



Management Devotional for Christian Institute of Management Publication - 2016

## **THE PATH FROM PESSIMISM TO OPTIMISM**

### **Devotional Day 1**

December 10, 2018 11:51 am

*".. all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." – Romans 8:28.*

Winston Churchill says, "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

People, by nature, tend toward either optimism or pessimism, and it need not be based on the relationship with God. And many stay optimistic with a positive outlook as they feel happier and healthier that way. However, such people can end up in Optimistic bias, which is the mistaken belief that one's chances of experiencing a negative event are lower, leading to dangerous results like confusion and disillusionment with life.

But Biblical optimism is not based on mere human confidence that everything will turn out all right nor based on the belief that whatever we ask in prayer, we will receive everything just because we believe it hard enough and not use negativity in our talks. It is an optimism that sinks its roots deep enough in the awareness of the sovereign nature of God and in the sure knowledge of the power of His love and Grace. This is based on hope and surety that regardless of the pain we face in life, we can trust in God's favor and strength, and that everything will happen for good at the end.

I was a happy-go-lucky girl initially, till I fell into depression and developed a negative outlook on everything and was bitter and angry on God. I felt that my life was a failure and even tried to take my life away. But while I was dying of Pneumonia and was kept on a ventilator, I heard a voice, "I am giving you a new life" three times. I saw the Cross and the Holy blood flowing in torrents, and I could see every wrong thing I had ever done getting washed away by that flow. This supernatural presence did not leave me. It forced me to read the Bible, which changed my whole outlook on life. Now I know that I have a Creator who loves me so much that all things that happen to me should happen only, if He allows it through His loving fingers.

Are you in pain now? If you can learn to view life from God's perspective, every pain will eventually turn out to be a matter of praise.

Dear Lord, Help me to know you more and be confident in Your love and Grace. Help me to meet you in my disappointments and to recognize that You have a purpose even in my pain, and everything will happen for my good at the end. Amen.

### **Devotional Day-2: FEAR TO FAITH**

*".. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged; for the LORD, your God will be with you wherever you go." – Joshua 1:9*

Mark Victor Hansen said one of the greatest assets you have is your imagination, but I feel that imagination is also the spring of human fear. The things we picture and dwell more, have a very powerful influence over us. So only Philippians 4:8 says whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, think about such things. However, the mind normally tends towards much unnecessary imagination, like the fear of rejection or the loss of loved ones or natural disasters or accidents. So only, the Bible has more than 80 verses throughout Scripture commanding us not to fear.

When I was young, I used to fear for every little thing. Often, I used to get up from sleep shouting that something is pressing my neck. Even after I became an adult, I had this fear of darkness and accidents. But this fear vanished once I knew Jesus, as I understood that the One in me is greater than the one who is in the world. Now I pray for others for deliverance from demonic possessions. Faith is the antidote to fear, and it depends on the Word of God. Joe Stowell says, "In the midst of the changing circumstances of life, we have a choice. We can live in fear of all the uncertainties, or we can cling to the reality of God's sustaining and intervening presence in our lives."

In Mark 4, we read the story of disciples waking up Jesus crying out whether He cares, when they were fighting a terrible storm. After calming the storm, Jesus asked, "Where is your faith? Is it on your ability or on My Power? Once when a flight was tossed around due to the turbulence, everyone in the flight was scared, except a little girl. When someone asked, she replied, "my Dad is the pilot, and he is taking me home."

Are you afraid of something? Remember that your Heavenly Father who can calm the wind and the waves is in Control and is taking home. Say like David, When I am afraid, I will trust in you.

Dear Lord Jesus, Help me to know that You are so close to me and that no fear can overtake me. When circumstances are against me, teach me to rest under Your everlasting arms. Amen..

**Devotional Day-3:**

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**PROBLEM TO PROMISE**

*“With men, it is impossible, but not with God: for with God, all things are possible.” – Mark 10:27.*

Many times our problems overwhelm us, and we don't know where to turn. But at such times, if we know that with God, nothing is impossible and choose to trust Him resting on His promises, we can enjoy a divine peace. God gave Abraham the promise that his wife Sarah will get him a son even while he was 100 years old. Romans 4 says that Abraham did not consider the weakness of his own body or the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not focus on the problem or His circumstances but on the promise. He was fully persuaded that God would do what He promised and believed that God can do the impossible and saw that His dreams came to pass. God can do what medical science cannot do; He can do what is impossible with our worldly strength or knowledge.

While doing my Ph.D. at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, I developed depression and found it difficult to continue and decided to drop it. But when Jesus became a part of me, I believed His promise that I would instruct you and teach you. I asked Holy Spirit to be my Guide; put a chair next to me for Him while doing my project work, and God helped me to write many papers for international journals and conferences and helped me to receive my Ph.D.

When God gave Zerubbabel, the promise and the mission of rebuilding the second temple, it was not an easy task. Everything came against him. But Zerubbabel refused to focus on the opposition. Instead, he focused on the promise. So the Lord said, 'Who are you, O Great Mountain? Before Zerubbabel, you shall become a plain, and the project of rebuilding the temple was completed successfully.

If you feel that your problems are too big, don't focus on those problems; start focusing on God's promises. Instead of talking about the impossibilities, talk of the possibilities with God. The God, who could part the red sea to deliver the Israelites, can do mighty things for you and can make a way for you. Mighty Lord Jesus, I praise You and thank You that You can do everything and that You have fearfully and wonderfully made me. Teach me to focus on Your promises and help me to come out of this problem victoriously.

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**Devotional Day-4:**

**MESS TO MESSAGE/ TRIAL TO TRIUMPH/ TEST T O TESTIMONY**

*".. comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." – 2 Corinthians 1:4*

Sadly many people in the world have to pass through traumatic experiences like the death of a loved one or divorce or major accidents in their lives that can create feelings of fear, uncertainty, and vulnerability leading to insecurities. Tamar had to live in desolation and shame after being raped by Amnon. Many abuse victims whom I have counseled say that they feel worthless, unwanted, guilty, and empty. When such tragedies come and go in life, it does not leave the person the same. They can come out better or bitter; they can come out blaming God or can come out stronger with a greater trust in God. God alone can take that mess of one's life and turn it into a message or a test into a testimony. He uniquely qualifies such people who are going through tragedies to help other people struggling in similar situations. God often uses our deepest pain as the launching pad of our greatest calling.

Twenty-five years before, while studying at Princeton, when Dr. BJ Miller tried to climb on top of a parked shuttle train, 11,000 volts passed through his body, which resulted in the loss of his legs below the knee and his left forearm. Later, he studied medicine, and when his only sister died of suicide, he specialized in palliative care, and now Dr. BJ Miller is the executive director of the Zen Hospice Project, a residential facility for dying patients in San Francisco and caring for people as they live out their last days. He says he chose this job as he is uniquely suited for it.

The Cross is God's own deep suffering and His capacity to turn evil into good, and it teaches us to trust in God in the face of suffering. Perhaps you might have gone through sufferings and questioning, "Why me?" Remember, if God can take the very worst thing that has ever happened, the death of Jesus and turned it into the very best thing: the opening up of heaven to His followers, can He not create something good out of your suffering? He can and He will.

Prayer: Precious Heavenly Father, I thank You for the Cross and help me to trust in You even when everything seems senseless and hopeless. Thank You for Your Presence that walks with me while I am going through this situation. Amen.

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**Devotional Day-5:  
WORRY TO WORSHIP**

*“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” – Philippians 4:6-7*

Worry is trying to control things that are out of our control. Constant worrying takes a huge toll as it consumes huge amounts of time and energy and ends up in anxiety disorder. Anxiety disorder affects around 20% of the population at any given time, as for many, being anxious seems to just be an unavoidable part. So only Jesus said, “do not worry” three times in that short passage of Matthew 6:25-34, in His Sermon on Mount.

The primary cause of anxiety is improper fear and allowing our minds to focus on doubts and uncertainties. If you take a small coin, hold it close to your eyes, it will block your vision. Similarly, if you dwell long on your problems, they appear huge. So the Bible says to guard your hearts and not to heed to all the words that are spoken. Though we cannot control what happens to us, we can certainly control how we choose to respond.

When I was in depression, I struggled with sleeplessness. One day while lying sleepless, I remembered my childhood, when I and all my six siblings used to sit around my mom every evening after school and tell our stories, mostly the good ones. Then during our family prayer, we used to thank God for all the good things. Something struck me, and I started to thank God for all the good things that He has done in my life, and to my surprise, I slept off soon. I came out of sleep disorder using this technique. So only Paul says, giving thanks to God in every circumstance is God’s will for us as God wants to see us joyful.

When three major armies were surrounding King Jehoshaphat, he had every reason for anxiety. But he put a group of men in front of his army to praise the Lord, and the Lord set the enemy armies against each other, and Judah won.

Are you suffering from anxiety? Instead of focussing on your physical capabilities and limitations, focus on the awesome and limitless capabilities of God. Say like David, I sought the Lord, and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears.

My loving Lord Jesus, You are above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and everything is placed under Your feet. Help me to trust in You fully and give me a thankful heart

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**Devotional Day-6:  
VICTIM TO VICTOR**

*"Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."- 1 Corinthians 15:57.*

A victim is a person who has been harmed physically, emotionally, or otherwise, and a victor is the one who defeats an adversary. Life is not simple for many, as they are pierced by painful experiences or been treated very badly. Few succumb to such hurtful experiences and allow them to permanently disrupt their lives or use negative incidents as excuses for sinful or irresponsible behavior. A person with victim mentality says I treat myself and the world around me in this wrong way because such horrible things happened to me when I was little, or because so and so hurt me.

When I became the project leader at a young age, I failed miserably not able to take the blames for the failures, due to my victim mentality, because of some promotional issues. But when I understood that it is poisoning my spirit, I allowed God to mature me, and He enabled me to develop good leadership skills. We should never let our history interfere with our destiny. God is bigger than any problem you and I will ever face, which includes death itself.

Though life was unfair to Joseph, being a victim of all kinds of evil deeds and wrong circumstances from the age 10 to 30; motherless, mistreated and betrayed by his own brothers, separated from his family, exiled, enslaved, falsely accused, imprisoned and forgotten, Joseph never succumbed to despair nor was he resentful or revengeful. Instead, he carried out his works as a good steward, and God never left Him and led Him to His ultimate destiny of becoming the highest in Egypt, second to Pharaoh. Yes, God acted in His time as time is that brush of God as He paints His masterpiece on the canvas of the human heart.

There is a fine line between winning and losing; many that are abused and mistreated live like victors, and many with advantages and opportunities live like victims. Even though trials and tribulations can impact our lives, let us be sure that we will never be forsaken as He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus. The beautiful rainbows appear when the sun comes after a terrible rainstorm.

Precious Heavenly Father, You are sovereign, and there is a purpose behind every adversity. Help me never to consider myself as a victim of circumstances but to see every situation as an opportunity for your glory to shine forth in victory.

**Devotional Day-7:**  
**APTITUDE TO ATTITUDE**

*“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus Who, being in very nature, God, did not consider equality with God.”- Philippians 2:5-7.*

Aptitude is an inherent or acquired ability or talent, and attitude is a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, person, or situation. Zig Ziglar says that your attitude, not your aptitude, determines your altitude, how high you go. This is because ninety percent of success in one's life will be determined by attitude and only ten percent by aptitude.

Though aptitude is not a pessimistic trait, aptitude without proper attitude is dangerous, and hence we should learn how to harness and control our attitudes. My father, being an educationalist, taught us all skills starting from music, dance to studies that enabled most of us to become doctors, engineers, and PhDs. But God had to allow all of us to go through personal problems to make us more humble by correcting our wrong attitudes like pride, anger, and low self-esteem; we learnt that attitudes matter more than these aptitudes. It is enjoyable to work with someone who is less talented and has a good attitude than someone who is very talented and has a bad attitude.

Abraham Lincoln had a humble attitude. When he was about to give his inaugural address, someone shouted: “Don't forget that your father used to make shoes for my family.” But he replied, “yes, my father used to make shoes and the way he made shoes; nobody else can, as he poured his whole soul in it. If you have any complaints, I can make another pair of shoes.” The whole Senate was dumbstruck.

The two men Joshua and Caleb, had a positive attitude compared to the other ten spies and the Israelites, and hence they were the only two who entered the Promised Land. When David faced Goliath, he never gave him credit for being big, but magnified the source of his strength and focused on his big God. God preferred David to Saul, who was tall and strong because of this godly attitude.

Let us strive to get this attitude of Paul, who learnt the secret of being content in any and every situation and said while in prison that I can do anything in the Lord who strengthens me.

Dear Lord Jesus, You came into this world to transform me and to give me hope for my future. Grant me attitudes of thankfulness, and help me to spread positive thoughts and deeds everywhere I go. Amen.