

Talk It Over

Be Thankful
(Week 1:)
Be Optimistic

SMALL TALK

1. What does the word "optimism" make you think of? How does it make you feel? Be honest.
2. Do you think a majority rides the negativity train every day?

VIEWPOINT

3. **READ Proverbs 11:27.** How does this play out in daily life?

Proverbs 11:27 (NLT) If you search for good, you will find favor; but if you search for evil, it will find you!

4. **READ Hebrews 11:1.** What gives us hope?

Hebrews 11:1 (NIV2011) Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

Everyone is an interpreter of reality.

Is life good or not? Everyone is an interpreter of reality.

How do you define reality?

By our feelings?

By what people say?

By what WHO says?

The news people?

The economists?

Theologians?

Scientists?

Pastors?

Some other teachers? Who?

How do we decide?

Are we to be our own authorities on reality, interpreting reality for ourselves strictly based on what we see, and our own experiences?

Hebrews 11:1 (NIV2011) Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

I'm OPTIMISTIC ...
based on what God SAYS...
not on what I SEE.

The human tendency is to drift.
And when we drift we we tend to drift downward into negativity.
We don't drift upward. We don't drift upstream. We don't drift against the wind.
We don't drift away from gravity.
Life is a journey. And it is often difficult. On a difficult hike, where do your eyes go?
Don't your eyes drift down to your feet. When you are worn out on a difficult hike,
a pause can do wonders. We need to pause and look up for inspiration. Let's do
that together today. Let's pause and look to God for hope and inspiration.
Let's not rely on what we see, but on what God says.
Let's not even rely on what we feel, but on what God says, because what we feel
down in a downward drift.

What we need is LIFT not DRIFT.
For LIFT we need to look upward to God for hope.

Who is in position to accurately define reality? I believe God is, and I believe what
he says will help us see that life is good, and we have good reason to be optimistic.

5. **READ Romans 8.** Review the "8 from 8" reasons for optimism from Sunday's
outline. Which one strikes you most and why?

Short List of 8 : This is ONLY true for those "IN CHRIST JESUS"

1. I'm **FREE**
2. Jesus is **PRAYING** for me
3. My future **VICTORY** is greater
4. I have **PEACE**
5. God is **FOR** me
6. God helps me in my **WEAKNESS**
7. God **REPURPOSES** everything for my good
8. **NOTHING** can pull me away

When I went through Romans 8, I came up with 32 reasons for Optimism:

1. **I am no longer condemned by sin's guilt or power**
{1} Therefore, there is now no condemnation
2. **I'm in Christ Jesus**
for those who are in Christ Jesus,
3. **I'm set free from Sin**
*{2} because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free
from the law of sin and death.*

4. **I'm set free from Death**
{2} because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.
5. **Jesus did for me what the Law could not do for me**
{3} For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh,
6. **Jesus fulfilled the requirement of the Law for me, and in me**
{4} in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
7. **Jesus enables me to live according to the Spirit, (in a new mindset with his desires)**
{5} Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.
8. **God gave me the Spirit to govern my mind with LIFE and PEACE**
{6} The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.
9. **God's Spirit changes my hostile to God mindset to a compliant mindset.**
{7} The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. {8} Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.
10. **I can now please God.**
{8} Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.
11. **I live in God's realm (God's hidden and unseen kingdom and in Christ's authority).**
{9} You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.
12. **God's Spirit will give me life and immortality**
{10} But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. {11} And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.
13. **By God's Spirit, I can put to death the misdeeds of my sin-trained body, and train myself to break all those patterns**
{12} Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. {13} For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.
14. **I am led by God's Spirit and without the fear of failure**
{14} For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. {15} The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather,

- 15. I am growing in intimacy with God my father**
the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” {16} The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.
- 16. I am an heir of God, co-heir with Christ.**
{17} Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ,
- 17. I share in his sufferings, yes, but I will share in his glory.**
if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.
- 18. That Glory will be far greater than the suffering, so much so that its not worth comparing.**
{18} I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. {19} For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. {20} For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope {21} that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. {22} We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.
- 19. My body will be fully redeemed (all hints of weakness, mortality, defilement, death, and corruption will be fully removed!)**
{23} Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.
- 20. My hope is not wishful thinking but something solid that has saved me already.**
{24} For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? {25} But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.
- 21. The Spirit helps me in my weakness**
{26} In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness.
- 22. God’s Spirit helps me pray when I don’t know what to pray or how to pray.**
We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. {27} And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.
- 23. God repurposes everything in my life for my good.**
{28} And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.
- 24. God conforms me to the image of Christ, to make me “Christlike”**
{29} For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.
- 25. God calls me to a cause and purpose**
{30} And those he predestined, he also called;

- 26. God writes my story and will see each chapter through to a great story!**
those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. {31} What, then, shall we say in response to these things?
- 27. Since God is for me, nothing can defeat me.**
If God is for us, who can be against us?
- 28. God gives me everything I need; he holds nothing back.**
{32} He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? {33} Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.
- 29. Jesus intercedes for me.**
{34} Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.
- 30. NOTHING can separate me from the love of Christ**
{35} Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? {36} As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”
- 31. I am more than a conqueror**
{37} No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
- 32. I’m confident and convinced**
{38} For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, {39} neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

GETTING PERSONAL

6. Is your attitude based more on what you see or based on what God says?
7. Which of the reasons to stay optimistic comes hardest? Which come easiest? Why?
8. Have you experienced pain that God repurposed for good? Share your story.
9. Pick one of the most challenging reasons for optimism for you (from the “8 from 8”), then attempt to explain how this reason might cause your life to look different if you could fully believe it?

MAKING PROGRESS

10. “From wherever you are”...what one step can you take this week to be more thankful and optimistic?

November 4, 2018

Be Optimistic

By Jim Hammond

Series: Be Thankful

I'm excited about this message series—I need it!

Focus: We need to step off the negativity train.

How many of you remember the little engine that could? *“I think I can, I think I can.”* On the negativity train, the self-talk goes more like, *“I think its bad. I think its bad. I think its bad.”*

“I don't have what it takes.”

“My life stinks.”

“Things are bad and getting worse.”

“The economy is doomed—Stocks are crashing.”

“Families are falling apart...The school system stinks and young people are a mess.”

“My food is genetically modified AND sprayed with pesticides and poisons.”

“Everyone is getting cancer...We are all going to die!”

Anybody feel better? No. Do you know why that is? Thoughts are food for the soul. And the food we were just eating was buzzard food! Buzzards live off of things that are dead! We aren't buzzards. We weren't designed for that.

We need to quit acting like buzzards and start acting like humming birds. Hummingbirds fly around with amazing energy and they live off of beauty and flowers. I want to be more like the hummingbird! Don't you?

[insert hummingbird and buzzard picture from file here]

Proverbs 11:27 (NLT) If you search for good, you will find favor; but if you search for evil, it will find you!

Negativity is contagious and destructive.
Realism is nothing but an interpreted description.
Optimism goes a long way toward opening future possibilities.

[insert "Life Is Good" graphic here]

The **"Life is Good" T-shirt company** is a 100 million company started by two brothers who grew up in a hard life. They learned from their mom with simple words that Life was good even while things were tough for them. At the dinner table, she would say. "Tell me something good that happened today." That habit and her simple conviction that life is good changed their outlook.

Everyone is an interpreter of reality.

Is life good or not?

How do you define reality?

By our feelings?

By what people say?

By what WHO says?

The news people?

The economists?

Theologians?

Scientists?

Pastors?

Some other teachers? Who?

How do we decide?

Are we to be our own authorities on reality, interpreting reality for ourselves strictly based on what we see, and our own experiences?

Hebrews 11:1 (NIV2011) Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

**I'm OPTIMISTIC ...
based on what God SAYS...
not on what I SEE.**

The human tendency is to drift.

And when we drift we tend to drift downward into negativity.

We don't drift upward. We don't drift upstream. We don't drift against the wind. We don't drift away from gravity.

Life is a journey. And it is often difficult. On a difficult hike, where do your eyes go? Don't your eyes drift down to your feet. When you are worn out on a difficult hike, a pause can do wonders. We need to pause and look up for inspiration. Let's do that together today. Let's pause and look to God for hope and inspiration.

Let's not rely on what we see, but on what God says.

Let's not even rely on what we feel, but on what God says, because what we feel down in a downward drift.

What we need is LIFT not DRIFT.
For LIFT we need to look upward to God for hope.

Who is in position to accurately define reality? I believe God is, and I believe what he says will help us see that life is good, and we have good reason to be optimistic.

One way to define reality is to say **8 from 8 is _____0_____** But today instead, I'd like to show you how

8 FROM 8 IS WHY I'M OPTIMISTIC

We are going to look at 8 inspiring truths from Romans 8. By the way. We only have time for 8. I found 32 reasons in Romans 8. I would encourage you to look to see how many you can find. That exercise alone was quite a LIFT for me.

1. I'm FREE

*Romans 8:1-2 (NIV2011) ^{1} Therefore, there is now **no condemnation** for those who are **in Christ Jesus**, ^{2} because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life **has set you free** from the law of sin and death.*

This actually provided multiple reasons on my complete list.

^{1} Therefore, there is now no condemnation

- **I am no longer condemned by sin's guilt**
- **I am no longer condemned by sin's power**
- **I'm in Christ Jesus**

for those who are in Christ Jesus,

I'm in Christ Jesus. This theme is HUGE in the New Testament. I am going to over simplify. Being in Christ Jesus means being in covenant with him. In covenant the two become one. It also means being one with him, just as he prayed in John 17. He in me, and I in him. The result is that I am forgiven. I'm also connected. I'm also reigning with Christ in realms I can't even see. And His life by his Spirit is in me.

- **I'm set free from the law of Sin & Death**

{2} because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

I cannot be now be condemned. My debt has already been paid! CHRIST took my place and gave me immunity! I'm free from sin's guilt! I've been set free from sin's POWER. This is great news with ongoing every day ramifications! Christ in me means yes, I get to go to heaven, but even more than this it means of heaven gets into me now!

2. Jesus is PRAYING for me

Romans 8:34 (NIV2011) {34} Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Prayer is powerful. The prayers of a good man are powerful. The prayers of the perfect man, the Son of God are most powerful, and he's praying for me! If anything should give us optimism, this is it!

3. My future VICTORY is greater

Romans 8:18 (NIV2011) {18} I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Don't sweat the small stuff.... everything is small stuff!
Compared with the glory of Christ that will be revealed in us,
Everything is small stuff! There is not even a comparison worth comparing.

4. I have PEACE

Romans 8:6 (NIV2011) ^{6} The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

Here is something we learn. We learn to let our minds be governed by the Spirit. The result is Life and Peace.

The Spirit impresses God's Words into us, so that what he says becomes the way we think. His perspective becomes our perspective. A mind directed, and governed by God's Spirit is Life and Peace.

The Spirit governing our minds mean we have begun to let God be in charge. We let him rule. We move from hostility to compliance. We actually desire the things he desires. This is really living. It is life. It is peace.

5. God is FOR me

Romans 8:31-33 (NIV2011) ^{31} ... If God is for us, who can be against us? ^{32} He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ^{33} Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

When someone doesn't like you, criticizes you, or shoots you down, or is against you, they are hostile. But if God is for you, how much does that matter, really? I've read the end of the story. We win.

6. God helps me in my WEAKNESS

Romans 8:24-26 (NIV2011) ^{24} For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ^{25} But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. ^{26} In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. ...

My hope is not wishful thinking but something solid that has saved me already. (See the past tense in 24?) And yet, I'm still in process. I still experience weakness. Nevertheless:

When I'm down, he holds me up!

When I'm hurting, he's my comfort.

When I feel lonely, he reminds me that I'm never alone.

When I'm weak, he is strong!

7. God REPURPOSES everything for my good

Romans 8:28 (NIV2011) ^{28} And we know that in all things God

*works **for the good** of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

At the beginning of Genesis, what the devil meant for evil—God through his grace will turn it around for good.

At the end of Genesis, what Joseph's brothers meant for evil—God through his grace turned it around for good.

In the Middle of the Bible, what the devil meant for evil (inciting the very crowd Jesus came to save, to reject, condemn, and crucify), God turned it around for good.

At the end of the Bible, it's all turned around for good for everyone who is IN CHRIST.

8. NOTHING can pull me away

***Romans 8:38-39 (NIV2011)** ^{38} For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ^{39} neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to **separate us from the love of God** that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

No matter where I am—God is here for me!

No matter what I did—God still loves me!

No matter what happened to me—God is reaching out to me!

Dear God,

Life is good, because You are good. I'm grateful to receive your goodness right here, right now, not because I am good, but because you offer your goodness to me as a gift. Thank you for giving me life through your Son Jesus! Thank you for capturing my heart with your goodness. I want to experience more of your goodness. I choose to put my hope in you. I choose goodness, gratitude, and generosity because you have given me all these things. I give myself to you, in Jesus name and for his honor. Yours truly..., Amen!