

## LESSON 16 Devotional

# Good News or Bad News?

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*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

*Philippians 4:8*

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In 1960 a classic movie, *Pollyanna*, was released. The theme of the movie was the contrast between Pollyanna's optimistic approach to life and her Aunt Polly's negative and controlling ways.

Pollyanna was a 12 year-old orphan who had such a positive outlook that she spread love and optimism all throughout the community. Aunt Polly, however, used her wealth to yield power over the community, including pressuring the local pastor to use a hellfire and brimstone style of preaching "*to keep the local people in line.*"

Both Pollyanna and the preacher had influence over the community, but Pollyanna's message of love won out over the preacher's message of fear. Eventually, the preacher was won over by Pollyanna's effective message.

In business and in life we can promote a positive message, or we can use fear and other emotions to drive people to action. In business, we must find effective ways to promote and market our products and services.

We have a choice. We can choose a positive approach, sharing the benefits of customers choosing our products, or we can promote fear by listing the risks of not choosing our products. Which will you choose?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The Sermon on the Mount was known as Jesus' first big teaching opportunity to share what many have called, "the Good News." This was his moment to choose how he was going to promote the kingdom of heaven. Read Matthew 5:3-12.

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons[a] of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

- a. Did Jesus use a positive approach or a negative one?

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- b. Why do you think he started off his sermon that way?

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2. Read Matthew 5:20-30.

*"If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell."*

- a. Did Jesus also share the risks of not buying into His message?

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- b. Why do you think he turned to a more negative approach later in His sermon?

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c. Are there appropriate times or reasons you should share with customers the risks of not buying your products or services?

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3. Re-read Philippians 4:8 at the beginning of the lesson. How might this verse impact your marketing?

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Considering the previous questions, what mixture of positive and negative messages might be appropriate in your marketing and sales efforts?

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4. How do you think your Customers feel about your current messaging style or approach?

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5. Do you believe you need to make any changes to your style or message after considering these passages?

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