightly")

2) Attitude is most critical when conditions are poor!

- a. We did instrument training a couple of times. You put on goggles which block out the windshield. All you can see are the instruments. Reading the gauge and knowing where you are with respect to the earth around you is life or death. Like in storms or darkness.
- b. Look, very few of us have to stop and examine our attitude – how am I thinking, what do I feel about my surroundings, when the sun is shining and life is easy. No, it's when things are hard, things are happening, people are problems, and you can't easily see the good things in life – that's when attitude examination is most needed!
- c. **Matthew 16:23** – Peter's attitude demonstrated this. He was confused in the darkness. This was not an EXCUSE for a poor attitude but the most critical moment for a good one!
- d. **Philippians 3:14-15, 17-19** – Many develop poor attitudes and selfish ones and allow their minds to think on worldly things (bad attitude). But where is Paul at this moment? He is in the clouds of life, the storm, the darkness – in prison. But that's when his attitude was most important and most needed and most influential! (v20-21).

("Hey, I get it. I need to be more mindful. But I can't always help how I feel.")

3) Attitude is about what I know over how I feel!

- a. Yes, we've talked about how attitude combines both, but the truth of the matter must dominate over what we feel about that matter. In flight school I was told countless stories of guys who flew by feel, not by instruments. Some flew into clouds perfectly level and came out flying straight down! Some died. Some saved it. But those who lived would say, "I don't know how that happened. It didn't feel like it." In the clouds, in the darkness, feelings can be affected and untrustworthy. Attitude is bigger than that.
- b. So many of us believe that how I FEEL in a situation or in dealing with a person is the right thing, the right attitude, because I FEEL it. It must be right. No, that's pride talking. Feelings can be easily moved, but THOUGHT, SOUND JUDGMENT, that is different.
- c. **Romans 12:1-3** – Our word is in verse 3. Feelings without sound judgment, Godly instruction, faith from God, are dangerous and pride based. We want feelings based on fact. We want to see ourselves with relation to the world based on what is real & right, not how I feel in the moment.
- d. **Phil. 4:6-8** – Pray to control emotions. Then THINK on God's things. Study the instrument. The truth about the world and people and sin and you and being a Christian and what is right and make that ATTITUDE align with what you know, not just feel.

("Again. It's not me. It's the world around me. If things were better, I'd be better.")

4) Attitude is chosen by me, not dictated by the world!

- a. The instrument has an odd inverted look to it. The wings, the plane are static, unmoving. While the gyro, the world beyond it is jostling all over the place. But that's actually the opposite of what is happening. The earth is holding fast, it is what it is. It's the plane that moves.
- b. I think it is easy to misread what's going on with us and the world. It seems, feels maybe, like I am holding steady, fastened, and the world is bobbing all over the place, DICTATING ATTITUDE. That is not true. Sure, the world moves, but mostly it is, in any given moment or circumstance, what it is. It's you that moves, that adjusts, that makes needed corrections corresponding to it. If we bank left to landing and wait for the world to rotate into place... crash landing.
- c. What I mean is – you aren't static, you are moving. This situation, whatever it is IS UNDER YOUR CONTROL. Susceptible to your adjustment. Attitude is on you. And that's good news!
- d. **Romans 8:5** –The world doesn't change, not really. YOU DO! "Set your mind" –every day choice!

Conclusion: If this all sounds kind of abstract or generic – that's on purpose. I can't tell you exactly how this must work in every situation. Everyone's situation, natural emotions, attitude issues, and life circumstances are different. I'm flying my plane and you are flying yours. But, in addition to the Word being that perfect measure of you and the world and showing the proper relationship, remember the great Pilot of all ages: JESUS.

Phil. 2:5-8 – Follow Jesus. The world hated him. His own people misunderstood him. He actually did fly the plan straight all the time, and it was the world that was spinning. But He did it this way – follow this – always.