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## Optimism Vs. Pessimism

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In life there are two kinds of people. There are the pessimistic and the optimistic.

The pessimistic are those who always have a negative attitude about life. They live with the mindset of "Woe is me! Nobody knows the troubles I have seen! Nobody knows my sorrows!" With every problem that comes their way they always expect the worst possible outcome. They are always sad and unhappy with life and they want others to feel the same way.

The optimistic are the opposite. These are the people who have a positive attitude about life. They anticipate good outcomes; they are happy and upbeat; they walk around with a smile on their face and want to help others do the same.

Which kind of person are you? Are you pessimistic or optimistic? The latter experiences so many blessings in life.

- **He enjoys more godly companionship.** Do you like being around pessimistic people? Do you like being around someone who is always negative and always looking for the worst in every situation? I don't! In fact, when I am I find myself quickly becoming negative myself. Their pessimistic energy finds a way to spread to others. I don't think Jesus would have "kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" if He was that kind of person (Luke 2:52). Even during very difficult times Jesus tried to lift the spirits of others. Jesus didn't have a troubled heart and He didn't want His followers to have one either (John 14:1-6).
- **He is always at peace despite his circumstances.** Paul is a great example of a man who exemplifies this. While being stuck in a Roman jail cell, just because he was a servant of Jesus and preached the gospel, Paul could have easily been a negative person. He could have easily developed a mindset that life was unfair and God was not with him. But he didn't. Instead he looked for the positives that could come from his bad condition and he continued giving glory to God (Philippians 1:12-14). He continued being content and thankful for the blessings he did have (Philippians 4:10-12). How could Paul be full of joy despite being unfairly locked up in prison (Philippians 1:4)? How could Paul still say what he does in Philippians 4:13? Because his treasures were stored in the right place (Philippians 2:21; Matthew 6:21).

- **He is more effective in bringing others to God.** Every disciple has a responsibility to try to bring lost souls to Jesus (Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 2:9-10). The first step to effective evangelism is living a righteous life before others (Matthew 5:13-16). We can't expect to sell people on the blessings of being a Christian if we are always negative and pessimistic. When non-believers look at our lives they need to see something different about us. They need to see how happy being a child of God makes us. This may prompt them to ask us questions about our faith. They may say, "I want what they have. I want to have that same kind of joy and peace in my life." In fact, Paul says that being a grumbler and complainer can actually hinder the work of evangelism (Philippians 2:14-16).

**He is stronger in his faith.** In the time of Moses, after going into the Promised Land for forty days, why did ten of the spies come back with a pessimistic report (even though God told them He would give them the land)? Answer: because of a lack of faith! By contrast, why did Joshua and Caleb come back with an optimistic and positive report? Answer: because they had strong faith! (See Numbers 13 and 14) From these examples we see that our faith in God is directly tied to our attitude about life. Those who have faith in God won't look for the worst in every possible situation. Instead they will focus on what they can control and leave the rest to God (Matthew 6:25-33).

