

BECOMING A POSITIVE PERSON

Text: Colossians 3:1-4

■ Charles R. Swindoll wrote, “This may shock you, but I believe the single most significant decision I can make on a day-to-day basis is my choice of attitude. It is more important than my past, my education, my bankroll, my successes or failures, fame or pain, what other people think of me or say about me, my circumstances, or my position. Attitude is that ‘single string’ that keeps me going or cripples my progress. It alone fuels my fire or assaults my hope. When my attitudes are right, there's no barrier too high, no valley too deep, no dream too extreme, no challenge too great for me.”

Becoming a positive person is all about *decisions*. We must make the correct decisions about everything from how we think to whom we associate with.

I. WE MUST CHOOSE TO THINK POSITIVE THOUGHTS.

■ *Philippians 4:8* says, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

A. Disciplined thoughts are productive thoughts.

B. We must take deliberate action to replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts.

You can regret all you want. What does it change? It just causes a sore inside you that festers. Next thing you know, you're dying and you don't know why.

--Morgan Freeman

C. Do not confuse humility with fear.

D. Do not confuse confidence with pride.

II. WE MUST CHOOSE TO LISTEN TO POSITIVE WORDS.

A. Many times our spirit is crushed or belittled by what we listen to.

■ Deepak Chopra tells the story of a patient she operated on for gallstones and discovered an inoperable case of cancer. The patient was diagnosed as having only two months to live, but her family decided not to tell her the news. Eight months later, the patient had no signs of cancer. Several years later, she told her doctor that before her surgery for gallstones, she was certain that she had cancer, but when she heard after the operation that it was just gallstones, she promised herself never to be sick another day in her life.

B. Every time we hear from the Lord or His Word we are strengthened and blessed.

III. WE MUST CHOOSE TO LOOK TO POSITIVE EXAMPLES.

■ *Hebrews 12:2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

A. Looking for the bad in people and in life never helped anyone.

■ There is very little difference in people but that little difference makes a big difference. The little difference is attitude. The big difference is whether it is positive or negative.

-Clement Stone

B. Looking to Jesus as a positive example will help anyone.

Hebrews 12:2-3

IV. WE MUST CHOOSE TO SPEAK POSITIVE WORDS.

A. Harsh, unkind and critical words destroy life.

■ James warns us that, “The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.”

B. Words of love, grace and goodness give life.

V. WE MUST CHOOSE TO BEHAVE IN A POSITIVE MANNER.

A. Negative, selfish and dishonest behavior displeases God.

■ A woman was waiting in the check-out line at a shopping center. Her arms were laden with a mop and broom and other cleaning supplies. By her actions and deep sighs, it was obvious she was in a hurry and not happy about the slowness of the line. When the cashier called for a price check on a box of soap, the woman remarked indignantly, "Well, I'll be lucky to get out of here and home before Christmas!" "Don't worry, ma'am," replied the clerk. "With that wind kicking up out there and that brand new broom you have there, you'll be home in no time."

B. Actions that uplift others are actions that God can bless.

CONCLUSION

■ A man once found a five-dollar bill. After that he always looked down when he walked along the street. Over the course of the years, he found twelve hairpins, five paper clips, a ballpoint pen, one nickel, four pennies, and a very large assortment of gum wrappers. But during those years he never saw a flower, a tree, or the smile of a passing stranger. If we just look down at our problems, we will never succeed. We will be like the centipede who was doing fine until someone asked him which of his one hundred legs came after which. He'd never thought of that before. The more he thought about it, the more he couldn't remember, and he found he couldn't walk at all. Lift up your eyes!

-- Robert C. Shannon, 1000 Windows, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing