



**SERVICE TIMES:**

Sunday : 9:30 AM  
10:30 AM  
5:00 PM  
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

**ELDER**

Todd Cox Jimmy Griffith  
Travis Everett Paul White

**DEACONS:**

Derek Anderson Bret Cox  
James Dow Patrick Gaughan  
Ryan Griffith Dan Harbin  
Craig Hecht Danny Meek  
Skyler Meek Phil Parker  
Jay Silvers Jason Stannard  
Travis Starling Bryan Tacker  
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**Toxic Positivity, And The Non-Pursuit Of Happiness**

I recently stumbled upon two articles that attempt to address our feelings in the modern world, and, what we should do about them. The first was an article by Laura Gallaher, Ph.D. (who calls herself a leadership coach and "organizational psychologist") on something she calls "Toxic Positivity," which apparently has become an issue in the working world. What is toxic positivity? How on earth can something that is positive (it's called "positivity" after all) be toxic?

According to Dr. Gallaher, the phrase toxic positivity means only focusing on positive things while ignoring, suppressing, or avoiding anything that may trigger negative emotions. And this is a bad thing.

Dr. Gallaher's premise is that if a manager runs around the office playing cheerleader, us underlings are apparently going to be annoyed, rather than motivated. This sounds just like the people who get angry when a store clerk wishes them to "have a nice day!" (I don't know, but I'm guessing that Dr. Gallaher lives in New York).

The second was an article written by David Robson entitled, "Why it's time to stop pursuing happiness." His premise sounds bizarre on the surface, and I

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would argue falls into the realm of “first world problems,” the kind that our forefathers would scoff at, if they could even comprehend them.

Mr. Robson’s argument is that people today are focused too much on the pursuit of their own happiness: “We become so absorbed in our own wellbeing, we forget the people around us – and may even resent them for inadvertently bringing down our mood or distracting us from more ‘important’ goals.”

While Mr. Robson appears to be onto something here, he does fall off the tracks later on, arguing against counting your blessings too much: “In one study, people who counted their blessings once a week showed the expected rise in life satisfaction, but those who counted their blessings three times a week actually became less satisfied with their life.”

This is where we are in the realm of modern day psychology. Experts are telling us to do things the exact opposite of what we’ve been taught, to ignore all the things we said in the past, because now we know better, so listen to the new us, not the old us . . .

Interestingly enough, I also read recently that the number one podcast on iTunes is the Bible. Mike Schmitz, a Catholic priest, hosts a podcast simply called, “The Bible In A Year.” According to the article, “His engaging and charismatic delivery takes the listener through all of the books. He tries to put events in context letting listeners know what else was going on at the time four-thousand years ago.” Interesting. A dramatic reading of the Bible is beating all other podcasts on iTunes. How could that be? I thought the Bible was old news, behind the times, etc.

And yet, all of this shows that people know something is missing from their lives, even if they can’t quite figure out what it is, and modern day science is failing them. Fortunately, it appears that more and more people are realizing that “there is nothing new under the sun.” (Eccl. 1:9)

I am moved with non-toxic positivity to see that more people are searching for meaning in their lives. Whether the cause is COVID, the divisiveness in our

country, or something else, people are searching. This creates opportunity like never before.

With apologies to preachers everywhere, I’ve often said that the first step in the plan of salvation is not hearing the Word. The first step in the plan of salvation is realizing that you need saving! Until you reach that phase of your life, nothing else is going to resonate. My brethren, people in the world are searching. Let us be there to lead them, “always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence” (1 Pet. 3:15)

“Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.” (Jn. 4:35)

- Phil Parker

**We think:**

It’s impossible  
I’m too tired  
Nobody really loves me  
I can’t go on  
I can’t figure things out  
I can’t do it  
I’m not able  
It’s not worth it  
I can’t forgive myself  
I can’t manage  
I’m afraid  
I’m worried and frustrated  
I don’t have enough faith  
I feel all alone

**God promises:**

All things are possible (Lk 18:27)  
I will give you rest (Matt 11:28-30)  
I love you (Jn 3:16)  
My grace is sufficient (2Cor 12:9)  
I will direct your steps (Prov 3:5-6)  
You can do all things (Phil 4:13)  
I am able (2Cor 9:8)  
It will be worth it (Rom 8:28)  
I forgive you (1Jn 1:9)  
I will supply all your needs (Phil 4:19)  
I have not given you a spirit of fear (2Tim 1:7)  
Cast all your cares on Me (1Pet 5:7)  
My word builds faith (Rom 10:17)  
I will never leave you or forsake you (Heb 13:5)

Those are God’s promises. Do you believe them?