

Studies in Christianity Christian Lifestyle #13

S#1.

Christians Are Positive People

S#2.

Text : **Phil. 1: 3-6, 2: 3-6, 3: 1-3, 4: 2-9**

A. Our previous two lessons centered on the basis for Christian contentment. S#3.

1. We are contented because Christians live by faith trusting God to take care of us.

- a. God made a covenant with His followers, **i.e.**, if we will put Him above all, He will provide our needs.

Matt. 6: 33 – But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness,
and all these things will be added to you.

S#4.

- b. God always keeps His covenants.

Psa. 89: 34 – My covenant I will not violate. Nor will I alter the utterance of My lips.

2. God reigns sovereign over the earth and all who live on it.

- a. God is aware of the death of every bird and every hair on our head.

- b. Thus, even when our life seems out of control, God is involved in it.

I Cor. 10: 13 – No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. **Job**

S#5.

B. With this lesson we want to observe that the Christian is a positive person.

1. Who has a greater reason to have a positive outlook on life than a Christian?

- a. *“Our Father rules the world and our Big Brother can wipe anyone.”*
b. Everyone dies and then faces God, but the Christian does it without fear.

2. The unbelievers constantly worry about the cares of the world, but the one who lives by faith trusts God to care for him.

3. It can be challenging, but we will see that the Christian can stay positive in this negative world.

C. BUT ... why be concerned about staying positive? S#6.

There are at least 5 practical reasons :

1. Staying positive reduces stress.

- a. Positive thoughts counter the negative effects of stress.
b. For example, you can't be thankful and stressed at the same time.

2. Social interaction

- a. Positive people tend to have more friends.
- b. Having friends is one of the keys to happiness.

3. Love

- a. Positive singles get more dates and are more successful in attracting a mate.
- b. Marriages are much more likely to succeed when the couple experiences a 5 to 1 ratio of positive to negative interactions ... (Dr John Gottman)

4. Performance at Work

- a. Positive people are able to see the big picture which helps them identify solutions but negative people maintain a narrower perspective and tend to focus on problems
- b. Positive work environments outperform negative work environments.
- c. Positive people are more likely to receive greater support from their coworkers and as result receive pay raises and promotions more frequently.

5. Life Expectancy

- a. Positive people recover more quickly from accidents or illnesses.
- b. Positive people live longer.

D. Question : We live in a very negative world at a very negative time, so how does one stay positive amid such negative currents?

S#7.

1. Winston Churchill lived at such a time as this and stayed positive. He said,
 - a. *A positive thinker sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible.* (must be able to see yourself succeeding,)
 - b. He kept his nation motivated by the strength of his character.
2. Our text will reveal at least 6 ways the Christian can stay positive.

I. Vs. 2-3 .. Don't fill your mind with the pains of the past.

S#8.

- A. Phil. 4: 2-3 .. I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. 3 Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.**

S#9.

1. This problem had to have been serious because he called out their names.
2. They are brethren who have earned a place of honor, but they had become hung up on a disagreement and would not let go of it.

- B. After the American civil war (1861-1865) Gen. Robert E. Lee toured the south riding the railroads. (Great Grandpa = war between democrats & republicans)**

1. General Lee had a twofold mission.
 - a. He wanted to thank the confederate troops who had fought for Him.
 - b. He wanted to secure the peace and start the healing.
2. He met a woman who was showing him a beautiful old tree which was destroyed.
 - a. Repeated battles had been fought on her land.
 - b. She passionately recounted how cannon balls knocked out limbs, etc.
3. When the lady had finished her impassioned diatribe about her tree, S#10.
 - a. Replaying negative events in one's mind makes him a negative person.
 - b. **Phil. 3: 12** – Not that I have already obtained it or have already become S#11.
 perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also
 I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. **13** Brethren, I do not regard myself
 as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies
 behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, **14** I press on toward
 the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

II. Vs. 4 .. Rejoice in the Lord.

S#12.

- A. **Phil. 4: 4** – Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! S#13.
 1. We cannot control what people say to us or sometimes do to us,
but we can control how we respond to them.
 2. When you keep thinking about what someone said to you,
you put them in charge of your attitude. (*You make them captain of your ship.*)
- B. Ships don't sink because of the water around them ; S#14.
 ships sink because of the water that gets in them, so
 don't let what's happening around you get inside you
 and weigh you down.
- C. Stay at the helm; be the captain of your ship. CHOOSE TO REJOICE !

III. Vs. 5 .. Be gentle with others.

S#15.

- A. **Phil. 4: 5** – Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. S#16.
 1. Becoming of a gentle nature is part of becoming a “new creature.” (**II Cor. 5**)
Col. 3: 12 – So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, S#17.
put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and
 patience; **13** bearing with one another, and forgiving each other,
 2. Hurts come when we are not gentle with each other.

B. One must develop a gentle heart before he can be a leader in God's church.

1. **I Tim. 3: 3** – temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, **S#18.**
3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable,
2. The members have the same requirement as the leader.
Tit. 3: 2 – Remind them to be ... **2** to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle,
showing every consideration for all men.
3. Compare ... **Jas. 3: 17, I Pet. 2: 8**

C. Anticipating a gentle answer will make people unintimidated to open up.**IV. Vs. 6-7 .. Replace your anxiety with prayer.****S#19.**

- A. **Phil. 4: 6** – Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and **S#20.**
supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known
to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

B. Whatever weighs heavy on your heart, God can handle it.

1. Pray about it and leave the worrying to God.
2. Dwell on what has gone right in your life ... not the negatives.

V. Vs. 8 .. Look for what is good.**S#21.**

- A. **Phil. 4: 8** – Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, **S#22.**
whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever
is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy
of praise, dwell on these things.

B. You have the remote so only you determines what your mind dwells on.

1. This world is a negative place overrun with sins of all kinds.
2. The media dwells on the negative : ***"If it bleeds it leads."***
3. You can't control what happens in the world, but you can control your response. **S#23.**

C. In a psychology class teacher held a white sheet with a very small black spot.

1. He instructed the students to look carefully and write down what they saw.
2. Everyone in the class wrote that they observed a black spot on the sheet.
3. The sheet was large and the spot was the size of a dime, **but** no one reported
seeing a white sheet. All reported seeing a black spot.
4. **WHY ?** We are instinctively drawn to the negative or that which is out of place.

VI. Vs. 9 .. Act on what you know to be right.**S#24.**

A. Phil. 4: 9 – The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. **S#25.**

1. I have a sign on the inside my office door so as I exit I see
“Always do what you know to be right.”
2. We all read the bible, but we don’t always apply what we read to our lives.

B. View yourself in the same way the Apostle Paul viewed himself.

S#26.

1. In **Rom.7** the Apostle made it clear that he wrestled with sin in his life.
2. Even so, he set himself up as an example for others to follow.
I Cor. 11: 1 – Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.
3. Knowing others are watching will make us aware of the need to be positive.

CONCLUSION :

A. How do we stay positive ?

S#27.

1. Don’t fill our minds with pain from the past.
2. Rejoice in the Lord.
3. Be gentle to others.
4. Replace your anxieties with prayer.
5. Look for what is good.
6. Act on what you know to be right.

B. No one on earth has more reason to be positive than the Christian.

S#28.

1. We have a personal relationship with the sovereign ruler of the universe.
2. When this brief life is over we will live with the ruler eternally.
3. All the negative things we endure will be worked to our eternal good.

INVITATION :

Are you walking with God in the light of His love ?

Do you have grounds for a positive outlook on eternity ?

God is inviting you now ...

Lesson Text :**Philippians**

1: 3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, 5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

2: 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself,

3: 1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.

2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; 3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

4: 2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. 3 Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. 9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.