

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH-Red Bud, Illinois

Adult Bible Class

"Having the Proper Attitude"

Introduction:

What does a thermometer do? _____

What does a thermostat do? _____

What is the difference between them? _____

Our nation's entertainment industry executives excuse themselves for the outlandish programming they put on television by saying they simply are "reflecting the values of our society" (like a thermometer does with the temperature). I believe that they are attempting to adjust or outright change the values of our society by the behavior (especially of a sexual nature) that they dump into our living rooms through our televisions (like a thermostat does to the temperature).

When we act in certain ways because "everybody does it," we are behaving as a thermometer, allowing the atmosphere around us to affect our behavior. On the contrary, our Christian lives are to reflect the difference between a thermometer and a thermostat in a positive way. When we act in ways that are independent of the world around us, but that reflect into the world the will of God for our lives, then we are behaving as a thermostat which controls the climate around us.

What percentage of the information that we take in daily is of a negative nature? _____

If it is true that "we are what we eat" then it can also be said that "we are what we think" or "we are what we see" or "we are what we do." We may not be what comes to us as junk mail in the mail box or as spam in our e-mail, but we are what we are willing to open up and read. If we allow the world around us to control our behavior, we are thermometers whose activity will reflect the sinful acts that surround us.

Proverbs 23:17 "Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the Lord."

How is the "thermometer" described here? _____

How is the "thermostat" described here? _____

Job 2:9-10 His wife said to him (Job), "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God and not trouble." In all this Job did not sin in what he said.

In the story of Job who was the thermometer? _____ **Who was the thermostat?** _____

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.

How is the "thermometer" described here? _____

How is the "thermostat" described here? _____

Having a proper attitude comes from seeing the work of God in our lives no matter what the circumstances are. The difference between happiness and joy is that happiness depends on the circumstances of our lives being what we want them to be while joy comes from the relationships in our lives, particularly a personal, saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalms 118:22-24 The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

How can we approach each day once we know of the salvation Jesus has won for us? _____

(Do you wake up like a thermometer, “Good Lord, its morning!” or like a thermostat, “Good morning, Lord!”?)

Philippians 4:4-11 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.* What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. **Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.**

When is the Christian to rejoice? _____

What are we to do instead of being anxious? _____

What list of positive “things” are we to think on, that is, to take into ourselves? (*in italics*)

- a) _____ b) _____ c) _____
d) _____ e) _____ f) _____
g) _____ h) _____

What is the “secret” of a positive Christian attitude? (bold) _____

Do you remember the story of David and Goliath from the Old Testament (1 Samuel 17)? What was the attitude of the Israelite army towards the Philistine giant Goliath? Acting like a thermometer, they feared him because they saw him as being too big to hit. What was the attitude of the young shepherd boy David towards Goliath? Acting like a thermostat, David confronted him knowing that the giant was too big to miss.

Galatians 6:7-9 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. ⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. ⁹ And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

When our attitude is focused on pleasing our sinful nature, that is, on things of our flesh, what will we get in return? _____

When our attitude is focused on what God’s Holy Spirit provides, what do we get in return?

When will we see the “reward” of having the right attitude? _____

1 Thessalonians 5:11 *Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.*

Until that proper time what are we as thermostats to do? _____

Conclusion

“We have a life that soon will pass, only what is done for Christ will last.” As the people of God in Jesus Christ we are not to live in this world as thermometers which reflect the sinful “temperature” of our surroundings. Instead we are to be thermostats in this world which affect the atmosphere around us in a positive, godly way, having an attitude that has been set for us by the saving work of our Lord Jesus Christ.