

[Leaders are Positive]

Who is the most positive person you know?

Answer:

Answer:

What kind of effect does their positivity have on you when you spend time together?

WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT IT

Positivity is not just plastering on a smile and pretending like all your problems in life don't exist. We all know what it's like to spend time with someone who is overly syrupy, is peppy all the time, and ignores all problems—it's annoying and exhausting!

Leaders acknowledge hardship and trial. They do not gloss over or ignore them, because they realize sometimes life is hard! However, leaders refuse to allow themselves or their followers to only focus on the negative—they know what a dangerous cycle this can be. Leaders set the example and challenge their followers to have godly positivity.

Godly positivity is not allowing the negatives of life to overshadow God's unchanging character or the fact that he wins in the end!

Godly leaders are confident in the Lord's promises; they do not need to ignore hardship, but they also do not let it have the final word. Rather, leaders with godly positivity root their lives in the sure character of the Lord rather than being overcome by despair and fear. Leaders do this in their own lives, and also point others to do the same!

Many of the Psalms are great examples of people who face hard things but still praise God and cling to his promises in the midst of them. As you read this passage, take note of all the phrases where the psalmist acknowledges his tough predicament but also states God's character or praise to Him.

Read Psalm 86 and answer the following questions.

Answer:

What are some of the “hopeless situations” this psalmist is facing?

Have you ever faced a seemingly hopeless situation? What was that experience like?

Why do you think the psalmist is so intentional about going back and offering praises to God after stating his tough circumstances and discouragement?

How can you help yourself choose godly positivity the next time you face a challenging situation?

A SECOND LOOK

In 1873 Horatio Spafford wrote the well-known hymn, “It Is Well With My Soul,” after losing all four of his daughters in a shipwreck while crossing the Atlantic Ocean. The first news from the accident he received was from his wife which merely read, “Saved alone.” He is said to have written this hymn a few days later as he crossed over the very spot his children died. The words of the hymn read:

*When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

A newer worship song, “How He Loves” written by John Mark McMillan was also penned in the midst of tragedy: the death of McMillan’s best friend in a car accident. His resulting song reads:

*He is jealous for me
Loves like a hurricane
I am a tree
Bending beneath
The weight of his wind and mercy*

*When all of a sudden
I am unaware of these afflictions eclipsed by glory
And I realize how beautiful you are
And how great your affections for me
Oh how he loves us so,
Oh how he loves us
How he loves us so*

You can probably think of other songs that deal with the writer's pain or heartbreak; it's a pretty popular theme in music. One of the big differences between these secular songs and songs of worship however, is the enduring hope Christian songwriters can have—hope that is rooted in Christ rather than the mere hope they will one day just “get over it.” These songwriters model godly positivity and leadership: even in the processing of their pain they remind us to look to God as the source of our hope—leading us into worship!

Answer:

How do you think we develop the attitude, “it is well with my soul” in the midst of hardship?

Why do you think it is sometimes easier to stay focused on the negativity of our situation rather than the truth of the Lord?

Do you know anyone having a hard time? Think of a way you can sympathize with their pain and also remind them of God's promises.

APPLY IT

It's easier to choose godly positivity when we have others to help us, so invite a friend to join you! Get together this week and share a discouraging situation where you'd like to grow in choosing godly positivity. Then make a plan to reach out when that situation happens next and remind each other about God's promises.

Be specific:

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

PARTING THOUGHT



"While other worldviews lead us to sit in the midst of life's joys, foreseeing the coming sorrows, Christianity empowers its people to sit in the midst of this world's sorrows, tasting the coming joy."

– Timothy Keller