

# The Vincennes Voice

“...The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight...” (Matt. 3:3)

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## THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF NEGATIVITY

Larry R. Ping II

Twelve men were selected to “search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel” (Num. 13:2). For forty days they did (Num. 13:25). Upon their return, it was reported by ten of the spies, “We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there” (Num. 3:27-28). This negative report brought about rebellion, murmuring and discouragement among the people of God (Dte. 1:26-28). Caleb and Joshua, the other two spies, saw things much differently. They said, “the land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from

them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not” (Num. 14:7-10). This earned Joshua and Caleb nearly death (Num. 14:10). As a result of this negativity and the ensuing results, God declared, “As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun” (Num. 14:28-30).

My dear friends, we must learn to be like Joshua and Caleb. We must discover how to shun the negative attitudes of the ten spies, and further realize the damage that negativity causes. Will you consider with me the negatives of negativity?

**1) NEGATIVITY BRINGS ABOUT AN IMMEDIATE ATTITUDE CHANGE.** There must have

an immense amount of excitement among God’s people. They were so close to being able to see with their own eyes the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). The spies even returned with evidence that the Promised Land indeed “floweth with milk and honey” (Num. 13:27). Take notice though, as soon as the negative report about the land was made, there was a distinct and immediate attitude shift among the people. They went from joy to weeping. They went from excitement to fear. And all because of the negative words of ten, pessimistic men.

**2) NEGATIVITY BREEDS REBELLION.** This negative report of the spies generated ridiculous (and repeated) statements such as, “wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt” (Num. 14:3-4). They were simply and purely rebelling against God and His Word. Had Moses not intervened on

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behalf of the people, God had designs on smiting *“them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they”* (Num. 14:12). Of this kind of activity the Psalmist penned, *“Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help”* (Psa. 107:11-12).

**3) NEGATIVITY PRODUCES MURMURING AND COMPLAINING.** This is an almost immediate response by the people of God as the negative report was issued. Moses wrote, *“And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness”* (Num. 14:2). Moses said they *“murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us”* (Dte. 1:27). The Holy Spirit calls upon God’s people to *“Do all things without*

*murmurings and disputings”* (Php. 2:14).

**4) NEGATIVITY SPAWNS DISCOURAGEMENT.** In Deuteronomy’s account of this sad and negative story, it is told, *“our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there”* (Dte. 1:28).

Discouragement, at the same time, is one of the greatest enemies of the Lord’s people and among the most dangerous weapons of Satan. And he will not hesitate to use it! While negativity brings about discouragement, discouragement creates apathy and indifference. What Christian, or local work for that matter, can thrive and survive with such unconcern?

**5) NEGATIVITY CREATES ILL-FEELINGS TOWARDS THOSE WE SHOULD LOVE.** Those words might sound unbelievable, but they are very true. Clearly, Joshua and Caleb were men of great fame and renown to have been selected as one of the twelve spies. Yet, as they tried

their best to inspire their brethren to at once go and possess the land with the Lord’s help, the meek man testified, *“But all the congregation bade stone them with stones”* (Num. 14:10). In a matter of minutes, these two men went from heroes to villains. In a matter of minutes, the people turned from loving their brethren to desiring to kill them with rocks!

Unfortunately, among the members of the Lord’s Church today, there are plenty of Christians filled with negativity. They love words like, “no,” “can’t” and “won’t.” There is no telling the damage which has been done over the decades and centuries with such negative attitudes.

Will you now, along with me, make a firm dedication to eschewing negativity, and producing positivity? May we never be participants in causing others to rebel against God, or to murmur and complain, or to rapidly turn on each other as though we were enemies?

Paul said it well and best, *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”* (Php. 4:13).

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## FIRST CITY CHURCH OF CHRIST

### MEETING AT HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS

2720 Battery Road, Vincennes, IN 47591

### MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 672  
Vincennes, IN 47591

Phone: 317.308.8288

Website: [www.firstcitychurchofchrist.com](http://www.firstcitychurchofchrist.com)

Email: [firstcitychurchofchrist@gmail.com](mailto:firstcitychurchofchrist@gmail.com)

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## MEETING TIMES (EST)

### SUNDAY

Bible Study – 10:00 am

Worship – 11:00 am & 3:00 pm

### WEDNESDAY

Bible Study – 7:00 pm