



You Are What You Think
2 Peter 3:18

A Friendly Reminder



"Promise me you'll always remember that you're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think."

Christopher Robin to Winnie the Pooh

The Importance of a Positive Attitude

A good start toward spiritual growth is achieved when we...

- Accept the challenge to obey God's command to grow
 - **2 Peter 3:18** - But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.
- Believe we are capable of growing with God's help
 - **Philippians 4:13** - I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

You Can Focus



Power of Focus

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The Importance of a Positive Attitude

- **Set both behavioral and functional goals as described in the Scriptures**
- Striving to develop Christ-like behavior
- **2 Peter 1:5-8** - For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Importance of a Positive Attitude

- Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: To choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's way.
- Viktor Frankl, concentration camp survivor.
- **Philippians 2:14-16** - Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

The Importance of Positive Attitude

- **Create good habits that slowly but surely help us reach those goals**
 - Habits that change our behavior – Bible Study, Prayer
 - Habits that promote Unity and Fellowship - Church Attendance
- **Hebrews 10:24-25** - And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

How Long Does it Take to Form a Habit?

- Recent research led by a team at the University College London think they have uncovered just how long (on average) it takes for something to become habitual.
- They do not think it takes 21 days to form a habit.
- They believe it takes an average of 66 days to create a habit.

The Importance of a Positive Attitude

- For spiritual growth to continue, however, requires maintaining a positive attitude...
- Believing that all our efforts will be worthwhile
- **1 Corinthians 15:58** - Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Encouraging us to persevere through difficult times

- **2 Corinthians 4:8-9** - We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed

The Battle for Your Heart, Mind, and Soul



The Danger of a Negative Attitude

- **THE DANGER OF A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE...**
- Illustrated in the example of the twelve spies of Israel
- Ten did not believe they could take the land of Canaan
- Their negative attitude discouraged the rest of Israel
- **Numbers 13:30-33** - 30 But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.” 31 Then the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are.” 32 So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, “The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. 33 And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.”

Henry Ford

“Whether you think you can, or you think you can't--you're right.”

The Danger of a Negative Attitude

2. When negative attitudes are allowed to develop...

- ✓ We stop believing in God and in ourselves
- ✓ We stop trying to do what God wants us to do
- ✓ We discourage those around us
- ✓ We fail to reach the goals God has placed before us

The Value of a Positive Attitude

B. THE VALUE OF A POSITIVE ATTITUDE...

- Illustrated in the example of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem
- It helped them overcome ridicule by their enemies –
 - **Nehemiah 4:1-2** - Now when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he jeered at the Jews. 2 And he said in the presence of his brothers and of the army of Samaria, “What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore it for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish up in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, and burned ones at that?”
- It led to the rebuilding of the walls
 - **Nehemiah 6:15** - So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days.

The Value of a Positive Attitude

- **When positive attitudes are maintained...**
 - ✓ We continue to believe in God and our ability to serve Him
 - ✓ We keep trying to do what God wants us to do
 - ✓ We encourage those around us, and overcome those who would discourage us
 - ✓ We ultimately reach the goals that God has placed before us

Can or Can't?



Maintaining a Positive Attitude

- **CHOOSE TO BE POSITIVE...**

- ✓ We can control our attitudes, our moods
- ✓ We may not be able to control or change our circumstances
- ✓ But we can control how we react to them

The Choice

When I am surrounded by pessimism I will choose optimism.

When I feel fear I will choose faith.

When I want to hate I will choose love.

When I want to be bitter I will choose to get better.

When I experience a challenge I will look for opportunity to learn and grow.

When faced with adversity I will find strength.

Maintaining a Positive Attitude

- **We can choose to rejoice when times are hard**

- As we understand the value of difficult times

- **Romans 5:3-4** - Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

- When we know that hope and prayer can help us to rejoice

- **Romans 12:12** - Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

Block Out Negativity

- **BLOCK OUT NEGATIVITY...**

- ✓ By avoiding negative self-talk
- ✓ Such as "I can't do it..."
- ✓ Such as "It's too hard..."

Block Out Negativity

- **By avoiding negative people**
- Choose your friends carefully
- **1 Corinthians 15:33** - Do not be deceived: Bad company ruins good morals.
- Stay away from "toxic" people (whose negativity poisons other people's attitudes)
- Otherwise, you will join what Rick Pitino calls "The Fellowship Of The Miserable" and the killers of the dream

Block Out Negativity

- **By surrounding yourself with positive people**
- People who will encourage you to do what is right - **Hebrews 10:24**
- People who refresh your spirit, not discourage it - **1 Corinthians 16:17-18; Philemon 4-7**
- People like Barnabas, "Son of Encouragement" - **Acts 4:36; 11:22-24**

Block Out Negativity

- With the right self-talk and the right companionships, we can avoid becoming hardened by the sin of negativity
- **Hebrews 3:13** - But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Live in the Present – With An Eye to the Future

- **Live in the present, not the past**
- If anyone could have bemoaned his sinful past, it was Paul
- Yet he chose not to dwell on past mistakes (or even past successes), but to press on in the future
- **Philippians 3:12-14** - Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Live in the Present



Live in the Present – With An Eye to the Future

- **Live in the present, with an eye to the future**
- This is what Paul did, reaching forward to the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus
- It was the future glory that enabled him to endure the present trial
- **2 Corinthians 4:17-18** - For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

DON'T CRY OVER THE
past, IT'S GONE.
DON'T STRESS ABOUT
THE *future*,
IT HASN'T ARRIVED.
LIVE IN THE *present*
AND MAKE IT

Beautiful