

The Benefits Of Preaching

Introduction. In a world of negativity, a positive outlook is refreshing. All Christians should be positive and happy (Romans 5:1-2, 11; Philippians 4:4). However, there are times when positivity can be a hindrance. God revealed His scriptures to include both, and because of this, we need to accept and benefit from both. There are great benefits from positive and negative preaching, which we will explore in this lesson.

I. The "Positive Mental Attitude" Philosophy

A. In our country.

1. The philosophy emphasizes positive thoughts to overcome negative issues in life. It does not resolve the cause of problems, but tries to make them go away by overwhelming them with positive ideas.
2. The end result was the "hippie" generation, along with its rebellion, immorality, little or no work ethic, little or no respect for authority or respect for the dignity of life, i.e., abortion.
3. A more recent example of this philosophy in society is politically correct terminology such as "alternative lifestyles" in the place of homosexuality, adultery, and fornication.

B. In our churches.

1. Some suffer from "negaphobia," which is a persistent fear of anything negative.
 - a) In the church, brethren have tried to emphasize the positive and avoid the negative because to a lot of people, "negative teaching is legalism."
 - b) This attitude manifests itself in not challenging false religions or false doctrines, or also calling someone a false teacher. In fact, this attitude has also made people openly criticize and malign those who defend the truth against error. In the meantime, false doctrine continues to rob souls of eternal salvation.
 - c) Furthermore, sin (such as social drinking, immodest dress, and gambling) is redefined as an opinion, then is defended under Romans 14. Partial truths are preached, or truth without application is preached. Sinners are no longer convicted of sin because no caution against the danger of sin.
2. The overall result is poor Bible knowledge. People end up being unable to defend God's truth. This produces a drifting from the New Testament pattern and ultimately compromise: standing for nothing and accepting anything.

II. God's Idea Of "Positive" Preaching

- A. The Bible actually warns against purely positive preaching (Jeremiah 8:4-12; 2 Corinthians 11:12-15; 2 Peter 2:1-3, 18-19).
- B. God's idea of "positive" preaching is imparting instruction and information. "Negative" protects and preserves by warning against sin. "Negative" helps one understand evil without experiencing it. "Negative" yields positive results by "positive" prevention.
 - 1. Positive only neglects valuable warnings and rebukes — negative.
 - 2. Negative only neglects full instruction and encouragement — negative.
 - 3. Positive truths instruct, encourage, and edify — positive.
 - 4. Negative truths warn, prevent, and convict — positive.
 - 5. Favoring one over the other defeats the power of both — negative.
- C. Most understand positive statements of good conduct and need no warning for doing good (Galatians 5:23). However, people constantly need warning against sin.
 - 1. God warned Adam and Eve, hoping to keep them from wickedness (Genesis 2:16-17).
 - 2. The 10 commandments are considered by many to be the finest system of moral laws ever given.
 - a) The commandments were given for Israel's good (Deuteronomy 10:1-4, 12-14). But 8 of the 10 commandments are negative.
 - b) In explaining the 10 commandments, 15 negative and 5 positive statements are used (Deuteronomy 5:7-21).
 - 3. All scriptures, positive and negative, produce positive results (Deuteronomy 5:32-33; Acts 20:27; cp. vv. 20-21 [positive] and vv. 28-30 [negative]).
 - a) Jesus magnified the positive with "negative" statements (Matthew 15:11-14).
 - b) The scriptures, even the negative parts, make man complete (2 Timothy 3:13-17) — positive.
 - c) Preaching, both positive and negative, keeps man on the straight and narrow path (2 Timothy 4:1-5) — positive.
 - 4. A wise person learns the positive power of negative instructions (Job 5:17-18; Acts 2:22-24, 36-47; 2 Corinthians 7:6-11; Hebrews 12:5-11).

Conclusion. We have all heard the statement, "We need more positive and less negative preaching." Positive and negative are often subjectively defined. Whose concept of "positive" will we use? Ours or God's? True positive preaching can only be accomplished when preachers and Christians declare and live the whole counsel of God. To emphasize the positive over the negative produces negative results. To emphasize the negative over the

positive produces negative results. To teach a balance of both will produce positive results. Preaching the whole counsel of God is always positive preaching.

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