

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

“Positive Preaching”

Have you ever replaced the batteries in a flashlight, then flipped the switch on to find that it still doesn't work? Upon further examination you discover that you have placed the batteries in the wrong way (backwards). The positive pole of the battery is where the negative pole ought to be and a correction of your error is necessary before the flashlight will work.

Some brethren have their spiritual batteries in backwards, as far as God's word is concerned. They have swapped the poles around, or you might say, *“they have their wires crossed.”* Some have even let their batteries run completely down and die! It is now common to hear *“positive”* brethren cry for more *“positive preaching”* to the exclusion of mentioning anything they consider as being *negative*; their desire being to have their ears tickled (2 Tim. 4:1-4). **Question:** Have you ever tried to run something that is powered by a battery by only connecting the *positive* end of the battery? If you disconnect the *negative* lead from your battery terminal on your automobile, would it start? Both terminals must be correctly connected for proper operation!

Isaiah spoke of those who swapped things around and he pronounced a *“woe”* when he said, *“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter”* (Isa. 5:20). The prophet also described this attitude in Isaiah 30:10 where he wrote, *“Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits.”* Brethren who engage in such a practice, fellowship darkness and *“do not the truth,”* while professing to be walking *“in the light”* (1 Jn. 1:5-7).

Gospel preachers who boldly preach and proclaim *“all the council of God”* (Acts 20:27) and *“earnestly contend for the faith”* (Jude 3) are often criticized for being *“too negative, too boring, too judgmental, legalistic, watch dog brethren.”* Their critics demand preaching that *“accentuates the positive and eliminates the negative”* and they often demonstrate a great distaste for lessons which *“reprove”* (negative), *“rebuke”* (negative), *“and exhort”* (positive) *“with all longsuffering and doctrine”* (2 Tim. 4:2-4).

To coin a phrase similar to the Yellow Page advertising phrase, *“Let your fingers do the walking...,”* we will let God's Word do the talking! Please open your Bible and consider just a few of the many *“positive”* texts of God's Word, since there is such as desire for *“positive preaching”*:

Ezekiel 33:7-9: *“So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”*

1 Peter 1:13-16: *“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”*

Colossians 3:1-2, 5-7: *“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth....Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the*

children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.”

Space limitations do not allow the text of other passages to be quoted at this time, but, please take your Bible and read these passages which can be considered as “*positive*” texts: Matthew 5:32; 16:18; 19:9; 28:19-20; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Ephesians 5:22-25; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:15, 19; 3:12; Titus 2:11-15; Hebrews 5:8-9; James 1:22-25; James 4:7-10; 1 Peter 3:21; 1 John 2:3.

There has been and will continue to be excellent sermons preached by sound gospel preachers using these and other “*positive*” passages for their sermon text. As we have already noted, these passages are but a few of the many “*positive*” texts of the Bible.

Will brethren who desire “*positive preaching*” tolerate lessons based on the truths of these texts? Or, will they seek to have their ears tickled and turn away from the truth unto fables (2 Tim. 4:3-4)? Will “*positive*” brethren heed the admonition given by Jeremiah who plead, “***Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls?***” Or, will they make the same reply that Jeremiah heard, by saying, “***We will not walk therein***” (Jer. 6:16)? Let us place our trust in “***all the counsel of God***” (Acts 20:27) and remember the proclamation of Jesus who said, “***Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth***” (Jn. 17:17). Only the pure and simple gospel of Christ will *positively* save man from the guilt of sin. There is no substitute! – ***tgmc*** ■

What Can I Do In The Coming Year?

By Greg Gwin

Many times Christians feel as though there is nothing they can do to *positively* assist in the work of the church. This, of course, is a huge mistake. There is something for everyone to do. Let us suggest these things that **EVERY** member of the local congregation can do that will help our collective service for the Lord:

1. You can read your Bible every day. There are few things that can compare to regular Bible reading when it comes to strengthening the soul and maintaining focus on spiritual priorities. What are you waiting for? Make the commitment right NOW to read your Bible this year.

2. You can attend the services faithfully. We all push ourselves to do certain things. We’ll go to real extremes to attend family gatherings, keep a doctor’s appointment, go to a ballgame, have a regular time at the beauty shop, etc. Unfortunately, some are not nearly so determined to attend worship services and Bible studies. If you can get out for other things, why can’t you get out for services? Think! You can really help by simply being present.

3. You can pray fervently. Do you consistently spend time in prayer every day? Pray for the church, for the elders, for those who are weak, for our work in reaching the lost, etc. “***The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much***” (Jas. 5:16).

4. You can invite a neighbor, co-worker, or family member to attend the services with you. You might be surprised how many would be willing to come with you if you simply invited them.

5. You can set a good example. Don’t forget that others are watching everything you do, everything you say, everywhere you go. If you let down, even once, they will notice it, and your influence will be damaged. Be conscious of your impact by way of your example.

6. You can be positive and enthusiastic. Too many are “doom and gloom” Christians, always looking for *negative* things to complain about. Look up! Be thankful for what you have and excited about what you can do for God’s glory. – ***Collegvue Church of Christ Articles***, December 26, 2021. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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