

週一嗎哪 午間查經分享祈禱會

MONDAY MANNA
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CAUGHT IN THE LOOP OF NEGATIVITY?

By Robert J. Tamasy

A song from years ago complained, “If it wasn’t for bad luck, I wouldn’t have any luck at all.” These days, we could make a similar observation that if it wasn’t for bad news, we wouldn’t have any news at all. We don’t need to be reminded about the negativity spawned by the global pandemic. The mass media have seemed to revel in reports of deaths due to COVID-19, along with the countless cases of people being hospitalized with the virus. The old news mantra, “If it bleeds, it leads,” has taken center stage.

But that has not been the only cause of the negative environment in which we live. In many parts of the world, economic turmoil has reigned. Supply shortages of common goods have frustrated many of us. Threats of war in several parts of the world have created high anxiety. Violence is on the increase, as are suicides, drug abuse, and domestic strife. The list goes on.

The temptation is great to plunge into great despair, with the constant barrage of bad news causing us to believe that all hope is gone. But this temptation offers no positive outcome. So, how can we avoid it?

Leadership consultant Tim Kight recently seen that applies directly to this question. He said, “If you dwell on the negative, you simply feed your frustration or fear, which leads to bad decisions, which causes you to be even more anxious, angry, or afraid. It is a ‘doom loop.’ Press pause and interrupt the doom loop. Redirect your focus from the negative to the productive.”

Have you become caught up in a loop of negativity, or as Kight terms it, the “doom loop”? It has affected all of us to some extent, but there are ways of avoiding concentrating on the endless stream of bad news. We find sound advice in the Scriptures:

Develop a healthy mindset. We can allow our minds to become consumed by the continual stream of bad news and information, or we can make the conscious decision to focus on more positive, productive things. “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable will of God” (Romans 12:2).

Concentrate on positive, uplifting things. It has been said that you cannot keep birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair. “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

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Refuse to dwell on evil and negative ideas. We live in an information age, and much of the information we see and hear can be destructive, rather than helpful and uplifting. We can choose to cast aside counterproductive thoughts and ideas. “Test all things; hold fast to what is good. Abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22).

Choose faith rather than doubt. Even when circumstances look bleak, trusting in God can direct us to hope, a sense of earnest expectation and confident assurance in the face of discouragement. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).

© 2022. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC's Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship*; *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*; *Pursuing Life With a Shepherd's Heart*, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and *The Heart of Mentoring*, coauthored with David A. Stoddard. Bob's biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How have you been dealing with the constant bombardment of negative, unsettling news?
2. What do you think of the observation that allowing ourselves to dwell on the negative can put us into a “doom loop,” a loop of negativity that leads to frustration, fear, anger, and bad decisions?
3. In what ways can we combat the negative environment in which we have been living for so long? How can we cultivate a healthy, positive mindset to guide our actions and everyday decision-making?
4. Do you agree that a sincere, well-grounded faith in God, in His sovereignty and divine control over all circumstances, can enable us to overcome the loop of negativity that seems to plague so many people? Why or why not? What are challenges to trusting God in times of great discouragement and despair?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Psalm 23:1-6, 100:1-5; Proverbs 12:25, 16:24, 25:25; Romans 8:28; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

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