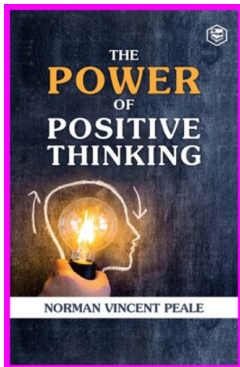


# «POSITIVE THINKING»: CAN IT BE FOUND IN PAUL'S CHURCH EPISTLES?

JAN LILLEBY

□□□□ Getting straight to the answer, 'NO WE CANNOT FIND SUCH A TOPIC WITH PAUL!' Who – among Christian writers – do you think of as you just read my headline?



If the name□□ *Norman Vincent Peale*□□ came to mind, you hit the jackpot. This author (1898-1993) was a Protestant clergyman, Wikipedia informs. Widely known as the author of the book□□ '*The Power of Positive Thinking*',□□ this□□ was entering the market in 1952.

On□□ YouTube□□ I happened to hear a Baptist pastor, who in his sermon mentioned□□ *Norman Vincent Peale*...warning against his 'theology', going...□□ '*Donald Trump is known to have been a disciple and believer following Peale's teachings on 'Positive Thinking'!*

Now, if we ask St. Paul (please forgive the traditional Catholic titling) what he might quote to Trump had he lived today, we would risk hearing Paul's known exhortation in Eph. 5:5...as he would know about Trump's bathing in billions□□ of dollars, (NASB net version) -

«1□□ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;□□  
2□□ and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.□□

3□□ But immorality or any impurity□□ **or greed**□□ must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints;□□

4□□ and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.□□

5□□ For this you know with certainty, that no \* immoral or impure person□□ **or covetous man, who is an idolater,**□□ has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.□□

6□□ **Let□□ no□□ one□□ deceive□□ you with□□ empty□□ words, for□□ because□□ of□□ these□□ things□□ the□□ wrath□□ of□□ God□□ comes□□ upon the□□ sons□□ of□□ disobedience.□□**

7□□ Therefore do not be partakers with them;□□

8□□ for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light□□

9□□ (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and

righteousness and truth ),

10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord." (Editor's emphasize).

**The red text:** This is a warning which Paul might have thrown right in the face of Mr. Peale in his day! The critics of Peale's writings/theology are many (check Wikipedia) – and it is clear that he deceived his gullible ignorant readers witless, dumping them all into a mindset *more fit in the litterbin* than in regular human society!

Peale was a confident friend with the Nixon's. He was awarded by Ronald Reagan with the 'Presidential Medal of Freedom' March 26, 1984.

Psychologist **Albert Ellis**, according to Wikipedia, slaughtered Peale's beliefs in 'Positive Thinking', using one of his clients' cases of mental disorder, *"One of my 50-year-old clients, Sidney, read everything that Norman Vincent Peale ever wrote, went to many of his sermons at Marble Collegiate Church, and turned many of his friends onto trusting completely in God and in the Reverend Peale to cure them of all their ills. When some of these friends, in spite of their vigorous positive thinking, wound up in the mental hospital, and when Sidney had to turn to massive doses of tranquilizers to keep himself going, he became disillusioned..."* (Editor's emphasize). Ellis was just one of a *multitude of critics* who warned against Peale. Again, check out Wikipedia.

'POSITIVE THINKING' SEEM TO HAVE GOTTEN TO  
JUST ABOUT EVERY PASTOR OF MEGA-CHURCHES,  
ALMOST TO PROPORTIONS OF OBSESSION!

If you want a very obvious proof of that, **read my article on Joel Osteen** and his inherited 'Kingdom' – with his Church congregation in Houston of 16 000 meeting up at the huge stadium like facility! He actually tells his followers to lie to themselves. If one is a poor broke fellow, he is encouraged to say to himself 'You are rich, You are rich, You are rich' – and so forth. Positive Thinking made into 'Step 2' - *Positive Confession*. It belongs of course right in there with the heretical Word of Faith camp. The Prosperity Gospel, a gospel not found in the Bible anywhere. Then if you so wish, and have the stomach for it, the road is short into the world of the Mega-Churches, since they all seem to teach the *very same poisoned kind of 'gospel'* from their pulpits.

On the internet I found at least 28 such congregations, classified as 'Mega-Churches'. By name, address and who the pastor is.

Checking with Paul, we find that the better title to such heresy would rather have been *'The Destructive Power of*

*Positive Thinking'.*

Human self-help books, Christian or not, are flooding the markets. The message is always centered on 'What you must do to change your negative situation in life'. You have to do this, and do that, and start this, and stop this...an endless quagmire of 'Magical word formulas' which eventually would bring blessings and positive changes into one's life. But it never happens. Blessings are not appearing. It rather seems to send patients right into the mental hospital, as seen with example mentioned above and the sick 50 year old Sidney and his friends.

No, dear fellow Christian believer, we must not trust in smart human based advice like these. We have to turn to the Word of God, served us by His true faithful apostle Paul, the apostle to us Gentiles.

I quoted Eph. 5:5 which is a stern but clear warning from God.

Paul, however, wrote so much on our salvation by faith in Christ, and to let our minds be centered on heaven up above, and not the things here on earth, and Col. 3:1-5 is a passage I cling much to. This is the best kind of 'Positive Thinking' I can ever find,

«1 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.»

2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.»

3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.»

4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.»

5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry."

Paul actually tells us TO THINK on the heavenly things, more than to dwell on earthly things.

But Norman Vincent Peale and many others like him, turned it all around – 'Set your mind on the things on earth, not on the things that are above'.

You do know, I hope, that we have a HEAVENLY CALLING, and not an earthly one?

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