

The Positivity of Negativity

Empty, hungry, void, longing, lonely, sad, broken, hopeless, are all words that describe a need—the need to be filled, full, happy, joyful, hopeful, whole, and satisfied. God created us for a level of comfort—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. When these levels are not met, the result is a need. God intends these feelings to let us know we are lacking something. The negative feelings are life-preserving indicators—once again, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. These are not things we learn, but the way we are created. For example: we cannot ignore the feelings of hunger because it is a natural feeling, not something we had to learn. In the strictest sense, hunger is the preserver of life. If we never felt hungry, what would make food taste good, and why would we eat? The same is true about our emotional and spiritual well-being.

The feeling of loneliness is separation from someone or something we hold in high regard or feeling—like being on the outside while everyone else is inside. It is a feeling of emptiness that longs to be filled. It is part of the need for families, friendships, communities, churches, and is included in the foundation of love and marriage. Loneliness can simply be the tug of heart strings of love or can indicate a lack of security.

Security is part of the basic nature that needs to be met in a parent-child relationship. A newborn child goes from being a part of their mother, to the reality of a cold, cruel world. Naturally, they feel vulnerable to the elements, and when they feel insecure, they cry. In a healthy relationship, that cry stirs the parent to comfort and fill that insecurity by satisfying their need. They may be cold, hungry, or afraid. They may feel insecure and need to be held close—to feel they are loved. When these needs are met, their crying stops, and they may fall asleep contented in their parents' embrace.

Spiritually, it is no different—only the vacancy cannot be satisfied by earthly things. It is similar to the need of a newborn baby, only it is a longing for spiritual security—for a God who is all powerful and all knowing. Unlike physical needs, spiritual emptiness can be ignored and filled with other things; at least temporarily. We can physically live without God; we can ignore His call and live for self, but there will be a continual need to fill the empty spiritual void with other things to keep it quiet. Eventually, in the dark of midnight; in the storm; in the failures and disappointments of life; that longing and loneliness will awaken and seek to draw us back to God. One may have an ideal life on the outside: friends, success, and wealth. But if the heart does not have God dwelling in it, that loneliness will remain. Man can stifle it and ignore God—eventually He will withdraw Himself, leaving man to his own whims and desires. God will not continue to force us to come to Him if we continue to refuse Him.

Our emotional needs are laced through our physical and spiritual lives. We all have the need to feel happy and fulfilled in life. Most long for security, a loving home, marriage, and a good job. This provides the basics for good emotional health. However, there are many things we have no control over: death, accidents, health crises, loss of a job, loss of a friend, misunderstandings, and many more negative things, which are a part of life. These things can bring about a negative emotional impact. When we feel secure with things and those around us, we can handle quite a few negative blows in life. Likewise, when our faith and trust are anchored in God, we can weather some severe storms that come our way. But most of us are not invincible and will find the strain and stress of life eventually to negatively affect our emotions.

God has created us with these indicators so that we can live physical, emotional, and spiritual healthy and productive lives. He created us to live happy, fulfilled lives and wants to do all He can to fill those needs for us. When we have Him in our hearts, we may at times feel hungry, lonely, or hopeless, but He is there to give us inner comfort, strength, courage, and hope, despite our physical and emotional needs. He is there to fill us with something beyond this life. In fact, He creates situations so that we will feel these lonely feelings to draw us closer to Him. He is there to walk with us through the difficulties of life, to give us hope when hope seems lost. He offers His friendship when friends seem not to understand or are few and far between. He is

there to give us His spiritual nourishment when we feel broken, discouraged, and needy. He may not take away the physical or emotional suffering, but He will stand by our side when we cannot stand, and He will hold us in His embrace when we feel like we are falling apart. He is not oblivious to our needs. He calls us to put our faith and trust in Him. He waits and knocks and waits some more, longing to fill our needs.

Emptiness and loneliness are an opportunity to have our needs met by the Lord. Without the negative things in life, what would cause us to seek Him? It is the difficulties in life that give us the opportunity to lean on Him. It is the loneliness in life that causes us to seek His face. It is the unpredictability of life that teaches us that we need to stay close to Him. It is through difficulty that tests our faith and teaches us to trust, but it is His love that keeps us coming back for more. As the day is the darkest and coldest just before dawn, and as healing cannot happen without pain, so the adversity in the life of a follower of Jesus, is but a door to greater and better things. And when we look back, we will see that He was there all the time, watching over us and keeping us safe.

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together: That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it. Isaiah 41:17-20 KJV

And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. 2Corinthians 12:7-10 KJV

The Unlikely Writer - Jeff Goertzen

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