

How to Avoid Positive Stinking

by Vic Zarley

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:4 [NIV]

It would be helpful to recognize the difference between being "positive" all the time and true submission to Jesus Christ.

To be positive all the time is a very willful act. We are making ourselves be that way. We are working to do something of our own volition. We are in charge of our lives, the masters of our fate, the conquerors of our souls.



To be positive in this way is to deny the negative feelings that squirm just below the surface of our lives. We refuse to acknowledge them. We do not want to deal with them. They put a damper on our personal goal of being positive all the time.



True submission to Jesus Christ, however, involves being especially aware of the dark spots in our souls, the negative feelings (if you will). We are not trying to spread a glossy happy paint over the weak and knotted wood, but instead desire to expose the weak and knotted wood to Jesus for His healing touch.

Beware lest anyone rob you through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the elements of the world and not according to Christ. Colossians 2:8 [MKJV]

If we wander this world in our forced happiness, we are living a lie. But wandering this world in complete submission to Jesus Christ enables us to give up what we would no longer desire to suppress; eliminate permanently what we would no longer desire to see explode within us, surprising even ourselves, as it seeps onto the highways and byways of our lives. Our prayer time should be spent asking Jesus for strength to actually do what He asks us to do: Love those who are very challenging to love.

The wisdom of the wise is to understand his way, but the folly of fools is deceit. Proverbs 14:8 [MKJV]

Sure, we can be all smiley-faced as we put on the mask of happiness, in complete denial of our sub-surface feelings regarding someone we DO NOT love. But this is not being humble and asking for help from the Lord, our Savior. We are choosing to try and save ourselves and we know the futility of that act, don't we? This is not to say that all Christians are to be sad-faced, and completely engulfed in solemnity. Heaven's no! (And we see this too often, don't we?) We are to be genuinely happy, exuding the spirit of God, through Jesus Christ, who humbles our souls, extracts the deadness from us, delivers us from our infestations within which deprive us of our TRUE happiness. We no longer desire a fake mask of happiness, but only the real and true joy that comes from Christ, as we humbly offer up to Him, our entire lives for healing, holding back nothing.

In addition to not faking our happiness, there is another aspect of positive thinking that ought to raise red flags in our minds. Why? Isn't it good to use our God-given minds to change our environment and relieve our suffering? you might ask. I know of at least three cases where God used the suffering of someone else to lead someone to healing. The first one is the ultimate suffering of Jesus on the cross who died for each of our sins. Didn't He tell us to pick up our crosses and follow Him? The next one involves a lady who was very depressed and uncertain about her prognosis as she lay in her hospital room. She cried out to God for help but it didn't seem He was listening. But He was, for God had a devout Christian lady suddenly come down with an illness of indeterminate cause. She was placed in the depressed lady's room and, while there, shared Christ's light with her. In addition, she got a word of prophecy that all was going to be well with her upcoming surgery. Shortly, the lady who had come down with the mysterious ailment was whole again, and went home. The depressed lady began to feel the love of God and her physical healing sped up because her soul had been lifted up and God's love was made known to her by the lady with the mysterious ailment.

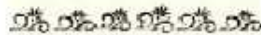
Finally, not long ago I read of a couple who had asked the Lord if it was a good idea to move into a certain neighborhood and they both felt an unqualified YES, from God. They purchased the house and property values went down in the next couple of years until they really wondered why God had told them it was okay to move into that neighborhood. While there, though, they had held Bible studies in their home and had ministered to many people they would not have had the opportunity to IF they hadn't been in that community. They both felt the Lord tell them that He bases His direction, not on financial gain, but on the eternal things. God's will, therefore, does not



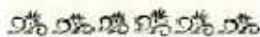
always involve our feeling good and feeling prosperous. God tells us not to judge each other, but to love unconditionally. We can understand that command because our hearts do not know the readiness of someone to receive Christ into their hearts. Therefore, we need to love people and always help prepare the soil for their coming to the Lord. But what does God want us to do? Does He want us to be rich all the time? Does He want us to be healthy all the time? How can we judge God's heart? His heart does not seem to revolve around worldly mammon, nor does it revolve around physical bodies being in "perfect" shape. If that were so, He certainly would not have the missionaries suffer so much physical persecution as they try to minister to the lost in foreign countries. Most



definitely, then, God has greater vision than we, when our minds are set on prosperity and He has greater vision than we, when our minds are obsessed with health. Can we get beyond all worldly concerns and truly become interested in knowing the heart of God as well as desiring to do His will no matter what circumstances He may have you experience?



Lord, give us this greater vision of God's. Help us be willing to suffer a little, or a lot, if it will help reach people for You. Help us not to be so purposed in finding comfort for ourselves while, at the same time, claiming to love You and desiring to do Your will. Also, Lord, help us to love the people you place in our lives—with a real love, a genuine love. I know you do not tolerate fake love or surface love only. Thank you, Lord, for putting in me a humble and teachable spirit. Thank you, Lord, for giving me true love from Your heart to distribute to all the people—even those whom I dislike for any number of reasons. In this way, the door is opened for you to heal me. Most of all, Lord, lift my eyes from the trappings of this world. Lift my eyes to You. Amen.



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Thank you, and God bless you.
Vic and Eva Zarley

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