



# The Power of Positive Thinking

by Russell Carnley

Have you ever noticed someone who is incurably happy? Do you know a person who always has an encouraging word to say, even when things are going rough for them? This type of person has learned the value of a positive attitude. Looking at the bright side of a situation and having an optimistic approach to life is an excellent way to live. In fact, if we are to be pleasing to God, we must learn to have this type of outlook. The Bible is filled with examples of those who refused to let circumstances get the best of them. We read of men and women who were pleasing to God because they believed in Him and in His power to help them overcome obstacles and to reward them abundantly for their labors. If we desire to be happy in this life, and blessed in the next, we must learn to harness the power of positive

thinking. Let us observe how positive thinking can improve our lives in three areas.

### *Personal Life:*

As we consider our personal lives, we should know that a positive attitude will help us to cultivate and maintain meaningful relationships. Consider the story of Ruth. She is a great example of how one woman, with the proper attitude, can make a difference. This beautiful story of grace and redemption is set in the uncertain and tumultuous times of the judges when “everyone did what was right in his own eyes,” (Jg. 21:25). It is sad to note that what was “right” in the eyes of men amounted to an abomination in the sight of God (Prov. 14:12). But Ruth was faithful even in these times. When adversity struck, with her mother-in-law. She didn't know how the Jews would react to her. Nor did she know if she would even be able to gather enough food for them to survive. But she knew that Naomi needed her, and she knew that she must at least try. She could have thought up several reasons not to go with

her, but she didn't. Instead she kept a positive attitude and God blessed her greatly because of it. A positive attitude can help your personal life as well.

### ***Professional Life:***

Positive thinking can help you be successful in your professional life also. When you consider your life, most of your waking hours will be spent at your workplace. This is a very sobering thought. But with the proper attitude your workplace can be more enjoyable. And with a positive attitude you can achieve far more success in your career. Consider Joseph as an example of the proper outlook. When he was a young boy he was betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery (Gen. 37). He arrived in Egypt and became the property of Potiphar. In Potiphar's house he worked very diligently and was promoted to overseer of all of his house. Now Joseph had reason to complain, but he didn't. He merely worked hard, and God blessed him. After being falsely accused, he was cast into prison.

Now he really had reason to complain! But he did not. He was simply the best prisoner he could be. As a result he was placed in charge of the prison. His next promotion was from head of the prison to head of the country. He was second to Pharaoh himself. Joseph is merely one example of how God can work through bad events for the greater good. Joseph didn't waste his time being negative. He rather used his time wisely and kept a positive attitude. A positive attitude can help you achieve your professional goals as well.

### *Spiritual Life:*

Finally, a positive attitude can improve your spiritual life. Your attitude towards the Lord affects how you live your life for Him. Consider Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve. In Genesis 4 we read of their offerings. We read that "Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground..." (Gen. 4:3). And Abel "brought of the firstborn of his flock.." (Gen. 4:4). God respected the offering of Abel, but did not respect that of Cain. What was the difference? One difference is

in the attitudes of those making the offering. Notice that Abel brought “of the firstborn” while Cain simply brought an offering. Abel put the Lord first in his mind and first in his sacrifice. Cain's attitude was wrong from the start and got worse as time progressed. When we have the proper attitude towards God, we can serve Him acceptably.

Consider another example of how a positive attitude can help your spiritual life. Think of Joshua and Caleb, who went against popular opinion in telling the people to go up and possess the land (Num. 13-14). Because of their diligence, they were the only ones of that generation who were permitted to enter the land of Canaan after the forty years of wandering. Joshua led the Israelites as they conquered the land. Caleb made a very ambitious request when he was eighty five years old: the mount of Hebron (Josh. 14:12). And he conquered it! These are examples for us today that let us know that no obstacles are too large for us, when God is with us. As we consider the power of positive thinking as it is

shown in the Bible, let us be more diligent to study the word and to glean these valuable lessons from it for ourselves. There are many more examples where people have overcome insurmountable obstacles through faith in the Living God. So we ought to know that God can help us through our struggles. We should keep an optimistic outlook as we know that God works all things together for good to those who love Him (Rom. 8:28). We should know that God desires and expects us to have a positive attitude. Positive thinking reflects a positive faith and a positive attitude translates into a positive action. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him," (Heb. 11:6).