

OUR MINUSES ARE GOD'S PLUSES

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CONCLUSION

PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENT

INTRODUCTION

For all the negative things we have to say, God has a positive. Believe it or not, we have a lot of negative things to say. "I don't have enough time." "I'm too busy." "I'm too sick." "I can't do it." "I'm tired." And lots of other things like that. We tend to emphasize our _____. Subconsciously, we remember our finiteness. But we are believers, so **we need to change!** The Bible says, "**All things have become new.**" We are no longer children of finiteness, but we are children of infiniteness. We are children of God. We are limitless. The Bible talks about angels. In Hebrews there is a verse that different people interpret differently. Some say we are little bit lower than the angels, some say that the angels are little bit lower than us. In any case, we are different. Maybe there are some things we can do that angels can't do. Certainly the angels can do things we can't do. However, let's talk about us and see what God has in store for us, His children. He wants to take our minuses and turn them into pluses.

1. We say, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE. God says, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

We find that in Luke 18:27, "*Jesus replied, 'What is impossible with men is possible with God.'*"

We can't save anybody; God can. He can even save rich people! He can even save the leaders in your _____! He can even save **MEN!** Jesus can do all these things that we think are impossible. Next time you begin to shake your head, "No, this can't be," just grab your head, stop it and say, "Yes, with God it is possible. **God says, 'All things are possible.'** Hallelujah, I am a child of the King, all things are possible!"

2. We say, I'M TOO TIRED. God says, I'LL GIVE YOU REST

Matthew 11:28, "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. And you will find rest for your souls.*"

God says, "I'll give you rest." Basically that's an element we ignore. God wants to give us **rest!** Wow! We tend to have a slave driver's image of God. He always wants more and He is never satisfied. He wants sacrifice

and He wants _____. The Bible says God wants to give you **rest**. God says, "My child why are you struggling and struggling so hard when I want to give you **rest**?"

There is the interesting connection here between the rest and the yoke that you better think about later on at home. Now, we think that the picture is of oxen plowing a field. That's heavy work. But he goes on to say, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart." If you would learn the yoke of gentleness and minister in humility, you would find that the yoke is very different. He says, "...you will find **rest** for your souls because my yoke is easy and my burden is light." But we are running through life thinking, "I've got to do that. Oh, I don't have time anymore!" We're just full of energy and emotions and stress and then we wonder why nothing happens. Jesus focused on His priority. The worst sinner felt, "Jesus is just like one of us. He is not like somebody above me." Jesus came to him in order to be with him.

3. We say, I CAN'T GO ON. God says, MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU

II Corinthians 12:9, "But he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in your weakness."

Our God _____ must be thinking, "Why do you think you can't go on? What is the matter with you? I have a whole warehouse full of grace here. I just want to pass it out to whoever wants it or needs it. Maybe you just don't understand that My power is made perfect in your weakness. As long as you feel good, as long as you feel strong, as long as you feel, 'Boy I can do this!' Okay, then you don't need me. You don't need my heavenly supply of _____. But when you think, 'I can't go on.' Then I have everything that you need." Because **God says, "My grace is sufficient for you."**

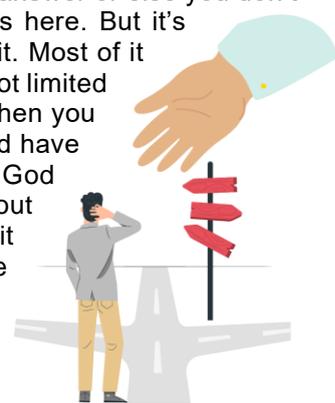


Paul said, "When I understood that, and because of that, I just want to boast about all my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me," and he may have added "You know I'm tired, you know I didn't sleep well, I hurt my back, I don't think I can go on. I am hoping we will only have a one-day conference instead of a two-day conference. Isn't it wonderful, I feel so bad? I mean God really can do something through me now!"

4. We say, I CAN'T FIGURE THINGS OUT. God says, I WILL DIRECT YOUR STEPS

Pr. 3:5-6, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

It just doesn't make sense to me! You have felt like that and said that sometime, no doubt. Maybe you have been in a building with lots of stairways. Stairways here and stairways there, stairways to the first floor and other stairways to the basement, then more stairways to the higher floors and stairways at the back. You just can't figure it out. Maybe that is how your life is a little bit. You've prayed about it and get no answer or else you don't understand the answer. God says, "You dummy! You prayed about it. The answer is here. But it's better tomorrow than today. I want to give it tomorrow." But you are all worried about it. Most of it is because we are creatures of time. But **God says, "I will direct your steps."** God is not limited to time. He knows precisely in His plan what is the perfect moment. I just don't think when you pray that it happens very often that God says, "Oops, he prayed about that and I should have done that yesterday. Oh, well, let's just quickly do it right now." I don't think so! I think God does everything in the _____. I love the story of Daniel about that mountain where the rock was made loose on the top and it's started rolling and it got bigger like an avalanche and eventually it just consumed everything. Then at the bottom of the story it says, "That's the kingdom of God." Are you surprised? I am not surprised, because you see, we will have success.



5. We say, I CAN'T DO IT. God says, I CAN DO ALL THINGS

Phil. 4:13, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength."

Of course, we quote it all the time. Perhaps we quoted it yesterday, but today, "I can't do it. It's not real." Abraham gave us a bunch of stuff yesterday that is more than we can handle. We don't want to do that much work! But God can do all things. God will do His work. God is faithful and He will do it, the Bible tells us so. An amazing ingredient is _____. Faith is like salt in everything. Sometimes you taste the salt sometimes you don't; many times you are not aware it is there. Sometimes it is very good because of the salt and sometimes it's just normal, you don't know the salt is there. But if you don't have enough salt, eventually you develop

problems, you get sick. It is the same with the ingredient faith. “I can’t” is not based on faith, it’s based on a negative faith, which is called fear. That’s the faith of the evil one. His whole kingdom is set up on the basis of fear. Fear is a type of faith that belongs to the evil kingdom. But **God says, “I can do all things.”**

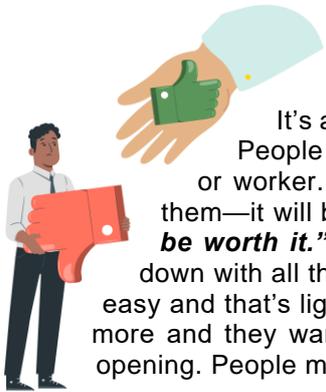
6. We say, I’m NOT ABLE. God says, I’M ABLE

II Cor. 9:8, “*God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*”

You can’t say it much stronger than that. He has His warehouse full of grace. He is able to make all that grace abound to you. It’s not like he says, “Well, I need 10% for Volodia, 10% for Ivan, well maybe I still have 7 % for Leonid.” It’s not that he has to count it on calculator, “Do I have enough left?” He has all of this grace and he can give it to you. All this grace is available to you for a purpose, for a reason to meet all things, physically, emotionally, spiritually, mentally or whatever other needs you can think of. In all things He has grace for you and an _____ of grace for you. It’s there at all times so that you may have all that you need. We would never tell God, “God I just don’t have enough of this or I just don’t have enough of that. When can you send me a new shipment of grace, I ran out last week.” No! It’s in all things, at all times, for all that you need for the purpose that your good works will be bountiful. It says, “**You will abound,**” which means that you will have an abundance of good works and, of course, that is easy to check. **God says, “I am able.”** Maybe few months from now I’ll come to your village, and I’ll begin to ask questions about this Christian that was running around there and what would I hear? If I hear, “Man, he’s done this, he’s done that, he gave me this, he helped me with that,” I’ll know you’ve been busy. You did good works. Being believers we think doing good works is **thinking** about good works. “I’m a nice person, I don’t drink, I don’t smoke and I don’t beat my wife. I don’t curse and I’m a good example for the people here.” Wow! But nobody else has **seen** your good works. Good works are just that—good works. It’s something that other people perceive of having received from you. “Good words spoken at an appropriate time are like apples of gold in a frame of silver.” You are in the store and the salesperson looks terrible. You ask, “Don’t you feel well?” “I couldn’t sleep all night because my child had a tooth ache and he was crying.” “I’m sorry to hear that. Here are 50 grievnas for you. I’ll pray for you. I’ll go home and I’ll pray for you. I hope you will still have a good day.” Maybe you will not give him grievnas but you can give him a good greeting. It’s amazing how many people get encouraged even when we meet them very occasionally but we give them a good little greeting.

7. We say, IT’S NOT WORTH IT. God says, IT WILL BE WORTH IT

Romans 8:28, “*We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*”



It’s amazing how many people are encouraged when you show just a touch of personal interest. People are encouraged when you treat them as an individual, as a person and not just as a clerk or worker. Give people a positive greeting as an individual or say something _____ to them—it will be worth it! Giving hope and encouragement to other people is worth it. **God says, “It will be worth it.”** People begin to perceive that you are a different type of person; you are not burdened down with all the weight of self-interest. They begin to discover that you have a yoke and a burden that is easy and that’s light and they wonder, “How come?” They are going to be curious, they are going to find out more and they want to be with you. Then opportunities will come to share the Gospel. But that’s the first opening. People must become interested and then they are willing to listen. It will be worth it.

8. We say, I CAN’T MANAGE. God says, I WILL SUPPLY ALL

Phil. 4:19, “*My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*”

God says, “I will supply.” Over and over there are testimonies about God supplying the various needs of people, such as books or other things, like winter coats. I think this is probably the most _____ among Christians—of how God supplies their needs. You hear about it all the time. So, whenever you can’t manage, God can supply all that you need. We were praying for some supernatural wisdom for preparing these lectures. I believe God has really been giving some special inspiration to accomplish several difficult lectures.

9. We say, I'M AFRAID. God says, I DIDN'T GIVE YOU FEAR

II Tim. 1:7, *"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline."*

It's interesting that some of these topics are very closely related and yet we can find other distinct, but similar Bible verses in different places in the Bible. God wants to turn all of our minuses into pluses. God does not give us a spirit of fear. Faith drives away fear. Satan robs believers of their power as children of God through giving them a spirit of timidity. But **God says, "I didn't give you fear."** God invites us to come boldly before Him.

10. We say, I'M ALWAYS WORRIED AND FRUSTRATED. God says, CAST ALL YOUR CARE UPON ME

I Peter 5:7, *"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."*

If I had to take care of you, you would have a problem. Sometimes I would, sometimes I would not. Sometimes I may forget. Sometimes I would like to forget. Sometimes I would not like to care, perhaps. Sometimes I would care a lot and sometimes I would care a little. But it says, "Cast your cares upon God."

I don't know why, but basically I live without _____. There is a good kind of stress sometimes. For instance, "How much time do I have? I'd better get this done quickly; he will be here in an hour to pick it up." That's a good stress. It gives energy; it gives time management. But anxiety—worry about tomorrow and the future and the things far away—is a negative energy drain that steals your health. There is nothing I can do about such things because I'm not living tomorrow. I'm living now. There is nothing I can do about tomorrow. There is nothing I can do about this or that in Ukraine because it is so far away. In other cases it involves people's personal will, like in salvation. Let go of your frustrations because they are all things satan wants us to have. **God says, "Cast all your care upon me."** God cares for us and He wants us to experience freedom, a life without anxieties because He cares for us.

11. We think, I'M NOT SMART ENOUGH. God says, I GIVE YOU WISDOM

I Cor. 1:30, *"It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption."*

You may think that you are not smart enough, but you probably are and that's why you are here. Furthermore, I'll share my wisdom with you, but that's not the answer. The _____ is: **God says, "I give you wisdom."** Prayer for wisdom has been one of my prayers ever since I was a tiny, tiny child. I heard the story of Solomon and it was simple for me and I was able to understand that story. So I said, "God, if that worked for Solomon, I want it too." Isn't it wonderful that through Christ Jesus we have been given wisdom?

Proverbs 2:6 and 7 tells us that *"the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity."* God has stored up wisdom especially for us to use when we need it. We are never left to our own ability—if we are willing to rely on God. But as with many of the promises, we need to claim them. We need to ask for His wisdom. **And** we need to give the honor and glory to Him for the wisdom He does give us in whatever situation we must cope with. In Colossians 2:3 we are told that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ. And Christ stands ready to give out this wisdom to you. It's yours for the asking. He never asks you to do something in your own understanding. Instead we are told, *"But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him."* (James 1:5) God is not going to say, "Why are you so dumb that you have to ask me?" No, He passes out His wisdom generously and without any reproach to His beloved children.

12. We say, I FEEL ALL ALONE. God says, I WON'T LEAVE YOU OR FORSAKE YOU

Hebrews 13:5, *"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'"*

It is quite possible that as God's ministers you feel all alone among unbelievers. You'll probably have that feeling as a missionary. That is why such tasks require a special calling and with that comes a special grace for the task and even then this Bible verse is true, **God does say, "I won't leave you or forsake you."** Often we feel all alone when we have a _____. Jesus was tempted when he was alone. He was tempted when he was hungry. He had specific needs and during that time of his weakness, the sly snake came. That's

usually the way it is with us. That is the time you need to become strong. That is the time you need to learn to say, "No, I'm not alone."

I remember one lady who was the pastor's wife in a small church. They had a guest visiting them. He noticed that every time this wife walked past the refrigerator she would frown. He noticed that and thought, "I wonder what's wrong." A refrigerator is the main food storage place. He thought it must be empty, and these people don't have enough food. He said, "Dear sister, I noticed that every time you walk past the refrigerator you frown. I want to give you a challenge. I don't know what your needs are but I want to encourage you. Find a Bible verse about praise and every time you walk past that refrigerator praise God for whatever problem is in that refrigerator." She started praising the Lord for her problem in the refrigerator and shortly afterwards the butcher came. He said, "I have a lot of meat here, but it's already a little old so my customers won't buy it. It is still very good; would you like to have it?" God supplied all their needs.

It is interesting that it says here, "Keep your lives _____ from the love of money. " Now, I know your life is free from the love of money. You don't love money, but it sure felt good when you received your salary yesterday, and it feels good to have it today, the day after you got your salary. It sure feels good to have that money. But let's look at our verse from Hebrews again. It says, "Keep your lives free, be content with what you have. I will never leave you." The Israelites in the wilderness never learned that lesson unfortunately. If they would just have said, "We don't have water, but isn't it good that we have God here! Moses, why don't you tell God we need a drink." Or "We don't have meat, isn't it good we have God with us. Moses why don't you ask God to just solve this meat problem." They could have done that. God was with them. But they didn't do that and nevertheless He did not forsake them.

13. We say, I CAN'T FORGIVE MYSELF. God says, I FORGIVE YOU

I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Rom. 8:1, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

A common feeling is, "I made a stupid mistake." There are so many Christian leaders who can think of a person that God wanted them to go and talk to about Jesus Christ. They didn't do it, and that person _____. Many Christian leaders have an experience like that and they feel, "I can't forgive myself for that. How on earth could I have made such a stupid mistake!" **God says, "I forgive you."**

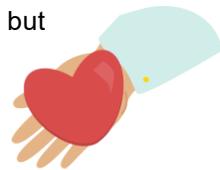
Brothers and sisters, if we confess our sins God **is** faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. Because God has done these things there is now no condemnation for us and we can bask in the sunlight of His forgiveness. Let us enjoy it.

14. We think, NOBODY REALLY LOVES ME. God says, I LOVE YOU

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 13:34, "A new command I give you, Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

At times you probably feel, "Nobody loves me," but that is, of course, a lie. That is a plain lie, nothing but a lie from a sly snake, because there is not a single person here who doesn't have someone who loves him. **God says, "I love you."** God so loved **you** that He gave His one and only Son, that **you** should not perish but have eternal life. And He gave a new _____ to your friends and relatives to love one another. Just as He loves you, so you must love one another.

God loves us and His love is an example to us. Many of our problems are because we simply don't believe in appropriating God's love for us. God does love us and because of that there is a limitlessness about God.



CONCLUSION

Easter is God's positive solution to our negative problems. **Easter is God's solution** through the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ to our negative problem of sin. The cross is **God's big "plus sign."**

God doesn't have any _____. Not in His character. Not in His being. Not in His supply. He just doesn't have any minuses, only pluses. So, our minuses are God's pluses. Every minus is like an extra opportunity for God to do His plus and to show His capabilities to us. So, take this to heart. Remember it. You need these things

when you don't have them; when you feel blue; when you are not interested; when you are tired; when you don't want it. Just when you don't have it, you need to think about these things. Just remember about God's plus sign. I love pluses! Instead of check marks, I like to use a plus sign. Okay I've done that, "Plus." Sometimes, when I need to do two or three things, I start by making the minus sign because the minus sign is already half of the plus sign. It gives me a hope of finishing the task and making a plus sign. That's true; I've done that on paper! It means that I don't know for sure if I can do it but I'm sure going to try. Therefore, I can't completely check them off, but I am going to try before the day is over. So I start by making half the plus sign, which I change into a complete plus sign later on when the task is completed.

I receive tremendous hope and encouragement from God and Jesus Christ. My minuses are His pluses. I love God's great plus sign. I love seeing that plus sign standing on a barren hill silhouetted against a clear blue sky. I'm so excited about God. I want to share it with you in His Holy Name. Amen.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

We are happy to present the video, audio and paper materials that have been prepared by **New Life for Churches**. You have the privilege *upon completion of your practical assignment* to use this lecture with others.

Practical assignment

Completed

- In the space below list two of your minuses. Pray and lay them in God's hands

- From now until the next seminar, keep a journal noting every day how God is using your minuses for His glory. Be prepared to share at the next meeting.

Answer Key

INTRODUCTION

Humanness

1. community
2. difficult things; priority
3. grace
4. fullness of time
5. faith
6. abundance
7. encouraging
8. common testimony
10. anxiety
11. answer
12. special need; free
13. died
14. command

CONCLUSION

Minuses