

The Power of Positive Psychology – Love
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[Start with Seligman BBC video] (26) To be honest > I was kind of surprised by the mention of this **strengths based idea** in Positive Psychology... **PAUSE...** I'd always thought this worldview was just about **ignoring the negative** (which it does - based on FACT... not denial or wishful thinking!)... and the **seeking of superficial pleasure... a "thin" kind of happiness!**

But what I now realize is that the central focus of this movement is actually **much deeper than that** – it's about seeking, what Seligman calls, '**gratification**'

Gratification – he posits - comes when we **live out of our core strengths... PAUSE...** "(27) The more you are who you **really are**, the happier you'll be"

PAUSE... This idea has many parallels to the Xn faith... **God wants you to be fully you (life abundantly)...** He made you as a **unique human being...** to play a distinctive part in a bigger body (church)... He made you w/**special-to-you gifts & strengths... PAUSE...**

"God given" strengths!... **PAUSE...** & it makes perfect sense that **when you live out of them** > you'll feel most **alive... most content!... most YOU! PAUSE...** "(28) Life will be most 'right' when you live who you are!"

PAUSE... So the question – re: finding happiness - then becomes **"Who are you?"** < Well Seligman has a test for that!... ☺ **[Homework? What was your #1 Strength? – GET ANSWERS!] [(29) JVS Results]**

Seligman would say that in order for me to have the most **meaningful, gratifying** life > I need to live as much as I can **out of those strengths... PAUSE...**

Which, thank God, I get to do... < I changed careers to do it... At NHC I've been gifted with **space, freedom, permission** to create... be original... and learn!
The trick to finding more **gratification in YOUR life** > is **for you to do the same...** (not b/c preacher!!... but find a calling where your strengths can be maximized...)

Be part of a faith community where **your strengths are realized and needed!.. PAUSE...** Find a spiritual home where the **Spirit's gifts in you** can flourish... **PAUSE...**

Reading the book this week > 'all these **strengths, positive emotions** sound pretty familiar... they sounded like the(list) **Spiritual Gifts... or the Fruit of the Spirit...** ".(30)..the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22

I made a **(31) [CHART - review]...** God's saying 'If **my Spirit lives in you, this is what you'll look like...**' **"If you live this way, you'll be more in step with me – better reflect my image – and you'll find real life!"**

And it's not a legal thing... rules based... from law...It'll **well up from within you (spring)...** it'll be natural!

Because that's how LOVE works... **LONG PAUSE...**

(32) God is love... therefore the gifts God gives are **borne of love...** & the strengths they **create & enable** are **defined and empowered** by love

PAUSE... (SLOW) So, to truly live out of your God-given strengths **you need to operate out of love...**

loving God above all & your neighbour as yourself...
PAUSE... Live your strengths in this loving way and you'll find life... **& you'll end up seeing the world more positively!...** **PAUSE...** I don't think you can help but be more positive if you love others... **PAUSE...**

How so? (33) True love sees the best in others...
Kierkegaard in commenting on the Paul's '(34) love believes all things' said that he saw love as something akin to what a parent feels for her child... sees past shortfalls to innate goodness in the person!

PAUSE... You've probably felt that before > how love makes you quick to forgive... slow to anger... less willing to hold a grudge... **PAUSE...** more patient... gentle or self-controlled... **PAUSE...** Love lets you see the bigger picture!... a **better** picture...

And if love leads you to **see the world in more of this way...** then doesn't that leave the world a better place?
PAUSE... In your perception of it... and in terms of who you are as part of it?... **LONG PAUSE...**

So then won't love **leave you with a lot more to love in this world? & give you a more positive outlook?**

Wouldn't a loving person, by nature, be more positive?

(You still **hate what's wrong**... but that doesn't define you... Love defines you... love is the last word...)

PAUSE... In his book Seligman > talks about how we often don't even **extend that love to our very selves!** [(35) READ Page 95]... < Again it's *not* about ignoring criticism... but more about **weighing**... not assuming the worst!... **God would never judge you this way...** *His love wouldn't let him...* [(36 - 41) RD ROM 8:31-39]

Again... this is who we are in God's eyes... **redeemed belonging** to him... **his children** that he loves with a Father's kind of love... **'believing all things.'** **PAUSE**

So, again > who are you going to believe?... Yourself, Others or God?... **PAUSE...** **And if you're loved this way,** how can you NOT love others the same... Seligman writes about studies that show how **'positive people' attract** others... **'negative people' repel...** **PAUSE...** Jesus is attracting a whole world to himself! Jesus is love... **LONG PAUSE...** **He sees us through love...** **PAUSE...** **But we can't see as clearly...**

Our love lenses are **blurred, cracked... broken...**

PAUL > "(42) To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted." Titus 1:15, TNIV

I've been **haunted by the verse for years...** because **I've seen pure people** – loving people – who seem to see the world through different eyes than I do... (I've called them **naive** or **foolish**...)

Too often I think that people want to rip me off, hurt me, or take advantage... and it makes me wonder if that's **who I am!...** "(43) To the **advantage takers,** all things take advantage..."

You can fill in your character flaw if you'd like... (44) To the **cynical** all things are cynical... (45) To the **selfish,** all things are selfish... (46) To the **proud**... (47) to the **mean-spirited and harshly judging**... **PAUSE...**

God never takes advantage... or is cynical... he's never envious or proud... he's not rude or self seeking... he's not easily angered, nor does he keep any record of wrongs... He never delights in evil... but rejoices in the

truth... he always protects, always trusts, always hopes and always perseveres... **LONG PAUSE...**

(48- END) Read 1 Cor 13:8-13...

God is Love.... What an empowering and positive way to view **His world!**

Romans 8:31-39

So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose? If God didn't hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn't gladly and freely do for us? And who would dare tangle with God by messing with one of God's chosen? Who would dare even to point a finger? **[including YOU]** The One who died for us—who was raised to life for us!—is in the presence of God at this very moment sticking up for us. Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture:

They kill us in cold blood because they hate you.

We're sitting ducks; they pick us off one by one.

None of this fazes us because Jesus loves us. I'm absolutely convinced that nothing—nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable—absolutely nothing can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.

⁸Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹²Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

BLESSING – Romans 15:13 – “May the God of green hope fill you up with joy, fill you up with peace, so that your believing lives, filled

with the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit, will
brim over with hope!”