

## **“THE POWER OF POSITIVE ACTIONS”**

### *Concrete Actions Lead to Concrete Results*

Would you agree that a daily challenge, in our time and place, is to maintain a positive outlook? Negativity seemingly exists everywhere. Whether it be the destruction of whole cities and towns from hurricanes, the brutal murder of people attending an outdoor concert, or the uncertainty of a potential nuclear conflict with North Korea, the daily news seems to cast a doom and gloom atmosphere over our lives. How do we see and help establish a light at the end of the tunnel?

In 1952, the American minister and author, Norman Vincent Peale, released a self-help book entitled “The Power of Positive Thinking”. It became Peale’s most widely read work and stayed on the *New York Times* bestseller list for 186 consecutive weeks. According to the publisher, Simon & Schuster, the book has sold over five million copies and has been translated into 15 languages. The book’s premise is that the reader can achieve a permanent constructive and optimistic attitude through the constant positive influence of his or her conscious thought, for example by using such affirmations as “Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better”. Despite their popularity, Peale’s ideas and techniques proved controversial, and he received widespread criticism from religious figures and from the psychiatric profession.

Returning to our daily challenge of establishing and maintaining a positive outlook, might we consider that worldly negativity could be successfully overpowered by our observation of the aggregation of countless individual positive actions, that might be called “The Power of Positive Actions”.

Our parish stewardship renewal invites all of us, as disciples of Jesus Christ, to share God’s gifts of time, talent, and treasure for the building of the Kingdom of God. Parishioners are offered the opportunity to prayerfully identify their particular gifts from God and to discern how they will share these gifts in the service of others. We are all encouraged to formally document our intentions to share our gifts during the next year in specific, concrete ways by completing and submitting a stewardship commitment form.

God’s universal gift to all people of a free will allows all of us to individually choose how we will use, or not use, our gifts of time, talent, and treasure. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to his service. But Jesus does not call us as nameless people in a faceless crowd. He calls us individually, by name. Each one of us – whether clergy, religious, or layperson; married or single; adult or child – has a personal vocation and mission in carrying out the divine plan.

Jesus calls each of us to actively do God’s will, to actively proclaim the Good News of salvation, to actively heal the afflicted, and to actively care for one’s brothers and sisters. Collectively, through the individual concrete actions of countless disciples throughout the ages and throughout the world, the Kingdom of God is built, “For we are God’s co-workers” (1 Corinthians 3:9).

The task at hand is to understand our mission – our personal vocation – in God’s plan. The stewardship way of life is an answer to the call of Jesus. It enables us to discern our personal vocation in direct relationship to the individual, particular set of gifts given to us. It helps each of us to identify our particular mission as an active, committed, dedicated, and effective co-worker in building the Kingdom of God.

The Power of Positive Actions can truly overwhelm negativity in our daily lives, by demonstrating that concrete actions lead to concrete results.

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