

Steward Life

LESSON 40



STORY

Black and Decker research and design teams are always trying to make tools better—drill bits included. But someone once pointed out that it made no sense to market drill bits with new improvements by detailing their benefits, because a person who buys a quarter-inch drill bit does not want a quarter-inch drill bit—the customer wants a quarter-inch *hole*.

Dealing with negative shapes is sometimes difficult. We are so used to seeing coins, jewelry and other items embossed—with a raised design. But the artist or engraver who creates the piece must work his talent in reverse to make the die. Many machinists also work with negative tools, such as taps and dies, to make positive results: nuts and bolts.

INSIGHT OUT

Sometimes we don't recognize God's grace-gifts that come in a negative form. God may provide quarter-inch holes when we are looking for a drill bit. Sometimes God's gift is a thing that *doesn't* happen.

STORY

As a child of about five, I went with my family into the city thirty miles away to a popular amusement park. We had a delightful day on the rides, playing the carnival games and eating the best custard and taffy I can recall to this day. Just as we left the park I got my first helium-filled balloon—a bright red one. Mom tied it to my wrist so it wouldn't float away. I was fascinated. In the car on the way home it rode on the ceiling. Dad, who usually liked to ride with his window wide open, kept it only slightly cracked so my balloon wouldn't blow out.

As we came into the driveway, the neighbor boys were there, as excited as I was about my helium balloon. It was the first they had seen. They all wanted to tug on the string and let it snap back up as the balloon strained to get away. They left for a while, and when they did, I went out into the front yard and began running with the balloon behind me—following me like a red ghost.

I then grew curious. If I took the balloon off my wrist and released it, I was sure I could quickly grab the string again. Slowly I slipped the string over my wrist. Tentatively, I released the string and the balloon surged upward with a start. I grabbed for the string, but—too late! The balloon floated freely up over the road and brushed the trees on the next block and rose up and up—then out of sight. I had the most hollow feeling in the pit of my stomach. I just stood there, looking up and seeing nothing.

Just then the neighbor boys jumped out of the bushes and ran over to me. But seeing the balloon was gone, they slowly faded away. Later I learned that they had intended to bully me into giving them my balloon. Because it had floated away, I was saved some bumps and bruises, for I surely would have fought them off.

INSIGHT OUT

The negative blessing of Christ's ascension was not apparent to the disciples until the coming of the Holy Spirit. It was then that the disciples finally understood everything that Jesus tried to tell them. He had told them plainly, "Unless I go, the Holy Spirit will not come to you" (John 16:7). We also discover that by ascending, Christ resumed full power as God, and thereby became omni-present, as He promised: "I will be with you to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). All these blessings from an event that the disciples might have viewed as negative.

E X E R C I S E

Look around your environment and identify as many negative shapes as you can that serve as blessings or benefits. Here's a start: The holes in wall outlets that provide you with power. Check out your home, your car, your work place. While you look for “negative blessings” in your physical life, look also for “negative blessings” that have happened or are happening in your spiritual life. The Christian who lives the StewardLife expresses thankfulness to God for all His grace-gifts, both those that appear positive and those that appear negative.



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