

“Dwell on the Positive”

This article is from the “Edifying the Body” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website (churchofgodbig sandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of April 15, 2023.

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BIG SANDY, Texas—When I recently heard a sermon on the seventh day of Unleavened Bread, one of the men in our congregation (Reg Killingley) gave a wonderful sermon about Philippians 4:8.

I love that scripture—having spoken about that subject many times and having written about the topic on occasion. (In 2019, I wrote an eight-part series of articles about Philippians 4:8.)

Mr. Killingley accomplished what an experienced speaker does—he influenced me to study my Bible about the subject again.

Dwell on positive

One of the best pieces of advice that a mental-health professional can give to people is: “Focus upon the positive factors of this life.”

Mr. Killingley effectively reminded us about the value of Philippians 4:8.

Recognize negative

One of the keys of happiness in life is to learn how to recognize the negative in our journey of life—before we come to the point of dwelling on the positive.

Building a relationship with the Father and the Son is the most important action of life. The Son of God instructed potential followers to “count the cost” (Luke 14:26-33).

If that spectacular relationship has some negatives, every other part of life has some negatives—including your new car, new house, new job and the person you intend to marry.

End with positive

While it is important to recognize the negative aspects of life, it is necessary to dwell on the positive. That order is important.

Do you remember an important lesson when Moses sent individuals to spy out the land of Canaan (Numbers 13:17-33)?

- Numbers 13:26-27—The spies began their report with their positive evaluation—even showing the impressive fruit of the land.
- Numbers 13:28-29—But the spies then proceeded to dwell on the challenges of the land.
- Numbers 13:30—Caleb mentioned the mistake of giving the report in the wrong order, and he stressed the positive.
- Numbers 13:31-33—But the other spies were consumed by the negative.

Helpful project

At this time, I would like to present you with a project. Would you consider looking through the Bible for examples of people who first recognized the negative and then ended up dwelling on the positive?

Here are a few examples to help you get started.

- Genesis 50:20—Joseph recognized that his brothers meant evil against him, but he focused upon the good that God was creating.
- Daniel 3:17-18—Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego recognized the possibility of dying in the furnace, but they focused upon continuing to obey God.
- Matthew 26:36-44—The Son of God recognized the consequences of His trial, but He focused upon doing God's will.
- John 16:21-22—The Son of God reminded His disciples that the journey may have the pain of childbirth, but it will also have the joy of children.
- Romans 12:17-21—The apostle Paul reminded friends that they should recognize evil, but should avoid revenge and seek to overcome evil with good.
- 2 Timothy 4:14-15—The apostle Paul reminded friends that they should recognize people seeking to harm them, but should let God do the repaying.
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-10—The apostle Paul reminded friends that they should recognize the burden of trials, but should focus upon God's deliverance.

God bless your Bible study. And remember to dwell on the positive.