

Positively Speaking

By Mark Wilson

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“Heavens No!”

One day, a few years ago, I was deeply troubled with some issues at the church. It seemed like the problems kept piling up on me. Life was hard, misunderstandings abounded, and everywhere I looked, it seemed that the difficulties multiplied.

I decided to call my mentor, Loring Peterson. He'd know just what to do. Loring had preceded me at the church, and I always could count on him for a good word of wisdom and encouragement.

"Hey, Mark!" he answered the phone cheerfully, "How are you doing up there in frozen tundra??" (He'd retired to Florida.)

"Don't ask, Loring! It's just terrible! I have more troubles than I can count. Every time I turn around, a new problem pops up. Loring, would you please pray for God to take away my problems?"

I was astonished when my esteemed mentor shouted, "NO!!! Heavens, No!!!"

"What??? No??? I thought you cared! I thought you understood! Why won't you pray for me??"

"I'll pray for you alright -- but I'm sure not going to ask the good Lord to take your problems!"

"W-w-why not?" I muttered.

Because, all those problems have to do with people -- right?? And if I asked God to take away all your problems, He'd take away all your people! Now, you don't want THAT do you?"

I gulped, "Well, I suppose not."

"So, Instead of praying that God will take away your problems, I'm going to pray that God will help you face 'em head on. I'm going to pray that you will endure the problems like a good soldier, that you will learn something valuable from 'em and that you will come through them all shining like gold!"

"Now, if you'd be satisfied with THAT kind of prayer, I'd be happy to send one up on your behalf."

I accepted.