



## Actions and Attitudes

### A Temcat Study

Suppose I have here a piece of paper, it has the number '1' marked on the one side and the number '2' marked on the other side. Now if I give this paper to you to examine you can see that it is one sheet of paper, and '1' is written on one side and '2' is written on the other side. OK, what would you think of me if I asked you to give me side one and keep side two for yourself? Yes, you heard me right, I want you to give me sheet one and keep sheet two for yourself.

What? You have a problem with that? What's the problem?

You say you can't do that? Well why not? Look here, there are two sides, why can't I have one and you the other?

You reply, "Because didn't you know? Haven't you heard? Hasn't anyone ever told you? The two sides are only one paper and you can't have one side without the other."

"You mean the two sides make up one complete object? But the two sides are different, you can see that one side has a 1 on it and the other has a 2; but you still say they are only one paper?"

Yes, you are certainly correct, and if I were to seriously ask you to do this, you would have a right to doubt my mental processes. No one would dream of asking such a thing, we wouldn't make such a mistake as that! But do you know that we, in our western, modern culture, have been taught to think in just that kind of unrealistic way about ourselves, our very lives? We have come to believe that a person can be one way inside—in our thoughts, and another way in our outward actions. We also imagine that our outward actions have no real effect on how we are inside—in our 'inward, real self'—as we like to think of it.

Let's look at what Jesus said over here in Matthew 15:19: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:"

Notice that most of these are what we would call actions.

Also turn to Matthew 5:28: "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

Where is our 'heart'? Is it inside or outside? What is meant by our heart? "I love you with all my heart," "Whatever he does, he does with all his heart!" Is it this muscular organ that we all have beating away in our chest? When we speak of our 'heart' in this sense, we mean our whole selves, everything that makes us truly 'us'. You will notice I didn't say "our inner selves?" Can we have an 'inner self' without an 'outer self'? Think of the paper again; can I have side one without side two? No! It means our whole self and includes the way we look at things, our outlook on life.

It seems that Jesus told us clearly that our 'insides' (thoughts and feelings) and our 'outsides' (words and actions) are inseparably connected, just like our paper's two sides.

Let me tell you a story:

A young woman visited a well-known psychiatrist one day. Her marriage had gone on the rocks, and now she wanted to be divorced. However, before leaving her husband she had the frantic desire to hurt

him as vehemently as ever possible. She hated him with all her heart. That was the only reason why she solicited the psychiatrist's advice.

“Well, I know men—how they think and react,” said the psychiatrist, “So I can tell you exactly what will hurt your husband more acutely than anything else. If you take my advice, you will simply stay with him for another three weeks or so. During the course of that time, you should treat him with treacherous friendliness. In fact, you ought to do him all the good you could ever imagine to do. Let him gradually be wrapped up in the deceptive idea that you love him sincerely, and then, suddenly one day, you break away from him as cold as ice. That will hurt him to the core. But we will plan the rupture in more detail once you have practiced your fraudulent work upon his self-conceited mind. The departure should be made as scornful and cutting as possible. But remember, now in round one you are to load him with goodness and all imaginable tokens of love, and see to it that they look as genuine as possible.”

The woman thought it was certainly a shrewd plan, and just sufficiently wicked and cynical to suit her purpose. She joined into it wholeheartedly and followed the instructions as closely as she could.

Finally the day came when she came back to the psychiatrist as she had promised, but there seemed to be something different in her demeanor.

“Well, did you proceed exactly as I told you?” he inquired.

“Yes, I have been heaping him with goodness and love every day since I left your consulting room”, she said.

“Good! Now, what date do you think would be most convenient to leave him?”

“Leave him? Why should I leave him? I couldn't think of leaving him now—not even for a moment. I love him. I have never loved him as much as I do today.”

Consider for a moment—what was it that affected that woman in such a powerful way that her rabid hatred was changed into warmth and love? Was it not the reaction of her actions?

You see, not only do our thoughts and feelings show up clearly in our actions—but our actions have a direct and powerful effect on our thoughts and feelings.

I wish to share this amazing statement:

“It is a law of nature that our thoughts and feelings are encouraged and strengthened as we give them utterance. While words express thoughts, it is also true that thoughts follow words. If we would give more expression to our faith, rejoice more in the blessings that we know we have, - the great love and mercy of God, - we would have more faith and greater joy.” Ministry of Healing 251.

We have all heard the motto, “Keep Smiling!” We have numerous songs about this very topic. Suppose I am feeling very sad and depressed today; I have a sad face and sad thoughts—I'm all turned inward to my sad self. Then I remember the motto, “Keep Smiling”. I turn outward a little and think “well, I don't want to make others around me feel sad, so I will “Put on a Happy face” and so I do. What begins to happen when I do this? Do I still feel all sad and depressed inside? No, amazingly enough, as I turn away even a little from my self-pity and put on a pleasant smile—‘just for the sake of others’, I feel better in myself.

Why is this? My problems might still be there but I feel better just from smiling. Well I am going to let you in on a secret, and it is a powerful secret! It is impossible for the body to have an outward show of an emotion without also having the inward feeling of that emotion as well. Side one and Side two remember?

Here are some more words of Jesus: Matthew 12:33,34: "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

Luke 6:43-45: "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."

What does Jesus mean when He talks about fruit? Well, by 'fruit' He means our actions, our outward actions and our words. He is saying that we cannot be one way inside and another way out side, because each side effects the other side, as they are really only one. If I tear side One of my paper, I have to tear side Two at the same time, don't I?

Here is another amazing bit of insight shared by the late Dr. Carsten Johnsen, from an ancient Roman philosopher named Tacitus, who says somewhere in his Annals: "It is really a characteristic of the human mind to hate the person it has hurt."

"Can that really be true?" some would immediately inquire.

Of course we are all quite familiar with the idea that human beings have a tendency to hurt a person towards whom they already have a certain amount of that all too uncommon emotion called hatred. But suppose I happened to cause some offense or damage to somebody, perhaps even quite inadvertently. In other words, that unfortunate victim, perhaps an entire stranger to me, had only one 'fault' and that was that he in some way or other has exposed himself to my quite thoughtless and involuntary blows. Now comes the serious question: What monster from the bottomless abyss of human wretchedness urges me to entertain suddenly an instinctive resentment against that unfortunate and perfectly innocent fellow-creature?

You will perhaps say that my guilty conscience, or even just an intensely unhappy consciousness of that poor fellow's sufferings, has rendered the very thought about him quite disagreeable to me. So consciously or unconsciously I now get busy trying to find some actual, more 'decent' reason for that gradually increasing resentment I feel against the person. And those who search shall find. That seems to apply even to the absurd and evil things for which human minds may search. Anyway, before long, I have half a dozen excellent 'reasons', all nicely adapted to the urgent needs of the case.

'Why!' I say to myself, 'that fellow was not, after all, quite as innocent as he looked at first. Why did he do this and that in connection with the accident? Others, too, I hear, have had difficulty with him. Perhaps he is just the 'rascal' who would deserve all the bad treatment he has now received.' It is so comforting to know that finally someone got 'just what he bargained for'. In fact, even if he got a little more, that probably just 'serves him right'. So why not give him a little more?

Then further relations between me and my 'enemy' develop rapidly both internally and externally. I hurt him still harder now and not quite as accidentally this time, I am afraid. Every new negative action against him brings more negative feelings—exactly in accord with the principle laid down by old Tacitus. Hurting produces hate, and hate produces hurting—an ceaseless vicious circle.

Now, in considering this, what do you think about Jesus' words here in Matthew 5:44-48? "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on

the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

Isn't that interesting? You see, Jesus knew that if we act kindly towards someone we dislike, this will change us. It will inevitably change our feelings and thoughts towards that person. You see again, you can't act in one way and feel in another. Your actions will change your feelings, just as your feelings will change your actions. Thus said He, you become "Perfect". If we put good actions to work they change us in our feelings and thoughts as well. This is good news and a powerful way of being the kind of Christian we want to be. Act like a real Christian would act and how Jesus would act and you will have that Joy and Happiness inside that a real Christian has.

This whole vicious circle of hate and blame can be totally short-circuited if we always immediately offer apology for any offense—even if we feel the person should know “we didn't mean it—it was an accident.” Even if we don't 'feel like' we need to apologize—this act will prevent any snowballing of the situation into a hating-hurting cycle. WE need that apology even more than the injured party may need it. I am sure that is why Satan often makes the act of apology—the simple saying of, “I am sorry—please forgive me” so distasteful to us. He knows that he can have a field day in planting evil thoughts in the minds of both the hurt and the hurter if reconciliation is not immediate. Remember this and give him the boot by a quick and hearty apology. It is best to do it, even if you were the one who was hurt!

We often hear a lot about Faith and Works, and many people make the mistake thinking you can have one without the other, but again, like our paper, they are two sides of the same thing—different but indivisible. You can't have one without the other being there as well. You can't have real Faith and just bottle it up and keep it to yourself. When you look again, you will find it gone. And you can't have cheerful, joyous Christian actions without having real Faith either. If you try, you will just find the actions to be drudgery. Faith and Works have to be together.

Now let's look at another side to this reality.

Have you ever heard someone say, “Oh, I can read whatever I like; it has no effect on me at all.” Or “I can watch anything at all on TV or any kind of movie and it has no effect on me at all. I know it isn't real so it doesn't affect me.”

OK, let us discuss this for a moment. When a writer in a mystery story wants to say that the heroine is afraid, do they just write, “She was afraid.” No, that would be boring wouldn't it? They will write something like this; “Her heart was pounding, her hair stood on end, she trembled and screamed in terror.”

Do you know that we are made in such a way that when we read, see, or hear the description of an emotion like this, we actually experience some of this very emotion? We can't separate the experience from the sight or description of the emotion. We were created to be able to “weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those who rejoice”. (Romans 12:15) Studies have shown that when we read or watch anger, fear, lust, hatred, jealousy and so on, our body changes reflect what we are beholding almost as if the situation were actually happening to us! This is why the reading and watching of fiction-type entertainment is so addicting to us.

Writers and actors know this, and so design entertainment in such a way as to maximize the effect on the reader or viewer. Did you ever notice how “boringly” the Bible is written compared to pulp fiction stories? When the Bible tells the story of someone who fell into sin for example, it just states the happenings as plain facts. Nowhere does it describe the lustful feelings David had for Bathsheba or the

feelings of hate Cain felt for Abel. Why? Because God has no intention of stimulating similar feelings in the readers, but He has to tell us true happenings to teach us true lessons.

But what happens when men decide to “help God out” by making a major movie out of a Bible story? Well then you see and feel all the evil emotions as you watch, and also, by the way, the actors see and feel all the evil as they act it out. It is a law of the universe and no-one is immune to it. It is the way we were created. That is Reality!

Did you know that there were no theaters in ancient Israel and no actors? Yes, that is true! God wanted the scriptures *read* to the people and the stories of history *told* to the children with emphasis on the moral lessons they taught. They were never ‘acted out’; they were sung, told or read. Think about it.

I urge you to put this law of your being into action for the good and blessing of yourself and all around you. Consider this insight: 2. Corinthians 3:18: “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Philippians 4:8: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

What we look at and think about, the words we say, and the things we do, can all be powerful tools to change us into real Christians with our faces shining with real joy both inwardly and outwardly, because it is really two sides of the same whole.

Our Father, in the name of Jesus we ask: help us to “Behold our Lord” and so become like Him.