

16 Dangers of the 'Positive Christianity' Movement

Are we are forming a culturally acceptable version of God?

"And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD." And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play" (Ex. 32:4-6).

I'll begin by affirming that God absolutely is LOVE! He is good, all the time. However, his goodness may not always register as good on our human grid.

"The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).

There is a rapidly growing aversion to any discussion about God that includes anything that feels negative. The problem? Cover to cover in Scripture we see endless accounts of God displaying His attributes—many of which would not be defined as positive.

Instead of proclaiming the full counsel of Scripture, people today are looking for a buffet Bible when they can load up on chocolate cake and milk shakes while quickly stepping by the peas, carrots and salad.

People want to form a god of their own design as the Israelites did when Moses was meeting with a fearful God. The

plan is to sit down to eat and drink and rise up to play.

Today it's nearly impossible (not an exaggeration) to find a church that preaches cutting, hard-core truths of Scripture that break us out of prison and into freedom. If you want to hear about how good God is and little else, then you can pick most any church in the nation.

"If Jesus had preached the same message that ministers preach today, He would never have been crucified," said Leonard Ravenhill.

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False conversions—I could spend a lot of time on this point, and I do address it extensively in my book *The Coming Church*. For the sake of brevity, we must finally come to the understanding that salvation requires an extreme step—not a casual one. It's when we understand the great drama that includes God, Satan, eternity, heaven, hell, judgment and abundant life that authentic conversions can occur. Who wouldn't sign up to follow a God that promises gold coins and butterflies? The question must not be, "How can I benefit from salvation." It has to be, "Is God worthy of my surrendering all I value to Him?" When we truly know Him in His fullness, in His grace and wrath, in His mercy and judgment, as a Lion and a Lamb, we will be able to make the fearful decision, "You, Lord are worthy of my entire life."

Misunderstanding of the fear of the Lord—It's stunning to me that so many are renouncing any fear whatsoever, even the fear of the Lord! If we have a view of God that is only positive, we will reject anything that feels negative, and this includes the fear of the Lord. Let's set the record straight—the fear of the Lord is not simply to be in awe of God or to respect Him. Fear of the Lord is translated over and over as terror, to be afraid, to dread. The love of God and the dread of God are not mutually exclusive. In fact, His love shines brighter

we we realize how fearful He truly is.

“That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off” (Rom. 11:20-22).

God is limited—When we eliminate a major part of God’s personality and character, we greatly limit our revelation of Him and His ability to move in our lives. God is much more than the leader of some euphoric land of fantasy.

Rejection of judgment (that we need so badly)—I believe one of the most important prayers I can pray is, “God, judge me daily.” For those who reject God’s judgment because they perceive it to be negative, their lives will be marked by areas not given access to God’s loving calibration. Additionally, our nation is in desperate need of loving judgment from a righteous judge. Judgment is not hatred; it’s love. It is deep love. We see this in our own society. We are so touchy-feely that we react in anger when we presume someone to be judging us. However, it’s true love that will judge an issue and help someone break free into healing. We must embrace judgment in these dire end times.

“And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead (Acts 10:42).

Rejection of God—This is one of the most serious issues. God absolutely still judges in the New Covenant, and those who reject this will be at risk of attributing judgments of God to Satan. God’s wrath is still on the Earth, and we have to understand that much of the trouble we see today has actually been initiated by God—all while many of His followers are

rebuking Him and calling Him Satan.

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him” (John 3:36).

Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit—Even more serious is the risk of blasphemy. I believe we have to be radically opposed to God to fall into this unforgivable sin (I know many wrestle with this, but unpacking it will require more time than we have here), but, the “positive Christianity” movement can nudge people closer to falling into this. When we attribute an act of God to Satan, that is blasphemy, and this occurs often within “positive Christianity.”

“‘Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin’— for they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit”’” (Mark 3:28-30).

Ignoring calls to battle—If we think God is mostly interested in our safety and happiness, we will deem unnecessary and invasive any call to battle. It’s time we mature and understand we are already in the midst of a vicious battle, and it’s our calling to fight hard. God really is OK with His children being tortured and killed as martyrs for the sake of other people discovering Jesus, and we should be too. We are end-time soldiers, and this means we have signed up for a life of inconvenience, brokenness and struggle. That negative reality is glorious when we understand what it is unto.

Misinterpretations of negative situations—News flash: It’s not always the devil. How often do people rebuke demons when it’s actually God Who caused the situation? If we think that God only functions positively, then what are we to do with the fact that God actually demonized Paul and refused his deliverance? What about God striking people with sickness?

“So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong” 2 Cor. 12:7-10).

God actually endorsed an assault of Satan on Paul to keep him humble! Paul embraced a “negative” God, because He was True. He was content with weaknesses, hardships, calamities. He didn’t rebuke them, and that didn’t cause him to attribute them to Satan. Of course, Satan wouldn’t want to keep Paul from becoming conceited, so this wasn’t his plan. Just as with Job, God will allow attacks of the enemy for our own benefit. In fact, it was Satan who was allowed by God to kill Jesus. He literally had thorns in His flesh as He hung on the cross, and they were not taken away.

Minimized need for intercession—If we think things are getting better and better, as many who support the “positive Christianity” movement do, then we have no need to intercede. However, if we truly understand that some very troubling times are ahead, and God has called us to stand in the gap, then our passion for intercession will skyrocket. We need Abrahams and Jonahs who will see the judgment of God ahead and pray with passion and warn those in its direct path. Our God who is the same yesterday, today and forever, totally destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. He destroyed the Earth in a flood. His wrath remains on those who reject Him today.

“Then he said, ‘Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there.’ He answered, ‘For the sake of ten I will not destroy it’” (Gen.

18:32).

Rejection of call to martyrdom—Martyrdom is the pinnacle of negative experiences for the Christian. Of course, the truth is that it's not negative at all. It's glorious!

"Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.' But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul" (Acts 7:54-58).

How powerful is it that Jesus stood as Stephen died! Not only that, but did you notice what young man was mentioned in the story? A young man who would end up turning the world upside down. Saul. Paul. We need Stephens to arise and lay down their lives in such a way that a new company of Sauls are awakened into their destinies.

Universalism—You'd be surprised at how many professing Christians reject any thought of eternity in hell—for anybody! After all, how could a good God cast people into eternal torment? It doesn't register on the grid of "positive Christianity."

Rejection of tenets of the faith—I'm angered at how many of today's Christians get sad and withdrawn when core tenets of the faith are preached. The cross, hell, fear of the Lord, surrender, brokenness and repentance are minimized as they prefer to focus on how giddy God is about them! We absolutely need a fresh wave of Blood-bought fire-and-brimstone preachers again!

Wrongly discern God's presence and purpose—The presumption is

that whenever God is manifesting that the feelings we experience are to be happy, warm and positive. Any manifestation that includes fear of the Lord, conviction, rebuke, challenge or mourning is soundly rejected. If the atmosphere isn't electric, many today check out and disengage.

Using God—A spirit of religion is in this “positive Christianity” movement. The thought is that God is there for our enjoyment and must respond to our cries for satisfaction. We determine the experience instead of letting God use us as He sees fit.

Self-centeredness—Related to using God, instead of focusing on the devastation in the world and our responsibility to bring resolution to it, those in the “positive Christianity” movement are focused on self.

Forsaking our anointing by always being nice—Boy, we have to stop this. We think God always has perma-smile with a twinkle sparkling off of His grin. If we think of God in this light, we'll attempt to do the same. It can manifest many different ways. For example, instead of boldly preaching repentance and the terror of hell, we might just smile and be sweet and sugary by encouraging people to take baby steps toward Jesus. We have become so tentative and passive when dealing with severe threats against the church, such as the homosexual agenda, the false-grace movement and others. We need prophets to rise up and preach judgment and repentance again!

Sometimes we need to look someone in the eye, under the unction of the Holy Spirit, and say with no hint of a smile that they are destined for hell. Repent!

Conclusion

Of course, there are limitless positives about God and our relationship with Him. However, we don't want to stop there. We must trust Him enough to embrace Him in His fullness.

The judge is coming, and He will start with the church. How many will fall away when He arrives, disappoints and confuses people by looking nothing like the god of their own design?

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