

# Positively Speaking

By Mark Wilson

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## Open and Closed

You know those signs in store windows that say “Open” on one side and “Closed” on the other? Well, I have a little idea that you can use whenever you notice one.

Whenever you see an “Open” sign, it’s a reminder of how we should be “Open”.

- 1) **We need to have Open Eyes:** This is the way to see things the way they really are (rather than what we assume them to be.) It means having eyes of faith rather than unbelief. Through Open Eyes, we see our neighbors’ needs, rather than shutting them out. Having Open Eyes brings clarity to the situation. Solutions come into focus.
- 2) **We need to have Open Ears:** Listening is one of life’s greatest virtues. Many of us talk too much and hear too little. Since God gave us two ears and one mouth, we should use them in that proportion. Open your Ears to the whisper of God. Open your Ears to the cry of a needy world. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.
- 3) **We need to have Open Hands:** This means being generous. When people hold tightly to possessions with clenched fists, they find their jaws clenched too. Selfishness and being uptight go together. If you want to be happy, start by being generous. Happiness is not obtained by getting everything you want. Instead, it is found in giving to others. An “Open Hand” means holding loosely to earthly things. Don’t get worked up over material items that are broken or lost. It’s only stuff. Stuff can be replaced. Stuff is always temporary. Live life with Open Hands.
- 4) **We need to have Open Minds:** Approaching others in an Open Minded way means recognizing that others might have valid opinions and ideas too. It’s easy to think that OUR way of doing things is the ONLY way. That makes life miserable for family and friends who must suffer our stubbornness.
- 5) **We need to have Open Hearts:** When the heart is open, love pours out. Sometimes, through hurt or disappointment, we are tempted to close off our heart towards others. However, we were created to love. If we erect barriers and walls, we cannot experience life as it should be lived. Nobody is an island. An old African proverb says, “I Am because We Are.” We really do need each other.

Whenever you see a “Closed” sign, this is a reminder for us too. Sometimes, we need to be “Closed.”

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- 1) **We need to have Closed Eyes:** In other words, overlooking the faults of others. Now, if you want to go digging for flaws and faults, you will find them in everybody. We all have our shortcomings. It is noble to overlook the human weaknesses in others. The Golden Rule says, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Do you want other people to pick you apart? To point out all your shortcomings and failures? If not, then you shouldn't go around doing that to others. This is especially true at home. One wise person gave the following advice for young people: "Keep you eyes wide open before marriage, and half closed afterwards!"
- 2) **We need to have Closed Ears:** Don't be a willing receptor of gossip and garbage talk. If a conversation starts to go to the dump, the honorable thing is to back out of it. Usually, a kind word about the victim being criticized will shut the gossiper up. When garbage trucks drive out of town loaded with trash, they head straight to the dump. I once heard John Maxwell say that some folks are like Garbage Dumps. People come to them with a big load of garbage and dump it -- because they invite it with an invisible sign: Garbage Dump: Open for Business! If people keep coming to you with loads of dirt, maybe you should put out a sign that says, "No Dumping Allowed!"
- 3) **We need to have Closed Hands:** By this, I mean hold on to what is good. Don't let go of truth, regardless of popular opinion. Sometimes truth is politically incorrect. Grab hold of what is right. Never let it slip from your grip!! Always take the high road. Hold on to faith. Hold on to God. Hold on the best in life.
- 4) **We need to have Closed Minds:** When it comes to ageless issues of truth, moral absolutes, character and integrity, it's better to be closed minded. Some folks are so open-minded, their brains fall out!
- 5) **We need to have Closed Hearts:** Closed, that is, to anything that would take us down the wrong path. Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the well spring of life. Don't love the ways of the world too much. Inordinate affections keep us from being true hearted and whole hearted. Close your heart towards addictions, sins, and temptations that drag you down

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