

Do you know any negative people?

A family had twin boys whose only resemblance to each other was their looks. If one felt it was too hot, the other thought it was too cold. If one said the TV was too loud, the other claimed the volume needed to be turned up. Opposite in every way, one was an eternal optimist, the other a doom and gloom pessimist.

Just to see what would happen, on the twins' birthday their father loaded the pessimist's room with every imaginable toy and game. The optimist's room he loaded with horse manure. That night the father passed by the negative son's room and found him sitting amid his new gifts crying bitterly.

"Why are you crying?" the father asked. "Because my friends will be jealous, I'll have to read all these instructions before I can do anything with this stuff, I'll constantly need batteries, and my toys will eventually get broken." answered the pessimist twin.

Passing the optimist twin's room, the father found him dancing for joy in the pile of manure. "What are you so happy about?" he asked. To which his optimist twin replied, "There's got to be a pony in here somewhere!"

An optimist sees the best in the world, while a negative person sees only the worst. An optimist finds the positive in the negative, and a pessimist can only find the negative in the positive.

For example, there was an avid duck hunter who was in the market for a new bird dog. His search ended when he found a dog that could actually walk on water to retrieve a duck. Shocked by his find, he was sure none of his friends would ever believe him. He decided to try to break the news to a friend of his, a pessimist by nature, who was invited to hunt with the man and his new dog.

As they waited by the shore, a flock of ducks flew by. They fired off their rifles and a duck fell. The dog responded and jumped into the water. The dog, however, did not sink but instead walked across the water to retrieve the bird, never getting more than his paws wet.

This continued all day long; each time a duck fell, the dog walked across the surface of the water to retrieve it. The negative man watched carefully, saw everything, but did not say a single word. On the drive home the hunter asked his friend, "Did you notice anything unusual about my new dog?"

"I sure did," responded the pessimist. "Your dog can't swim!"

Negative people; we all know some. Waking up in the morning, the optimist opens the window and says with a smile, "Good morning, Lord!"

Pessimists? They rub their eyes; look out the window and say with a frown, "Good Lord! It's morning!"

Pessimists always see the dark side of clouds. A pessimist once said, "Every dark cloud has a silver lining, but lightning kills hundreds of people each year who are trying to find it."

A pessimist complains about the noise when opportunity knocks.

A pessimist's blood type is be-negative.

Do you know any negative people? Negativity is one of the Ten Major Causes of Failure.

Negativity can often cause failure, and failure often leads to a negative outlook on life. For some of us this is an endless cycle.

The negative person is often a chronic complainer, whining and moaning incessantly about everything from the weather to his or her job. The Jewish community calls this “*kvetching*.” A negative person attracts other negative people and repels those who are optimistic about life.

Christ-followers should be some of the most happy, optimistic and positive people on the planet.

- Our sins have been forgiven.
- We have a home in heaven.
- Our Father is the Creator.
- We are being taken care of by our Father who has promised to “supply all of our needs.”
- We have been told that we are loved with an eternal love.
- We have exceedingly great and precious promises that we can “take to the bank.”
- We have brothers and sisters “in Christ.”

We are commanded in Scripture to rejoice! Psalm 32:11 says, “*Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!*”

As believers we do not rejoice without a reason—this is not some exercise that empty-headed and empty-hearted people undergo. We rejoice with good reason.

Psalm 33:21 says, “*In Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.*”

Psalm 35:9 says “*...our souls rejoice and delight in His salvation.*”

So how do we deal with negativity? One way is to rejoice.

But then the Bible teaches us another way to deal with negativity and that is through a *cheerful or merry heart*. The Bible says in Proverbs 17:22, “*A merry heart does well like a medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.*”

When was the last time you laughed? No, not a grin or a snicker but a whopping belly laugh. When was the last time you laughed until your stomach began to hurt and tears began to pour from your eyes?

The author of an article written in the June 22 edition of Charismamag.com had this to say about laughter:

In recent years some medical doctors have used "laugh therapy" with their patients. I heard a story about a lady who was healed through laughter. Her doctor prescribed a steady diet of "The Three Stooges." She was instructed to watch the videos of their old films as much as possible. It worked. She actually laughed her way to health. This secret was known by Solomon, who writes, "A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones."

A merry heart *does* do well like a medicine but the verse does not end there. It continues to say that, “*a broken spirit dries the bones.*”

The word dries comes from the Hebrew word, **yabesh**, that means, “*to dry up (as water) or wither (as with plant life)*”

Bones have many functions...

- **Support.** Bones provide a framework for the attachment of muscles and other tissues.
- **Protection.** Bones such as the skull and rib cage protect internal organs from injury.
- **Movement.** Bones enable body movements by acting as levers and points of attachment for muscles.
- **Mineral storage.** Bones serve as a reservoir for calcium and phosphorus, essential minerals for various cellular activities throughout the body.
- **Blood cell production.** The production of blood cells, or *hematopoiesis*, occurs in the red marrow found within the cavities of certain bones. Leviticus 17:11 says, *The life of the flesh is in the blood...*”
- **Energy storage.** Lipids (fats) stored the yellow marrow of the bone serve as an energy reservoir. ¹

With this information we could paraphrase Proverbs 17:22 to say, “*A merry heart does well like a medicine but a broken spirit will make you sick.*”

The Scriptures shed light on many of the things that negatively affect our bones and thus our health.²

1. *Bad News* = Brings rottenness/decay to the bones. In Habakkuk chapter three, the prophet got a report of the judgment of God that was to come. In verse 16 he says, “*When I heard, my body trembled; My lips quivered at the voice; Rottenness entered my bones; And I trembled in myself.*”

2. *Shame* = Brings decay to the bones. Proverbs 12:4 says, “*A virtuous is the crown of her husband, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.*”

3. *Reproach* = Is like a sword in the bones. “*My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, “Where is your God?”*” (Psalm 42:10).

4. *Cursing* = Is like (hot) oil in the bones. Psalm 109:18 reads, “*He wore cursing as his garment; it entered into his body like water, into his bones like oil.*”

5. *Sin* = Causes unrest to the bones. Psalm 38:3 says, “*There is no soundness in my flesh Because of Your anger, Nor any health in my bones Because of my sin.*”

6. *Unconfessed sin* = Causes the bones to grow old. In Psalm 32:3, David looks back to the covering up of his sin with Bathsheba. He writes, “*When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long.*” (Psalm 32:3).

7. *Envy* = Brings rottenness to the bones. “*A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.*” (Proverbs 14:30).

¹ <http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/Section/What-do-bones-do-except-give-us-a-skeletal-structure-.id-305406.articleId-27243.html>

² While most of the comments are my own, some of the outline was taken from Chapter Seven of the book, “*Bringing Every Thought Captive, Vol. I*” . I haven’t read the book and I am not familiar with the author so I cannot commend it to you.

9. *Fear* = Causes the shaking of the bones. “*Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.*” (Job 4:14).

10. *God’s Chastening* = Produces strong pain in the bones. “*Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed.*” (Psalm 6:2). “*He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain:*” (Job 33:19).

11. *Grief and Iniquity* = Cause to bones waste away. “*For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, And my bones waste away.*” (Psalm 31:10).

Healthy Bones

The Scriptures shed light on many of the things that negatively affect our bones and thus our health and they also reveal to us some of the factors which produce healthy bones and thus increased health.

1. *The Fear of the Lord* = There is some indication in Scripture that the fear of the Lord increases the production of bone marrow. Proverbs 3:7-8 says, “*Be not wise in your own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to your navel, and marrow to thy bones.*”

2. *A Good Report* = Just as bad news can adversely affect the bones, good news impact the bones in a positive way. “*The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and a good report makes the bones healthy.*” (Proverbs 15:30).

4. *Deliverance* = Deliverance “rejoices the bones.” Some of us are probably familiar with the invigorating feeling that comes when you are delivered from something. You pay off a bill. You finish a semester of hard courses. You are free from a destructive relationship. The Bible says in Psalm 35:10, “*All my bones shall say, “LORD, who is like You, Delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, Yes, the poor and the needy from him who plunders him?”*

5. *A Clear Conscience* = Rejoices the bones as well. “*Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice.*” (Psalm 51:6-8).

7. *Giving to the Needy* = Has a positive impact on our bones. “*If you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall be as the noonday. The LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones...*” (Isaiah 58:10-11).

8. *Peace and Comfort* = Causes our bones to flourish. In Isaiah 66 God says He will bring peace and comfort to Jerusalem. God tells His people that when they see this, their “*heart shall rejoice and their bones shall flourish like grass.*” (Isaiah 66:14).

“*A merry heart does well like a medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.*”

Medical research has discovered that healing enzymes are sent throughout the body when we laugh.

Therapeutic Benefits of Laughter³

Two researchers from Loma Linda University in California have been studying the effects of laughter on the immune system.⁴ Let me share with you a summary of their research.

³ http://www.holisticonline.com/Humor_Therapy/humor_therapy_benefits.htm

⁴ Dr. Lee Berk and fellow researcher Dr. Stanley Tan

Laughter Activates the Immune System

In the study, the physiological response produced by belly laughter produces healthy or positive emotions. After exposure to humor, there is a general increase in activity within the immune system. For example:

1. There is an increase in the number and activity level of the cells that attack virally infected cells and some types of cancer and tumor cells.
2. There is an increase in activated T cells (T lymphocytes). There are many T cells that await activation. Laughter appears to tell the immune system to "turn it up a notch."
3. Antibodies IgA (immunoglobulin A), that fight upper respiratory infections are increased.
4. When subjects watched a humor video, there was an increase in the chemical the body manufactures that helps antibodies to pierce dysfunctional or infected cells.

So laughter activates the immune system.

Laughter Decreases "Stress" Hormones

The results of the study out of Loma Linda University also tell us that laughter decrease the stress hormones that constrict blood vessels and suppress immune activity.

Laughter decreases dopamine levels. Dopamine is involved in the "fight or flight response" and is associated with elevated blood pressure.

Laughing is aerobic, providing a workout for the diaphragm and increasing the body's ability to use oxygen.

Frequent belly laughter empties your lungs of more air than it takes in resulting in a cleansing effect - similar to deep breathing. Especially beneficial for patient's who are suffering from emphysema and other respiratory ailments.

Laughter Decreases Pain

Experts believe that, when used in addition to conventional care, laughter can reduce pain and assist in the healing process. For one thing, laughter offers a powerful distraction from pain.

In a study published in the Journal of Holistic Nursing, patients were told one-liners after surgery and before painful medication was administered. Those exposed to humor perceived less pain when compared to patients who didn't get a dose of humor as part of their therapy.

There are other areas that are affected by laughter:

Muscle Relaxation - Belly laugh results in muscle relaxation. While you laugh, the muscles that do not participate in the belly laugh, relaxes. After you finish laughing those muscles involved in the laughter start to relax.

Cardiac Exercise - A belly laugh is equivalent to "an internal jogging." Laughter can provide good cardiac conditioning especially for those who are unable to perform physical exercises.

The good part about laughing is that it is free. A lot of the vitamins and minerals and herbal medications that many of us take cost a lot of money—but laughter is free.

The Bible says in Proverbs 17:22, “*A merry heart does well like a medicine...*” Science has finally caught up with these words in the Bible that King Solomon wrote some 3,000 years ago.

When was the last time you took your medicine? God has given us free medicine! Take your medicine!

A healthy lifestyle—researcher Michael Miller reports—would include 30 minutes of exercise three times a week, and 15 minutes of hearty laughter each day.”⁵

There is a lot of laughter in the Brooks home—much of the time our laughter is at the dinner table.

Sometimes we gotten so loud, we’ve had to close our doors and windows. Most of what we laugh about is the kind of stuff that you would have “had to be there” to get it. There is also a lot of laughter at our house that is based on things that have happened that are too crude to mention from the pulpit.

Let me share with you a few things that have happened to us, that even after several years, still give us a belly laugh:

“*Yoo-hoo!*”

There was the time about 10-11 years ago, when we were having dinner in our dining room and all of a sudden a strange woman pokes her head into our dining room and in a shrill voice says, “*Yoo-hoo.*”

It turned out that she had walked up our driveway into the backyard, entered our house through the back door, walked through our family room, our laundry room and kitchen and did not know that she was in the wrong house.

Years later we still laugh over that event—I have at least once put on a wig and acted like I was the “*Yoo-hoo*” lady!

“*Fire in the kitchen!*”

A roast was in the oven and the grease caught on fire. I jumped up from the couch in the living room and tried to run to the kitchen. There were toys on the floor in my path that kept tripping me up—I kept falling down and getting up as I ran to the kitchen. My wife tells us that my eyes were big as saucers as I was having the most difficult time “saving the day.”

The Brooks clan has an assortment of stories to tell that involve *Bugs, Bees and Cicadas*

“*The Flying Cockroach in the Hotel Room.*”

Deb and I were celebrating an anniversary one year. The hotel room we stayed in was very nice but it had only one problem. As we were unpacking our luggage, a very large cockroach took to flight and ran us out of our room.

Needless to say, we requested another room.

⁵ *The Week* magazine, March 25, 2005. Cited on *Parables, Etc.*, April 2005

Speaking of hotel rooms, there was the one occasion when we drove to Ohio to drop off our daughter Debbie for college. We stayed at the RodeWay Inn in Springfield. They should have called it the “*RailWay Inn*” because it was right next to a rail line. Every two hours the train came through and shook our room.

“The Cicada at RadioShack”

During the 1987 Cicada Invasion Debbie and I came out of RadioShack finding a cicada on the door of the car. After a few minutes we finally mustered enough courage to quickly get into the car and shut the door. What we didn’t realize is that a cicada had gotten into the car and was on the gear shift. All of us began to scream. We were afraid to get back out of the car and afraid to stay in the car.

“The Angry Spider on the BBQ grill cover”

When preparing to cook on our barbeque grill, I removed the vinyl cover of grill and saw on the cover an egg sack meticulously spun by a spider. I got some bug spray and began to spray the sack and all of a sudden an angry “mother spider” jumped out of the cover in attack mode and began to charge me. It actually followed me across the deck and forced me into my house.

“The Bee on the Patio”

I don’t like sitting out in the open air but Debbie brought me this really nice patio chair—manufactured just for big men like me. Deb invited me out to relax with her on the patio.

It was a nice day weather-wise and we had both dozed off when all of a sudden a bee buzzed by Debbie’s ear. Her earsplitting scream (as only a soprano could do) woke me up just in time to see her swat her earring right into the neighbor’s yard. From there, she tells the story of how I jumped from my new chair and ran into the house leaving her and kids outside.

I could on and on with our funny stories.

Isn’t it true that many of our best memories are laced with laughter? Proverbs 15:15, “*All the days of the afflicted are bad, but a cheerful heart has a continual feast.*”

I really believe that all the laughter that goes on in the Brooks home has kept me and Deb feeling young. A merry heart has truly been medicine for us!

Negativity can often cause failure, and failure often leads to a negative outlook on life. So we fight negativity with laughter.

But there are some other ways to fight negativity. As we approach the close of this message let me share with you four more ways be positive.

1.) Listen to praise music

Keep praise music on all day. Sing songs and make melody in your heart to the Lord. God has given us the garment of praise that lifts the spirit of heaviness.

Psalm 147:1 says, “*Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.*”

Illustration: Debbie's day care parent who commented on the praise and worship music Debbie was playing.

1 Samuel 16:23 tells us that *"whenever a distressing spirit came upon King Saul that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him."*

2.) Train yourself to think positive.

This can only happen as your mind is renewed with the Word of God. You deposit the Word of God in your heart and when negative thoughts come you reach in and make a withdrawal of the Word!

"I don't know where I will ever find the money to pay my rent or my BGE bill" – You reach in and pull out Philippians 4:19 that says, "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

When fearful thoughts plague your mind concerning troublesome people or situations, you make a withdrawal of Psalm 50:15 that says, *"Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."*

When you think negative thoughts that speak doubt to your abilities you can say to yourself, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* Philippians 4:13

When you are in a situation and feel like giving up; when negative thoughts tempt you to throw in the towel, you just go into your Scripture Bank and withdrawal 2 Corinthians 12:9 where God says, *"My grace is sufficient for you."* You can remember that Our God is the *"Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our affliction."* - 2 Corinthians 1:3

When you are confused about which way you will go turn when making a decision remember that Proverbs 3:5-6 says, *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."*

When you think that God has dissed you and has left you; when negative thoughts tell you that God no longer cares for you—it is at this time that you can reach into your Scripture Bank and pull out Jeremiah 29:11 that says, *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

You fight negativity by training yourself to think positive—to think Scriptural.

3.) Rejoice in the Lord

You fight negatively by rejoicing in the Lord. Philippians 4:4 says, *"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"*

So many that are oppressed or depressed seek to self-medicate themselves with alcohol, over-the-counter drugs or other drugs. Someone said that *"We have God's medicine bottle; the directions read: Take seven praise pills a day and rejoice in the Lord."*

The key is not just rejoicing when times are good but rejoicing when times are bad. Not just when the sun is shining but when the dark clouds come and the storm winds blow.

In the book of Habakkuk, chapter three, the prophet had a vision of an impending invasion. This vision almost caused him to collapse (vs. 16).

What if you were in his shoes? What if you knew calamity was about to be unleashed against your family? What if you knew that you were about to lose your job? What if you knew that your spouse was about to leave you? What if you knew that cancer was about to take your life?

With that in mind, listen to the words that Habakkuk sung in response to his horrifying vision:

Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls; Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills. (Habakkuk 3:17-19)

You fight negatively by rejoicing in the Lord. Philippians 4:4 *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!*

Paul says to rejoice. Someone might say, “*But you don’t know what I’m going through—you don’t know my circumstances.*”

Paul didn’t say, “Rejoice in your circumstances always.” He said to “*rejoice in the Lord.*” People become negative and unhappy in life because their happiness is dependent upon their circumstances rather than upon the Lord.

While your circumstances will change, you need to be plugged into the Lord who does not change.

Paul knew that he was plugged into the Lord who was “*the same, today, yesterday and forever more.*” (Heb 13:8)

He was plugged into the Lord who said that “*He would never leave nor forsake the believer.*” (Heb 13:5)

He was plugged into the Lord who said that “*I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*” (Matthew 28:20)

Paul could rejoice because he knew that he was eternally secure in the Lord—no one could pluck him out of the Father’s hand (John 10:29). Even if someone should succeed in taking his life, he could rejoice because (2 Corinthians 5:8)

4.) *Don’t take your “self” so seriously*

There is a philosophy of life that says “The answer to our problems can be found with a deep look inside oneself.”

Mariah Carey has been quoted as having said, “*You really have to look inside yourself and find your own inner strength, and say, “I’m proud of what I am and who I am, and I’m just going to be myself.”*”

Our kids are taught this stuff. In the movie, “*The Lion King*, the ghost of Mufasa says to Simba, “*You have forgotten who you are and so have forgotten me. Look inside yourself, Simba. You are more than what you have become. You must take your place in the Circle of Life.*”

The truth of the matter is that “*there is no good thing that dwells in the flesh* (Rom 7:18);” “*the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked.*” (Jer 17:9)

We must take responsibility for our own misery. You and I must take responsibility for the way we think and the way we act. The world doesn't revolve around us.

You cannot change someone else to make you happy and you cannot always change your circumstances, but with God's help, our negative personalities can be changed.

A cheerful heart chooses God's truth as a barometer for thinking and feeling.

A cheerful heart allows God to turn negative situations into positive results.

A cheerful heart really sees the glass of life "half full" instead of "half empty."

A cheerful heart looks outward instead of inward.

A cheerful heart doesn't give up.

A cheerful heart trusts God and it is evidenced in the way we think, talk, act, and feel.⁶

"A merry heart does well like a medicine..."

Take the time to laugh.

Take the time to laugh at yourself. Laugh at yourself first, before anyone else can.

Always laugh when you can. It is cheap medicine. He who laughs, lasts!

Laughter is inner jogging.

When you can laugh at yourself, you are free.

"A merry heart does well like a medicine..."

⁶ From an article called, *Lighten Up! Don't Take Yourself So Seriously!* by [Forshia Ross](#)