



▶ WHAT DOES PRAYER DO?



▶ IS MONEY THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL?



▶ WHAT ARE ANGELS?

November 8, 2015

Sunday Morning

# Discovery study

SEARCHING, SHARING, AND STUDYING REAL ISSUES OF FAITH TOGETHER WITH THE BIBLE AND DISCUSSION

*I can do all things through him who strengthens me..... Philippians 4:13*

## Faith vs Positive Thinking

I like to think I am a positive person. I think being positive makes the twists and turns of life a little easier to handle. But I also am a person who has faith. I believe that when faced the uncertainties and trials of life I can place my faith in God to help me and guide me along the way. But what do faith and positive thinking have to do with each other?

The idea of the “power of positive thinking” emerged into the pop culture scene in the 1950’s with the “self-help” movement. One of its key promoters was speaker, author and pastor the Rev. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale. Peale’s book by the same title explained that people can change the course of events their lives simply by thinking them into reality. If you really believe it, then it will happen. This line of thinking sounds good but critics claim it is flawed. While it is true that people with a positive outlook tend to be more upbeat and hopeful; there is no evidence which supports the notion that our thoughts can change the future.

In fact, some have even argued that positive thinking is not what Christians

should rely on: *“Every good gift is from God above (James 1:17), not from the power of positive thinking. The best gift of all is the indwelling Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13). The Bible says that man cannot be “good” on his own (Isaiah 64:6). The only good in us comes from the righteousness of Jesus Christ applied to our account (Ephesians 2:1–5; Philippians 3:9).”* The writer goes on to conclude: *“If we want to better ourselves and make positive changes, we need to have more than the power of positive thinking. True spirituality will always start and end with our relationship to Christ. It is the Holy Spirit who is the key to changing one’s life, not our thoughts, and not our effort alone. As we actively yield to the Spirit, He will transform us. Rather than seek help from psycho-babble, pseudo-religious books, or a self-generated power of positive thinking, we should rely on what God has already given us through His Spirit: “We have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16).”* gotquestions.org

How do we reconcile the differences between positive thinking and faith? How can the two work together?



“And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”

Matthew 21:22

## Asking Questions that Matter



You're going to go through tough times - that's life. But I say, 'Nothing happens to you, it happens for you.' See the positive in negative events. Joel Osteen

Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to someone's face? Did I say words of healing? Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love? These are the real questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits, here in this world and the life to come. Henri Nouwen

### Is having a positive attitude an indication of vibrant faith?

In an effort to create an upbeat, optimistic and expectant atmosphere, Christians are sometimes taught to maintain a positive mental attitude. It is undoubtedly better to be positive, rather than negative. Above all, Christians have hope [Romans 5:1-2].

An unfortunate side-effect of some Christian teaching on positive attitude is that those who are experiencing trying times may become confused about their faith in Jesus Christ. For troubled believers, the Bible offers words of comfort and encouragement – even to the point of telling them to count it as joy [James 1:2]. What the Bible does not do is to imply that suffering and mental anguish are an indication of lack of faith. In the Psalms we read that King David did not deny his pain when he was suffering. He did not use positive statements to cover up his torment. He cried out to God [Psalms 6:2-3,6-7]. But, he followed his laments by declaring that he was relying on God to deliver him [Ps. 6:4,8-9].

***A positive mental attitude, from a biblical perspective, is not proclaiming what is not so, it is not denying reality, it is not pretence. It plainly states the problem and acknowledges suffering – but it sees the solution in the power and mercy of God.***

1. How is having a positive attitude good for us?
2. How can a positive mental attitude create problems for us?



Salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ. To complain without expressing trust in God indicates lack of faith. Equally, not complaining, but relying on our mental strength and positive affirmations rather than on God, also indicates lack of faith. See: <http://www.differentspirit.org/opinion/faith-and-positive-mental-attitude.php>

Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.

Saint Augustine

Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

I am still far from being what I want to be, but with God's help I shall succeed.

Vincent Van Gogh

IMPOSSIBLE