

CROSSING ATTITUDES

Study Guide

Lesson One – Attitude of the Cross

Linda Pringle

The cross of Jesus Christ should be the centerpiece of our daily lives. Christians know intellectually that Christ died on the cross for their sins. A true believer accepts this as the basis for their salvation and they are grateful to God for His Son's sacrifice. Many Christians, however, look at their lives and wonder why the love, joy, and peace promised in the Scriptures are missing from their lives. Most Bible-believing Christians attend church, pray, read the Bible when they can, and try to live up to godly standards yet they often don't comprehend how Christ's life, death, and resurrection should affect their daily lives. However, what happened on the cross over 2000 years ago should influence our emotions, actions, relationships, and mind-set about the ups and downs of life.

Since Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted, we should understand what that means. The word 'heart' is used throughout the Bible and Christians use it often. In fact, we use it so much that it seems to have lost its meaning. What does it mean to love God with all your heart? The heart is the inner self that thinks, feels, and decides.¹ A better word for today's vernacular is "attitude." Do we love God with all of our attitude when we are irritated because of some minor inconvenience? During marriage counseling, most couples say that when they are in the middle of an argument their attitude is not focused on loving or trusting God but rather on demanding their own rights! The word attitude brings the idea of our heart down to the nitty-gritty daily grind of life. We have an attitude about everything that happens during the day. When Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted, He came to heal the broken attitudes that bring sorrow to our lives and the lives of others.

- 1) Isaiah 61:1-3 is a prophecy that Jesus quoted in Luke 4:18-21 to reveal that He is the prophecy's fulfillment. Jesus is the Messiah, or the Christ, that the Jews were waiting for. ("Christ" is the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew word "Messiah") Read Isaiah 61:1-3 and list all the reasons Christ came to this earth. Take special note of the two reasons at the end of verse 3.

Note: Notice that we are called trees of righteousness as we simply respond to His goodness and comfort. We do nothing to earn it! He plants righteousness in us so we will grow. We are His planting so that He may be glorified! Additionally, notice that the fullness of the Godhead is represented, "*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me.*" The Holy Spirit, God the Father, and the Messiah, Jesus Christ, all work together to minister comfort and joy to us.

¹ Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers

- 2) Christ came to heal the brokenhearted and give us a garment of praise for a spirit of heaviness by His death on the cross, which set us free from the penalty of sin. Before we can understand the work of the cross, we need to understand sin. Read Genesis 2:15-17, 2:25, and 3:1-7. What lie did the serpent (who was Satan) tell Eve?

- 3) The undercurrent of the lie Satan told Eve is that God was withholding something good from her life and that she really couldn't trust Him. This is the same lie we hear constantly today. Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44) and he lies to us all the time. As Eve mistrusted God's love and provision, her attitude filled with ungodly desires. What three desires filled Eve's heart from Genesis 3:6?

- 4) Compare Genesis 3:6 to 1 John 2:16. Write down the three lusts or desires the world offers that are not from the Father. Next to each one write down the corresponding phrase from Genesis 3:6.

1 John 2:16	Genesis 3:6

Note: Sinful lusts are desires to enjoy or possess anything more than we enjoy our relationship with God and trust His will for our lives. When we lust, we long for something rather than resting in God's love and waiting for His provision. Lusts of the flesh are longings to comfort my physical body, lusts of the eyes are longings for materialistic things, and pride of life is a longing to be important. Lusts can become a preoccupation in our minds that lead to broken attitudes causing great sorrow.

- 5) Now compare Luke 4:1-13 to 1 John 2:16 and you will see the same pattern of temptation from the devil, Satan. Write down the three temptations of Satan to Jesus and then write down the corresponding phrase from 1 John 2:16.

Luke 4:1-13	1 John 2:16

- 6) When Jesus was tempted to turn the rock into bread, He didn't let His mind dwell on that thought. He didn't entertain it by thinking about warm bread, fresh out of the oven with butter and honey! Instead, how did He respond to each deceitful temptation from Satan?

Note: All transgressions boil down to one or more of these aspects of sin, lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life. No matter what sin you think of, from Hitler's horrific crimes, to rape, murder, lying, cheating, stealing, drug or alcohol abuse, outbursts of anger, dirty politicians, family problems, or church gossip, you can see these lusts at work. James 1:14-16 tells us, "But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." As Satan deceived Adam and Eve, they were carried away and enticed by their own lust. The common denominator of lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life is self-centeredness. We sin when we selfishly put our comfort, desires, or importance above trusting God and loving others. When we see the biblical view of sin, we realize that we are all self-centered sinners everyday! I relate to the apostle Paul who stated in Romans 7:24-25a, "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

7) *Personal Insight:* In what specific areas of your life do you struggle with lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life?

8) The following verses are sometimes referred to as the "Roman Road to Salvation" because they give a clear description of what Christ did to set us free from the condemnation of sin. Next to each one, write out the verse or summarize it in your own words. Even if these verses are familiar to you, take the time to let them sink in and ask God to help you apply them when you see your sinful nature. If these verses are confusing to you, ask one of the leaders to explain them to you.

Romans 3:10	
Romans 3:23	
Romans 6:23	
Romans 8:1	
Romans 8:38-39	
Romans 10:8-10	

9) We are saved by God's grace and forgiveness but we also need to walk in God's grace and forgiveness every day. Every time we sin we have the opportunity to be reminded of His love for us! Describe a time when you realized you had sinned, felt convicted, but then experienced freedom as you realized His love, forgiveness, and acceptance of you. How did His love change your attitude toward sin?

10) **Psychology Myth:** "People are born good but negative experiences of the past alter our subconscious causing us to react in negative ways today. Put simply, we are victims of our past experiences." How does what we learned in this lesson refute this myth?