

Bringing God Into the Negative

By Ney Bailey

Transcribed from the FamilyLife Today broadcast, produced by FamilyLife, www.FamilyLife.com.
© 2000. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Has anything negative happened to you in the last 24 hours? I can't imagine it in such a wonderful place as this, but has anything negative happened to you in the last 48 hours? Or has anything negative happened to you in the last week? I see a lot of heads nodding. Well, if it hasn't, it will, because the Lord Jesus Christ himself said, "In this world, you are going to have trouble," but he said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And in Psalm 91:15 he says, "I will be with you in trouble." We have already learned that Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away but His words will not pass away," that means His word is truer than anything we feel, his word is truer than any situation or circumstance that is in our lives right now or ever will be in our lives. We need to know that faith is not a feeling, it is a choice we have to take God at His word, and we especially need to know that when the negative hits. And what do we do when the negative hits? A lot of times we want to run from the negative, don't we? Or blame someone else for the negative, ignore those negative feelings or fight them or push them away, rebel against them. We do all kinds of things to escape the negative feelings, and it is so important when we're in those negative times to know that His word is truer than how we feel.

How much faith does the scripture say it takes to deal with the negative? Anybody? What is the smallest...? Right – a mustard seed of faith. You know I think it is the Lord's grace that he doesn't say it requires an apple's worth of faith or a grapefruit's worth of faith; it is his grace that he only requires a mustard seed worth of faith. And just for fun a while back I got a jar of mustard seeds and I looked at those and I was intrigued to see that there were large mustard seeds, there were middle sized mustard seeds, there were tiny, tiny little mustard seeds, and my favorite was that there were some warped mustard seeds; I think I most identified with that. But it would be like this, if we had a blackboard up here we could draw this; let's say there was some negative situation in your life or my life. If we just feel it and wallow in it and that's all we do, you know what happens? We spiral downward and there is no help for us. But if we take that same negative situation and do what I have talked about, about pouring your heart out to the Lord like David, tell the Lord how you feel, but don't stop there – then say, But Lord I choose with my will to put my mustard seed of faith over on your side, I choose with my will to take you at your word this much, even though it is a tiny bit, then the Lord has something to work with, because the scriptures say we go from faith to faith in Romans 1:17. So if we take God at His word a little bit, then we'll take Him at His word a little bit more and a little bit more.

Some of you have seen that now famous train diagram that has the Fact, Faith, and the Feeling – the Fact is the engine, the Faith is the coal car, can't do without the facts, can't do without the faith, and the last of all, what is down here? The caboose, or feelings. And if you ever see that little diagram, it says "Do not depend on feelings." And what I want you to see there is it doesn't say Do not *have* feelings. It is okay to have feelings. We were created in God's image and part of his image is that we are emotional beings and we have feelings. We were not born into this world as Christians that happen to become human beings at a point in time, we were born into this world as human beings with feelings and emotions, created in God's image, that happen to become Christians at a point in time. And one of the biggest problems I see as I travel around, is that I hear Christians say things like, "Well, a good

Christian shouldn't feel this way", or "If I were you I wouldn't feel that way", or "If you were trusting God you wouldn't feel that way". The fact is, you do feel that way, so what are you going to do about it? And I think the Lord, Jesus Christ, himself is the best example for us in this. If you look at his time in the Garden of Gethsemane before he was going to the cross, he wasn't in the Garden of Gethsemane saying "The Son of God shouldn't feel this way, " or "If I were trusting God I wouldn't feel this way." He let himself feel every thing there was to feel, but he trusted God in the midst of his feelings. And if you can get that, it will set you free. Because I find too many people trying to put their feelings over here and trust in God over here, and you need to bring them together. If you look at what the scripture says about Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, it says, and these are words of scripture, "He was deeply grieved." Is that a feeling? Yes it is. "He was distressed." Another feeling. "He was troubled, he was in agony." So we need to trust the Lord in the midst of our feelings.

So with that as a backdrop, how then, do we bring God into the negative? We are going to look at three ways in the time that we have. The first way is that we bring God into the negative by giving thanks and by praising Him. I would like for us to look at Ephesians 5:18-20. It says, "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, to God even the Father." We have already mentioned First Thessalonians 5:18 "In everything, give thanks because this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." I think the toughest word in that verse for me is the word "in". The toughest time for me to give thanks is when I'm in it and I don't feel like it. Now I've heard about giving thanks for years and have practiced that, but I heard a story a few years ago that helped bring this home and make it very practical to me. I was watching television one morning and I heard a woman tell a story and this is what she said; she said she and her husband had gone to a Christian retreat, much like this one, and they heard a speaker talk about the fact that they needed to praise God and thank God for everything in their lives, especially for the most difficult things. They had never heard about that before. As they were going home, they said, "Well you know what the most difficult thing in our lives is, is our son." They had a 17 year-old son who had never given them anything but trouble. They had done everything they knew to do with him and it just simply had not worked, so on the way home, for the very first time, they thanked God for their son, and they praised God for their son, and they committed themselves to do that. Their son had been home alone that night and as they drove into the driveway, every light in the house was on, all across the house. They drove in the driveway, they said, "Father, we praise You and we thank You for our son." Then they went into the kitchen and there was the biggest mess you've ever seen. Out on the counter were ice trays and Coke cans and bread and mayonnaise and mustard and lunch meat and cookies and potato chips and milk, and they stopped, and they said, "Lord, we praise You and we thank You for our son." Then they went into the family room, the den and the television was on and there were papers strewn all over and there were leftover Coke cans and cookies and sandwiches and they stopped and they said, "Lord, we praise You and we thank You for our son." And they said it looked like he had gotten undressed on his way to his room, because there were his shoes, his socks, and his trousers. They continued to praise God and thank God for their son all that day, the next day, the next day... Sunday afternoon, there was knock on the bedroom door and the son said, "Mom, Dad, can I come in and talk to you?" They said, "Sure, son, come on in." He came in, he sat down on the side of the bed and he said, "Mom, Dad, you know, I've been doing a lot of thinking, especially lately. I've been miserable and unhappy and frustrated as long as I can remember." He said, "You know I can't take it out on my friends, because Gosh, I need my

friends, I gotta be nice to my friends. I can't take my hostility out on my teachers, because I want to make at least halfway decent grades. The thing I realized, Mom and Dad, is that I've been taking it out on you and the family and I just want to tell you I'm not going to do that anymore." 17 years, 18 years, 19, 20, 21... when he was 21 years old, this mother relayed this story to a Christian psychologist just as I've told you, and she said to him, "To what do you attribute the fact that from the time we began to praise God and thank God for our son, from the time he came in and said that to us, he has never once reverted to his old behavior?" And this is what the Christian psychologist said that was life-changing for me: He said, "I attribute it to the fact that when you praised God for what you didn't like, when you thanked God for what you didn't like, you brought God into the negative and you released his power to work." And I thought, That's fantastic! We don't thank God for the negative because we don't *feel* thankful for it, and it's like we keep the lid on and we don't let Him in there. I believe that we become bitter to the degree we don't give thanks. To the degree we're not praising God and thanking God now for the things that our happening to us, to that degree, we are becoming bitter. And I don't want to become a bitter old woman, so I know that I need to praise God and to thank Him now. We bring God into the negative by giving thanks and by praising Him.

The second way we can bring God into the negative is by blessing, and not cursing. This is another thing that I wish I had learned many years ago; I could have saved myself a lot of trouble. I would like for us to look at James 3:8-10. It says, "But no one can tame the tongue, it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it, we bless our Lord and Father, and with it, we curse men who have been made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way." Now I, like most of you, grew up in the South, and I thought the word 'curse' was the h-word, and the d-word and a few other words, but that's not what it means here. I understand the original word curse means to speak evil of or to not speak well of, and the word bless means just the opposite; to speak well of. So let's read it again with those new definitions in mind. "But no one can tame the tongue, it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it, we bless our Lord and Father, (we speak well of our Lord and Father) and with it, we curse men (we do not speak well of men and women) who have been made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come both blessing (speaking well of) and cursing (not speaking well of). My brethren, these things ought not to be this way."

I was speaking with my friend, Marilyn Henderson, that was one of the survivors of the flood and I said "Marilyn, I don't quite get a handle on these verses. Help me understand what they mean". And she said, "Well, Ney, this is a true story. In Portland, Oregon there was a fundamental Bible-believing Pastor, and this Pastor and his wife had had great trouble with their son, (and that was a different kind of trouble than the other son I just mentioned) this particular son had been very rebellious and had taken up the hippie lifestyle and had left home about 4 or 5 years before and they had not heard a word from him for all those years. This pastor went to a Christian counselor that he knew very well and he poured out his heart to this counselor. The counselor knew him well enough that he could really shoot straight with him and after the pastor poured out his heart, he looked at him and he said, 'How long have you been cursing your son?' Now that is really something to say to a fundamental Bible-believing pastor. And he said, 'What do you mean, how long have I been cursing my son?' And he said, 'Well, the word curse means to speak evil of or to not speak well of, and everything you've just told me there in some way you are not speaking well of him. How long have you been doing that?' And that pastor hung his head and he said, 'Well I guess I've been cursing him all of his life. I've never ever had a nice thing to say about him ever.' And the counselor

said, 'Well it hasn't worked, has it?' And the pastor said, 'No.'. And he said, 'Well, I want to challenge you and your wife to do something. I want to challenge you and your wife for the next two months, when your son comes to mind, I want you to bless him. I want you to pray God's blessings on him. When you speak of your son in your home, I want you to try to remember something good about him. I want you to speak well of him.' And the pastor said, 'Well, I guess I've got everything to gain and nothing to lose, so I'll take you up on that.' He went home and told his wife, his wife agreed and they began. They prayed for their son, they prayed God's blessings on him. When they spoke of him, they tried to remember some good things about him, and that was tough for them to do. They continued to do that day after day. On about the 10th day, the pastor was in his study – true story – and the telephone rang. And you guessed it – on the other end of the phone was the son. And the son said, 'Dad, I'm not really sure why I'm calling, but I've just had you and mom and the family on my heart and on my mind for the last week or so and I just thought I'd call and check in with you.' And the father said, 'Well son, I'm so glad you're calling!' He had to try to contain himself and not come right through the phone, and they chatted for a few a minutes and then the father said, 'Well son, I don't know if you can find it in your heart or not, but how about meeting me on Saturday on top of the hotel downtown for lunch?' And he said, 'Sure, Dad, I'll meet you.' The day came, they met for lunch. The son came in his old, kind of ragged clothes, his hair was long, he was kind of disheveled. Whereas before, the father would have gotten right on his case and been very critical and judgmental, this time he went in with an attitude of accepting his son and blessing him in his heart. He asked him some questions, he listened, he affirmed him where appropriate. At the end of that lunch, the son looked across the table and he said, 'Dad, I don't know what's going on here, but I've kind of enjoyed being with you.' And the father said, 'Well I've enjoyed being with you, too son.' And then the son said, 'Dad, do you think maybe just for tonight I could go home and spend the night in my old bed and see mom and the family? Just for tonight?' And he said, 'Sure, son, we'd love to have you.' As the father walked through the rest of that day, he was stricken in his heart. He was smitten in his heart to realize what a difference it had made to stop cursing his son and to start blessing him. That night when the son was in his bed in his bedroom, the father went slowly in there and he sat down and he said, 'Son, will you forgive me for all the ways I've treated you through the years?' And the son said, 'Sure, Dad, I'll forgive you.' And he reached up and he put his arms around his father's neck. That was the beginning of the restoration of that relationship, but when was the real beginning? The real beginning was when that father and mother began to bless their son in their hearts.

Well, the reason that had such an impact on me was because at the time I heard that story, there was a relationship in my life on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being neutral and 10 being good, I had a relationship that was about -20. It was in the deep freeze, it was awful. And I thought, well I've got everything to gain and nothing to lose. And I thought if I were to begin to bless this person, if there were such a thing as a talking stethoscope that you could take and put to your heart that would reveal the words you were thinking, I thought, I'm badmouthing that person in my heart when I think about them. So I began to bless that person and I know it doesn't always work this way, but I think the Lord was trying to show me something, within about a week, I had a telephone call from that person and I had an invitation to lunch. It takes time and a process for us to get ourselves into these messes and it takes time and a process for the Lord to bring us out of these messes. As I have shared this, people have come up and said, "You know, Ney, I realize I have been cursing my brother, my very own brother. I have been cursing my sister. Ney, I realize I have been cursing my children, I don't speak well of my children. Ney, I realize I have been cursing my husband, I don't speak well of my husband,

I don't speak well of my parents, I don't speak well of my in-laws, my employer, my friends, on and on...." A few have even said, "Ney, I realize I have been cursing myself. I put myself down all the time. I don't speak well of myself." And a very few have said, "You know Ney, I realize I have been cursing God. I don't speak well of God."

I was speaking in Dallas, Texas at a conference and two months later I was back at another conference in Dallas and unbeknownst to me, a person who had been at the first conference came to the second one. And in the sharing time, she stood up and she said, "I heard Ney two months ago speak on blessing and cursing and at the time I heard it, I had a little girl, 4 years old, that had never gotten out of the 'terrible twos'. She had been terrible all through her twos, her threes, and her fours, and I realized I had been cursing her, daily cursing her. I went home and it did a lot just to stop cursing her, but I also began to bless her and affirm her where appropriate." Tears streaming down her face and she said, "After about a week and a half, my husband came to me and he said, 'Honey, the miracle we've been praying for for our daughter has started to happen.'"

I was speaking at another conference down near Austin, Texas and a woman came up and she said, "Ney, I don't know who gave me this tape but I heard this message about blessing and cursing on a tape and when I heard it, it was like a neon sign went off in my mind – CURSE! CURSE! CURSE!" And she said "I realized I had been cursing my son in-law, who had been on drugs since he was in Junior High. I did not like him, I hated him, and I began to bless him, and I stopped cursing him. After that time, he went into a drug rehabilitation center. Now I love him, he loves me." Her daughter was standing there and she said, "He is staying home this weekend so we can be here at this retreat." "He calls me Mom, and I love him dearly. I don't understand it, but in some unique way, God honors it when we bless and when we don't curse." We reap what we sow. If we sow cursing, we're gonna reap cursing. If we sow blessing, we will reap blessing. And I would lot rather reap blessing, wouldn't you? We bring God into the negative by blessing and not cursing.

The last way we bring God into the negative is by forgiving. We bring God into the negative by forgiving. I would like for us to look at Colossians 3:12-13. "And so as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you." Now I like that, because the Lord acknowledges that we have complaints against each other, but he says that whoever has a complaint, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. It is when we realize how much He has forgiven us, and receive that forgiveness, then we have some to offer to someone else.

We saw today when we raised our hands that all of us have been hurt, and I think the deepest hurt that we ever have comes from within our own families, or comes from the people that are closest to us. I know one of the deepest hurts that I ever had was from my father. My father was raised in a small town in North Louisiana. His father left his mother and kind of ran around and was unfaithful to her. My father's mother died when he was about 12. He was put with an aunt and uncle and a cousin and my father didn't get very much emotionally as he grew up. My mother, on the other hand, was raised on a farm out in Oklahoma and they did everything together recreationally, they did everything together in church, they did the chores, very close family, emotionally expressive. My mother and father married, I was born into that family as the first child, and at a very early age, I computed their differences to mean my mother loves me and my daddy doesn't. And as I grew up in that household, I grew more bitter and more

resentful as the days went by. I didn't like the way my father talked to my mother. I didn't like the way he talked to me. I didn't like it that he didn't come to things that were important to me, it didn't seem like he cared, and we just pretty much ignored each other. And I remember talking to my mother and she would say, "Well honey, I just can't talk to your Daddy." Well if she couldn't talk to him, I sure couldn't talk to him, and I would always try to talk to her to get her to talk to him because I couldn't do that. Have any of you ever had those situations? It was tough. It is safe to say that I hated him. There was murder in my heart towards him. And I can remember in his second drawer behind some of his underwear, he kept a gun, and I can remember going and picking that gun up and looking at it and wishing I could kill him. There was murder in my heart towards him. My father had a drinking problem and I hated the sound of his opening that refrigerator door and you'd hear the beer can hit the counter, "Cchhhhh". I remember one night when my mother was at the church and my father was drunk, and he was furious and he said something about "Your mother is at the blankety-blank-blank-blank church" and he gave this long string of things. And a little while later, he came to me and he said, "Where is your mother?" And I said back to him what he had just said, I said, "She's at the blankety-blank-blank-blank church" and he came after me and chased me around into the bedroom and hit me and knocked me across the room and I fell across the bed. And when I did, he slipped on a rug and fell and his arm came out of joint and he went into the bathroom and just moaned and groaned. Pretty soon my mother came home and we took him to the hospital and we were in the hospital with him all night long. Now one of the reasons I remember this so vividly is because that next morning, I had been asked by the Dean of Women in our college to give a 5-minute Devotional type thing for the Who's Who's Chapel, and I can remember what an eerie sensation that was to stand up there and give that little talk and think, "No one knows what I've been through the night before – no one knows." Because my father had never seemed interested in me or anything I did, it never occurred to me to get his counsel about whether or not I should go on Campus Crusade Staff or not. So I joined the staff of Crusade and I heard someone talk about something that I had never heard before. They said, God is love, and I had heard that before, but they went on to say that if God is love, then 13th Corinthians is how God loves you and how God loves me. Before that time, people had said to me, put your own name in there where it says love, like Ney is patient, Ney is kind, Ney hopes all things, bears all things, endures all things... and I would always fall short and I didn't like that. But what they were saying was that God's love towards me was patient, God's love towards me was kind, God's love towards me would hope all things, and endure all things and bear all things. I had never, ever thought of the fact that God had a 13th Corinthian type love for me. Then I began to think about my father, and about all these years I have been waiting for my father to shape up and stop drinking, and then I was going to love him, but it was as though God said to me, "Ney, you've got more light, you've got more grace. My love towards your father is kind, my love towards your father is patient, my love towards your father hopes all things, endures all things, and bears all things. Ney, I want you to take the first step towards him." Tears began to stream down my face as I realized even though I was in Christian work, I did not have God's love for my very own father. It seemed like the Lord had done something new in my life but I knew I wasn't going to know until I was home and I was in it. And a few months later I went home with an attitude of acceptance and love and as I went in the house and had this new attitude towards him of acceptance and love and forgiveness, guess what? He sensed my spirit! And as I was nice to him, he was nice back! My father didn't know much about how to love, but he knew how to respond a little bit to love. And while I was home on that trip, I remember, my father was a lawyer and he went over to a dress shop, one of his clients, and he brought home three dresses on approval, he had never done that before, for me to try on. When I left home that time, I began to think about how the Lord says

Honor your Father and Mother, that it may go well with you and that you may live long on the earth. And I said, "Lord, you're the one that thought up this thing about honoring, now will you show me how to do that?" And the Lord began to give me ways that I could demonstrate love to them, and for the first time in my life, I thanked the Lord for my father and for my mother.

More time passed, and this is going to sound a little melodramatic, but this actually did happen. I was sitting one day, and I was just kind of staring into space, and I began to think about my father. And I thought, if my father were to die, and I were to go to his funeral and I would look out and see his casket, would I have any regrets? And I thought, Yes, I would regret that I had never asked him to forgive me for some of my ugly ways in my growing up years. So I put this in my heart to go home and ask his forgiveness. Now he described himself as a bullheaded lawyer, so to think about talking to him was very scary. You know when I imagined it in my mind, I imagined myself lying prostrate on the floor, sobbing my heart out, unable to utter a word. I went home, and it was football season, and I knew enough not to talk during the ball game, so I waited until halftime. My mother left the room and I said, "Daddy, you know I've been thinking about my growing up years and how ungrateful and unloving and unkind I was," and I said, "Will you forgive me?" and there was this pause and he kind of turned and looked at me and had a twinkle in his eye and he said, "No." And then he said, "I don't remember all those things." And then he named one. And I knew it was important to get a response from him, so I said, "Well will you forgive me for the things that you can remember?" And he said Yes. Right after that he said, "Now where are you going on your next trip?" He had never asked me that before, ever. Then he said, "You know you're getting ready to drive back to Dallas and there's a cheeseburger in there from last night. Why don't I warm that up for you?" I said, "Good idea." Now in no way did I want an old warmed up cheeseburger, I think it was a Whopper burger, and he took it, lettuce, tomatoes, sack and all and stuck it in the oven! And on the way out the door he handed me this warmed up sack and then he said, "Now when will you be home next?" and I said "December 21 or 22." And he said "I'll see you on the 21st," and he smiled. When I left I began to think about the verses that are at the end of Malachi. It says "The Lord will turn the hearts of the fathers toward their children and the hearts of the children toward their fathers." And that was what was happening to me. More time passed and I moved to California and one day in California my mother called me and she said, "Honey, your Dad found something in a catalog and it reminded him of you and he went out and he bought it and he had it wrapped and he sent it UPS all by himself and he's sending you a surprise!" And I said, "Mother what is it? Tell me! Tell me!" And she said "I'm not telling, it's a surprise." I could not wait for that package to come. He had never done that before. When it finally came and I opened it, inside was a little Melita two-cup coffee maker and a brown travel case, because he knew at that time I was drinking a lot of coffee and he knew I was traveling a lot and I remember I held that in my hands and I said, "Oh Lord, this represents a lot more than a Melita two-cup coffee maker! This represents a relationship that you have restored."

More time passed and several years ago I went home for Christmas. My sister Brenda was there with her family from Illinois, my sister Kim was there with her family, my brother Ed. We had a wonderful time. I left, went back to California, and on January 2nd I received a telephone call that my father had become critically ill and they didn't expect him to live. They tried to prepare me for what it was like in the Intensive Care Unit when I went home, with all the tubes coming out of everywhere. Some of you have been through that and may be going through it right now; I wasn't prepared for what I saw. The way it worked was the family could go in 10 minutes in the morning, 10 minutes in the afternoon, 10 minutes at night. My mother could go

in and stay the whole 10 minutes, but we four children had to line up out in the hall and we could go in for about 2 minutes. When it was my turn to go in for the first time, they had told my father I was on my way to Atlanta. I don't know why they did that; they didn't want to scare him, they didn't want him to think that I had come home just for him. I kind of wish now that they had told him that, but they said that I was on my way to Atlanta because they figured I'd be on my way to Atlanta someday. My father was a real weather watcher, I mean he loved to watch the weather and listen to the weather. And wouldn't you know it, the weather was bad in Atlanta, and so that's what he was talking about, was that the weather was bad in Atlanta. We talked about that for a minute or so and I said "Well Daddy, I probably better go now and let Brenda come in, she's out in the hall waiting." And I said, "I love you, Daddy." And he said, "I love you, too, honey. Whether you're in here or whether you're out in the hall waiting to come in." And those were to be the very last words that he was ever to speak to me. Several days later as I sat in that funeral home and I looked out and I saw that casket, I remembered. I remembered that when I didn't feel like it, I chose with my will to put my mustard seed of faith over on the Lord's side and choose with my will to forgive my father. I believe when we're hurt we need to ask ourselves the question, "Is my God bigger than my hurt or is my hurt bigger than my God?" We are the ones who get to choose. There are so many things, we could name hundreds of them, that are absolutely inexcusable we know, but there is nothing that is unforgivable. Someone has said "To forgive is to set the prisoner free only to discover that the prisoner was you." And when we choose with our will to forgive, what we do is we take that person off of our hook, but you know what, it is kind of comforting to know we can leave them on God's hook. We can leave them on God's hook but you take them off your hook. I believe we are most like Christ when we are forgiving, we are not most like Christ when we're perfect; we're most like Christ when we're forgiving.

My dad never asked me to forgive him, but God asked that of me, and it made all the difference. And I want to say this – maybe you're sitting there and you're thinking well Ney, what if the person I need to forgive has already died? I have good news for you: God is not limited by time. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and I believe you can tell the Lord what you would have said, and he will honor that. Another thing I want to say is that there are times when you have a piece of the puzzle in a difficult relationship or situation and you can't put that puzzle together by yourself and you need some help. There is a place for Godly, biblical counseling. Another thing, and some of the things I've said I'm not talking about being irresponsible. We need to be responsible because love has limits, and a good book would be James Dobson's Book *Love Must Be Tough*. Another thing I want to say is that there is often an element in relationships of spiritual battle. And another thing I want to say is that I do believe there is a place to bear one another's burdens. Sometimes people say to me, "Well Ney, you know, can I tell somebody what's going on in my life?" Absolutely! Because you need to bear one another's burdens so you can pray for one another so you can be healed. The reason I say that is because that it is hard to give balance to everything that I've said.

Is there a negative in your life? We need to praise God and to thank Him. Are you cursing someone? We need to begin to bless them instead. Is there a deep, deep hurt? We need to forgive. And by so doing, we bring God into the negative and we release His power to work.