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# Powered, Prospered & Protected by Positive Emotions

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## INTRODUCTION:

I spend a lot of money buying books and audio books. This is because I realize that a positive thought is always worth much more than the price I pay for a book. Cost is one thing, but value is another. The value I get from positive thoughts affects me for good in every area of life.

Recently, I sensed that my own level of encouragement was down. It was time to buy some new books, find some new thoughts, and drink from the well of encouragement. One of the books I purchased was *HOW FULL IS YOUR BUCKET* by Tom Rath and Donald O Clifton, PhD. *If you'd like to be powered, prospered and protected by positive emotions, buy that book.* I'll be sharing some of the main insights from this book and combining those with scriptures in this message.

For years, I've told myself to, "Fill each day with little acts of kindness." That has been my advice to younger ministers who want to know secrets to an anointed life. This book reinforces that and proves it is great advice. It also shows that filling each day with little acts of kindness is not only a key to anointing, but to productivity, successful marriages, good health, longevity, and the ability to make it through difficult times.

## 1. THE THEORY OF THE DIPPER AND THE BUCKET

Here's a quote from the book, *HOW FULL IS YOUR BUCKET*.

"Each of us has an invisible bucket. It is constantly emptied or filled, depending on what others say or do to us. When our bucket is full, we feel great. When it's empty, we feel awful.

Each of us also has an invisible dipper. When we use that dipper to fill other people's buckets—by saying or doing things to increase their positive emotions—we also fill our own bucket. But when we use that dipper to dip from other's buckets—by saying or doing things that decrease their positive emotions—we diminish ourselves.

Like the cup that runneth over, a full bucket gives us a positive outlook and renewed energy. Every drop in that bucket makes us stronger and more optimistic.

But an empty bucket poisons our outlook, saps our energy, and undermines our will. That's why every time someone dips from our bucket, it hurts us.

So we face a choice every moment of every day: We can fill one another's buckets, or we can dip from them. It's an important choice—one that profoundly influences our relationships, productivity, health, and happiness." (Page 5)

\*\*\*\* *If my emotional bucket is empty, I can't waste time blaming it on others who have dipped from it, draining me. If my bucket is empty, it means I haven't been doing enough to fill other people's buckets. If I am constantly encouraging people, thanking them, complimenting them, congratulating them, showing interest in them, listening to them and putting value on them—I am in the process filling my own emotional bucket with positive emotions that the Bible calls "fruit of the Spirit."*

**Gal. 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.**

Saying and doing kind and encouraging things to others, daily, is certainly the RIGHT thing to do, because the Scriptures command us to live this way. But we shouldn't attempt to do these things just because it's right. *We should realize that it's also wise, profitable and healthy.* It's an important strategy that enables us to thrive, and survive tough times. *If we realize how much these kind words and actions benefit*

ourselves we'll be much more likely to make our kind practices habitual. We'll also be more likely to always be on the lookout for ways to express little kindnesses to others as a way of putting value in our own emotional piggy bank.

**Proverbs 11:17 A kind man benefits himself, but a cruel man brings trouble on himself.**

If this is true, and you believe it, then why not *intentionally* benefit yourself a *lot* by always being ready to say or do something that would fill the emotional buckets of others?

**Isaiah 58:9b-11 “If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.**

If you oppress others, find fault with them, and saying bad things about them it will not only empty their emotional buckets, it would empty yours as well. But if you intentionally try to fill others with love and encouragement—God will fill you—with provision, protection, guidance and power.

**Proverbs 11:25 A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.**

**Matthew 7:1-2 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.**

In other words, if you take value away from others by discouraging comments, insults, and fault finding, God will take encouragement away from you. But if you use a big measure in giving appreciation, encouragement, and kindness God will give it back to you. It will be measured to you! If you give kindness to others with a little spoon, God will use that little spoon to measure relief and help back to you. To get more help from God, then, we should measure out kindness, help and relief to others with a bigger spoon, a gravy ladle, a dipper, or a big dipper. And remember, kindness comes back to us from God in the regularity of the way we spooned it out to others.

\*\*\*\* Imagine a man or woman praying for God for encouragement and relief. Nothing happens. They ask, “Why God? Why won’t you encourage me?” What if God replied, “I’m waiting for you to measure out some encouragement and kindness to others. As soon as you do, I’ll measure it back to you accordingly. Give and it will be given to you.” WOW.

Let’s not devalue ourselves or discourage ourselves by devaluing and discouraging others. Rather, let us intentionally look for ways to value and encourage others so that we never run out of strength, guidance, blessing, provision and empowerment from God.

## 2. NEGATIVITY IS THE DEVIL’S MOST POWERFUL WAY TO BREAK YOU DOWN.

Dr. Don Clifton, as a psychologist, began studying what was right with people, instead of the usual practice of just studying what was wrong with people. His whole life’s work became devoted to helping people discover their strengths. One particular case study had altered the entire focus of his life and career.

\*\*\*\* This study was done by Dr. William E Mayer who would later become the U.S. Army’s chief psychiatrist. He studied 1,000 American prisoners of war who had been detained in a North Korean camp. He was examining one of the most extreme and perversely effective cases of psychological warfare on record—one that had a devastating impact on its subjects.

The soldiers had been detained in camps that were not physically cruel. They had adequate food, water and shelter and were not physically tortured. There were fewer cases of physical abuse than from any other major military conflict throughout history!

Yet, 38% of the prisoners died in these camps although there was no medical reason for their deaths. It was the highest POW death rate in U.S. military history. “It was common for one of these soldiers to come into his hut, look despairingly about, and decide there was no use in trying to participate in his own survival. He would go into a corner alone, sit down, and pull a blanket over his head. And he would be dead within two days.” The soldiers called this “give-up-it is.” (Page 8-9, HOW FULL IS YOUR BUCKET)

When the survivors got out, they were given a chance to phone loved ones to let them know they

friendships or relationships with each other. Dr. Mayer described each man as being in a mental solitary confinement cell.

If the soldiers had been hit, spat upon, or slapped, they would have become angry. Their anger would have given them the motivation to survive. But in the absence of motivation, they simply died, even though there was no medical justification for their deaths.”

\*\*\*\* That reminded me of the famous movie BEN HUR. In one scene, Ben Hur was a slave on a Roman slave ship, a galley oarsman, condemned to die, chained to an oar. The Roman officer commanded them all to row at ramming speed. Finally, when all were exhausted, Ben Hur, slave #41, could still sit up and hold his oar firm. The Roman officer then walked behind him and lashed his back with a whip to see how he would respond. While Ben Hur restrained himself from cursing, his facial expression showed passionate anger. This brought a compliment from the Roman Officer. “You are filled with hate, 41. Hate is a good thing. It gives you a reason to live. It makes a man strong.” I always thought that was a non-truth, spoken from the viewpoint of a carnal man. People in the theater always laughed at that line. But the Roman warrior knew what he was talking about after all. (By the way, he ended up adopting Ben Hur as his son.)

I would think that hate would destroy a person, but far more destructive is the kind of passivity that no longer resists evil, but just gives up. Perhaps that’s why the Bible says, “**Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good,**” (Romans 12:9).

\*\*\*\* Dr. Mayer’s study found that the North Korean’s objective was to “deny men the emotional support that comes from interpersonal relationships.” By denying these soldiers emotional support they were able to produce a disease of extreme hopelessness, as if each man was in a mental solitary confinement cell. They did this by creating an environment of total negativity, devoid of any encouraging news or actions. This proved more deadly than physical deprivation and torture.

### 3. FOUR TACTICS WERE USED TO PRODUCE AN ENVIRONMENT OF EXTREME NEGATIVITY AND HOPELESSNESS.

The North Koreans used four evil tactics: Informing, self-criticism, breaking loyalty to leadership and country, and withholding all positive emotional support.

**STRATEGY #1, INFORMING:** The North Koreans gave prisoners rewards such as cigarettes when they snitched on one another. But neither the offender nor the soldier reporting the violation was punished—the captors encouraged this practice for a different reason. Their intent was to break relationships and turn the men against each other. The captors understood that the soldiers could actually harm each other if they were encouraged to dip from their comrades’ buckets every day.” (Page 11)

The devil wants us to find fault with each other and criticize each other to the point that relationships are broken and isolation, with all its despair and hopelessness, sets in. You don’t have to be in a prisoner of war to have this strategy worked against you. It happens in every church! This is why the bible condemns faultfinding as being sinful.

**Jude 16 These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.**

**James 4:11-12 Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?**

**Proverbs 17:9 He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.**

The North Koreans gave rewards to American soldiers who repeated the matter, who judged each other, who slandered each other, who spoke against each other, and who found fault with each other. While they were given a few cigarettes, they didn’t realize they that by informing on each other they were cutting themselves off from encouraging fellowship, isolating themselves, and slowly building their own mental solitary confinement cell of total hopelessness!

**1Peter. 4:8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.**

\*\*\*\* **Intercession is the opposite of informing.** When you see a flaw or fault in someone, determine what character value they need. If you know what they lack, then figure out what they need. Then pray a prayer that would help move that quality into their life. By so doing you are promoting love, covering over their flaws, and helping build those life giving relationships. You are promoting your own hope, your own freedom, your own victory, and your own survival through tough times!

Galatians 5:14-15 **The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.** Notice, sharp, negative words that devour the self-esteem of others are destructive for the speaker, as well. Every biting word empties TWO emotional buckets—of the one who hears it, and of the one who speaks it.

STRATEGY #2, SELF-CRITICISM. This was the second strategy. Soldiers were gathered in groups of 10 to 12 and were required to say bad things about themselves. A soldier had to confess all the bad things he had done and all the good things he could have done but failed to do. Dr. Mayer called this a “corruption of group psychotherapy.” The Bible tells us, **“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective”** (James 5:16). This kind of confession results in forgiveness, compassionate prayer and healing. But if no prayer is allowed, and each person must only say what is wrong with them, then a climate of distrust is promoted. Each soldier was actually dipping encouragement out of his own bucket by self-criticism.

\*\*\*\* Again, you don’t have to be in a prison camp to have this strategy worked against you. The devil wants you to help his cause through running yourself down. He is **“the accuser of the brethren”** (Revelation 12:10). When you accuse yourself and belittle yourself and put yourself down you are doing his work for him!

If a person thinks, “I’m no good. I’m bad. I’m a failure,” will this type of thinking make them want to pursue encouraging relationships or isolate in hopelessness? Don’t help the devil by emptying your own bucket of emotional encouragement! Rather, learn to say encouraging things about yourself.

**“I’m an oak or righteousness, the planting of the Lord for the display of His splendor.”** (Isaiah 61:3) **“He who began a good work in me will carry it on to completion”** (Philippians 1:6).

Stop and think. How many times a day are you putting some self-encouraging word into your emotional bucket? How many times a day are you ladling out encouragement through self-criticism? How well is this enemy tactic of self-criticism working on you? Well, stop cooperating with the accuser of the brethren. God’s been working on you for a long time, so compliment His work! Say, “Thank you Lord, for the good work you are doing in my life, making me good, kind, loyal, hardworking and honest.”

Does that sound strange to give God glory for putting good qualities in you? Does it sound more familiar to lament over your inefficiencies and deficiencies? What could word of self-encouragement could you ladle into your emotional bucket today?

### STRATEGY #3, BREAK ALL LOYALTY TO LEADERSHIP AND COUNTRY

Slowly and relentlessly, the North Korean captors undermined each soldier’s allegiance to his superiors. The book, (HOW FULL IS YOUR BUCKET?) doesn’t give any details as to how they did this. They only gave examples of the terrible consequences. In one case, a colonel instructed one of his men not to drink the water from a rice paddy field because he knew the organisms in the water might kill him. The soldier looked at his colonel and remarked, “Buddy, you ain’t no colonel anymore; you’re just a lousy prisoner like me. You take care of yourself, and I’ll take care of me.” The soldier died of dysentery a few days later.

The Bible tells us to be on guard against this tactic of the enemy. 1Timothy 5:17 **The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.**

Hebrews 13:17 **Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.**

The devil certainly works this strategy in local churches. He is always beaming negative thoughts into the minds of church people, saying things like, “He doesn’t care about you. All he wants is your money.” “All preachers are the same. All they care about is money.” While some preachers are greedy for gain most are not—or they wouldn’t be a preacher. They would have chosen some other profession. My point, be on guard against these kinds of thoughts for your own well-being. Your spiritual leaders **keep watch over you**, and if you don’t trust and submit to their authority, they can’t protect you. The same could be said of government leaders.

God doesn’t want us isolated from our own country, either. Paul wrote, **“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth,”** (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

\*\*\*\* We tend to think that *if* God answers our prayers and changes the character of government leaders then we’d live peaceable and quiet lives. *But prayers for those in authority first changes the person doing the praying!* It helps keep another vital connection to avoid isolation and hopelessness.

The devil will say to us about all government officials, “They don’t care about you. They are all self-serving. All they care about is your money and your vote.” We are prone to believe exaggerations like this, and it helps to isolate us mentally and create feelings of hopelessness. The truth is, there are a great many people in civil service who struggle each day with the complexities of how to keep us safe and provide the government services we take for granted.

We need, for our own good, to practice the virtue of loyalty! How can you show loyalty to those in authority over you?

**STRATEGY #4: WITHHOLD ALL POSITIVE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND INUNDATE THE PRISONER WITH NEGATIVE EMOTIONS.**

If a soldier received a supportive letter from home, the captors withheld it. But if a wife wrote that she was divorcing her husband to remarry—that kind of letter was delivered immediately. The captors would deliver overdue bills from collection agencies back home—within less than two weeks of the original postmark.

We obviously need positive emotional support from others. This is why the Bible says, **“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching,”** (Hebrews 10:25).

As we see the approaching collapse of currencies and nations, and the approach ever increasing darkness in world society, we need to encourage each other all the more that the King is coming and we are going to inherit a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness! We need to be collecting and distributing GOOD NEWS!

**Proverbs 15:30** A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and **good news** gives health to the bones.

**Proverbs 25:25** Like cold water to a weary soul is **good news** from a distant land.

**Isaiah. 52:7** How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring **good news**, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!”

**Isaiah. 61:1** The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach **good news** to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.

Could our down feelings and despair, be in part, because we habitually feed on news from secular sources, most of which is negative? I’m of the opinion that a Christian ought to be informed. But we need to be informed of what God is doing. Most news from secular sources is about what the devil is doing—who murdered who stuff.

\*\*\*\* **STOP AND THINK.** Could the devil be subtly working through the news media to inundate our society with negativity to produce hopelessness and isolation? Since I bought an I-phone 5 I’ve been checking a web based news source each day. There are stories from all the major news outlets on that sight and so it’s easy to quickly see what’s going on in the world—or is it? Because it’s not scanning the major

stories of what God is doing, it does tend to give me my choice of weird negative stories. Each day about sixty new headlines are up for a person to click on if one wants to read the story.

A sampling from January 13, 2014: \*\* Jan 1, 2014 Set Record for Highest Price of Gas Ever on New Years Day. \*\* China Set to Seize South China Sea Island by Force \*\* Abortion evidence of ‘throwaway culture’ \*\* Doctor-assisted suicides skyrocket in Belgium \*\* Rise of Al-Qaeda’s new leader \*\* Chicagoland: Woman fatally shoots brother during argument over whether her gun would fire. \*\* Japan’s birth rate plummets as one million teens withdraw from society—an epidemic of shut-ins. \*\* Too Much TV Can Damage a Child’s Brain. \*\* Mystery Remains: Woman finds wrong body in mother’s casket.

All these stories are interesting. Perhaps we need to know about China and Al-Qaeda and Japan’s birth rate problem—so that we can pray. But my point is; NONE of these stories are positive, yet they are almost addicting. I’m comparing how much time I spend reading this stuff compared to how much time I spend reading God’s word. I’m also thinking about how or where I could find POSSITIVE news stories. The over-all result of feeding on this kind of news is NEGATIVE. It’s really more about what the devil is doing than what God is doing. I am getting an app. for my phone that will have many different Bible translations. As a result, when standing in a line, I can read the Bible on my cell phone instead of reading a story about a woman who shot her brother arguing over whether the gun would fire.

#### 4. AN INVIRONMENT THAT BUILDS POSSITIVE EMOTIONS WORKS WONDERS

Dr. Donald Clifton, after carefully examining the data regarding POW’s from North Korean prison camps, decided to study the flip side. He wondered, “If people can be literally destroyed by unrelenting negative reinforcement, can they be uplifted and inspired to a greater degree by similar levels of positive reinforcement? Can positive emotions have an even stronger impact than negative emotions?”

Dr. Clifton spent the rest of his career and life studying ways to build people up emotionally and studying the effects of positive emotional support upon productivity, health and relationships.

##### 1. GOOD MARRIAGES ARE BUILT BY FREQUENT SMALL, POSSITIVE ACTS.

\*\*\*\* John Gottman did pioneering research on successful marriages and found a “magic ratio” of 5-1 in terms of the balance of positive to negative interactions. He found that a marriage is likely to succeed when a couple’s interactions are near that 5 to 1 ratio of positive to negative. When the ratio approaches 1 to 1 divorce is the usual outcome.

\*\*\*\* In 1992 Gottman’s team tested this idea with 700 couples who had just received their marriage licenses. Each couple was videotaped having a 15-minute conversation. The researches counted the number of positive and negative interactions. Then, based on the 5 to 1 ratio, they predicted whether each couple would stay together or divorce.

Ten years later, Gottman’s team followed up and found stunning results. They had predicted divorce with 94% accuracy—based on scoring the couple’s interactions for 15 minutes.

**1Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.**

It would significantly help your marriage if you’d intentionally say kind things and do kind little things while being aware and trying to avoid saying and doing unkind things. Take inventory. If your interactions with your spouse were clinically measured, what would the ratio of positive to negative be?

##### 2. LEARNING IS VASTLY INCREASED WHEN STUDENTS ARE PRAISED.

\*\*\*\* In 1925 Dr. Elizabeth Hurlock did a study on fourth and sixth grade students in math classes who received either praise, criticism or no attention at all. One group of students were identified by name and praised in front of the classroom for their good work. The children in a second group were identified by name in front of the group, but were criticized for their poor work. Those in the third group were completely ignored.

Students in the “praised” and “criticized” groups both did better after the first day. But then their performance changed dramatically. Those who were criticized had a major decline in their test scores and by days 3 and 4 they were performing as badly as the students who had been completely ignored.

Those who had been praised experienced a major improvement after Day 2 and that was sustained through the end of the study. At the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> day those who had been praised had improved by 71%.

those who had been criticized by 19% and those who had been ignored had improved by 5%. This study was largely ignored because the scientific community has focused almost exclusively on studying the effects of negative or traumatic moments. (Pages 38-39)

\*\*\*\* The idea here is to look for what people are doing right and praise them for it. But most of society is geared to looking for what is wrong, finding something, and then chastising, rebuking or berating—motivation through condemnation. Proverbs. 11:27 **He who seeks good finds goodwill, but evil comes to him who searches for it.**

If we could seek to find what a person is going that is good and praise them we could raise their learning ability and their performance. And when we find what is good in others and compliment them, it's as if we put something good in our own emotional bucket. Goodwill comes to us!

Therefore, a strategy to survive and thrive in this negative world would be to look for what is good in people and praise them for it, habitually. Literally become a goodfinder instead of a faultfinder.

### 3. POSITIVE EMOTIONS PROMOTE HEALTH AND LONGEVITY

Remember that 38% of the soldiers in the North Korean POW camps died in those camps, even though they had adequate food and shelter and were not physically tortured? They were killed off by negative emotions.

But positive emotions have the opposite effect. They help our immune system ward off sickness and disease and promote longevity.

Psalm 41:1-3 **Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the LORD delivers him in times of trouble. The LORD will protect him and preserve his life; he will bless him in the land and not surrender him to the desire of his foes. The LORD will sustain him on his sickbed and restore him from his bed of illness.**

\*\*\*\* One study of 180 elderly Catholic nuns revealed that nuns with more positive emotions lived significantly longer than nuns with fewer positive emotions. The researches studied the handwritten autobiographies each woman had written in her early twenties. They counted and scored the frequency of positive emotions in those early writings and then compared those scores to the mortality rates of those women when they were 75 to 95 years old.

The results showed that nuns who reported experiencing more positive emotions lived on average ten years longer. Of the nuns that recorded the fewest positive emotions, 25 had died at the time of the study, where as only 10 deaths had occurred in the group with more positive emotions.

It has been statistically proven that smoking cigarettes reduces life expectancy 5.5 years in men and 7 years in females. So negative emotions cut more years off life expectancy than smoking.

Proverbs 14:30 **A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.**

Proverbs 17:22 **A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.**

Philippians. 4:4-7 **Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

Notice, God's peace guards your hearts and minds—your mental and physical health. If you are gentle, your gentleness can PREVENT you from dipping out emotional support from others by sharp, impatient, rude or discourteous words. Gentleness helps KEEP your own emotional bucket from getting holes and draining out!

\*\*\*\* One study by Mayo Clinic followed 838 clinic patients over a 30-year period and found a link between optimism in how people explained life events and a lower risk of early death. We can't control all the events that will happen to us, but we can choose to respond in a positive way and interpret these events in a positive way.

\*\*\*\* The apostle Paul is a fine example of someone who optimistically explained life events.

2Corinthians. 4:17 **For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.**

Rom. 8:28 Webster **And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.**

Phillippians.1:12 **Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.**

Philippians 1:19 **I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.**

What an optimistic way to view troubles and difficulties. In Paul's mind every difficulty was light and momentary. In his mind, he viewed the troubles as working to achieve eternal glory for him. The things that befell him, in his mind, always worked to advance the gospel and thus help fulfill his life-purpose.

He believed that God would literally make all things work out for his good.

#### 4. PRODUCTIVITY IN WORK IS GREATLY INCREASED.

Recognition and praise are two critical components for creating positive emotions. Tom Rath and Donald Clifton surveyed more than 15 million employees worldwide on this topic. Their analysis found that individuals who receive regular recognition and praise **A. Increase their individual productivity B. Increase engagement among their colleagues C. Are more likely to stay with their organization. D. Receive higher loyalty and satisfaction scores from customers, E. Have better safety records and fewer accidents on the job.**

Yet their studies also found that 65% of Americans received no recognition in the workplace last year. Praise is rare in most workplaces. Through their extensive surveys and studies, they believe that 22 million workers in the United States alone are extremely negative or actively disengaged. The cost from this disheartened disengagement is estimated to be from \$250 to \$300 billion dollars a year in lost productivity. When you add workplace injury, illness, turnover, absences, and fraud, the cost could surpass \$1 trillion per year, or nearly 10% of the US Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

\*\*\*\* God spoke through a prophet to King Asa, telling him, basically, “You have been doing good work. I’ve noticed. I like it. I’m going to reward you. Keep up the good work.”

2Chronicles 15:7-8 **But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded.”**

**When Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Azariah son of Oded the prophet, he took courage. He removed the detestable idols from the whole land of Judah and Benjamin and from the towns he had captured in the hills of Ephraim. He repaired the altar of the LORD that was in front of the portico of the LORD’s temple.** (Notice, he worked even harder after he was praised.)

\*\*\*\* One CEO, named Ken, claims that bucket filling is his “secret weapon” as a leader. He has developed ways to increase positive emotions in the large organization that he runs. He likes to visit his various offices around the world and give out congratulations. One of his favorite lines is: “I’ve been hearing a lot of good talk behind our back.” Then he likes to “watch the energy move through the network.” He says, “I discovered that bucket filling is an extraordinarily powerful leadership strategy.” (Pg19)

**CONCLUSION:** When God tells us to say nice things to each other and do nice things for each other it’s not just because it’s the RIGHT thing to do. It’s a strategy that will fill BOTH parties with positive emotions that produce good relationships, an environment of learning and growth, productivity and success, and the ability to get through the toughest of times with resilience.

Hebrews 10:24 **And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.**

Galatians 5:13 **You, my brothers... serve one another in love.**

Rom. 15:2 **Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.**

Ephesians 4:32 **Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other.**

**CONCLUSION:** How full is your bucket? Would you like to be a person brimming over with positive emotions? Would you like to help fill others with positive emotions and thus keep your own bucket from being drained? Would you like to be the catalyst that causes great achievement in others? If so, think through these questions.

Who can I thank today? Who can I compliment today? What have I noticed that others are doing right? Have I told them? Am I speaking and doing five positive words and deeds in my home for every one negative word or deed? What is something kind I can do for someone today? What is something encouraging I could say to someone—today? Dear Lord, help us all be bucket fillers and not bucket drainers. Through Your grace, guide us to say and do those things that would fill others with positive emotions so that you can measure out great encouragement to us. In Jesus name. Amen.