

An Experiment of Self-Blessing: Replacing Bad News with the Good

As we said in the earlier and related *News: The Good, Bad & Ugly Blog Post*, we would be foolish to think we can be current in both the world's bad news and God's Good News – if we even had the time, they are so incompatible as to neutralize the other and simply waste more time! No, we have our choice, but not for both. Incompatible does not, however, mean we must give up all news other than God's Word. Some people have business or work responsibilities making certain news vital. Or, we may have recreational interests we follow – a sport, hobby, etc. This is where the internet is helpful, offering filtering services to seek out and provide specific news to us. Instead, incompatible means the habitual, indiscriminate and mindless watching of TV news or wading through internet news feeds. It is especially important we are discriminate about the sources of our news, avoiding the “propaganda” outlets and personalities: all 3 major networks (ABC, CBS & NBC), CNN, CNBC, Fox, NY Times, Rush Limbaugh, Rachel Maddow, Sean Hannity . . . those responsible for the unrelenting politicizing and sensationalizing of virtually all issues.

The Experiment

Plan for a week to test and see that Good News vs. bad is possible, practical and beneficial – it should prove true within this time period and provide a basis for future refinement and greater blessing.

1. STOP all bad news:
 - DON'T go to internet news sites.
 - When on a non-news sites (Google, Facebook . . .), and news “headline” banners appear, don't click through to them.
 - Minimize discussions with others about “news” – political and “trash” (gossip) news. Instead, steer conversations to as much as possible, which will become easier as you are in the Good, “off” the bad and, as a result, have better thoughts and fewer opinions about everything! Or, as the Good News, offers and leads us:

Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it **into practice**. And the God of peace will be with you. ^{Ph 4:8-9}

2. Read God's Good News every day, starting in the *New Testament*. Read it naturally, not ploddingly or with thoughts like: “I am not understanding all of

this,” “This doesn’t seem like it is all that practical . . . I couldn’t do what it is saying even if I wanted to . . .” **JUST READ IT AS YOU WOULD ANYTHING.**

- The Bible is NOT a history book. Rather it should be read personally, in the present-tense and looking for the practical. When stories about other people are presented, consider “these things . . . as examples” for us to see, in them, what may help us.
 - Don’t stumble over and be worried or discouraged about what you do not see or understand as you read – we will better understand as we read more and “loop back” to read the particular section again. As living and active news, we will not and should not think we will EVER understand it all!
 - On the other hand, it is not a bad idea, if we want to understand something (or its application) to stop and ask God to explain it to us, for the *Bible* is NEVER going to be truly understood unless God, through His indwelling Holy Spirit, reveals its personal meaning to us.
 - And, certainly most difficult (also effectively impossible without God’s Grace), we cannot understand the *Bible* through what we *think* we already know, but we must reevaluate all we have been told, taught or thought through the lens of what we are now reading in God’s Word. For as the *Bible* instructs us: “Test everything. Hold on to the good.” ^{1Th5:21} Don’t read God’s Good News through preconceived notions because, while some may be right, others may be totally wrong causing confusion or serious misinterpretations. Test EVERYTHING. Hold on to the Good News you are reading.
3. Use the freed-up time resulting from replacing the bad with the Good News, for positive purposes: quality time activities with family and friends, more time and thought appreciating the many gifts of God’s creation, establishing greater order in one or more of the primary areas of life: Mental, Physical, Emotional, Relational, Work, Rest, Financial, Entertainment, Meals, Personal Grooming & Hygiene, understanding that order, and the peace this brings, is one of the key signs of an authentic Godly life.

Summary – Replacing bad news with the Good

Much like the way physical exercise affects and improves us physically, even when we are not exercising, God’s Good News positively impacts our thinking, even when not reading and directly contemplating it (in the same way the time and emotions we devote to bad news affect other, seemingly unrelated, aspects of our lives).

Try this simple plan for a week and see if you are not motivated to continue (and improve) seeking to major on Good News to the point of making it a great discipline to an all-around ever-improving Better life!