

You Can't Win Battles With Pessimism

selected from my files

On September 16, 1965, General Dwight D. Eisenhower made a speech in which he said, "I never saw a pessimistic general win a battle." There is good reason for his statement, because it is next to impossible for pessimism to win. It matters not whether it be in business, sports, entertainment, one's personal life or living as a Christian, this principle remains true. But, what is a pessimist? Perhaps the following story will help you to understand.

Pessimist or Optimist?

As the story goes, three men look at a rose bush loaded with beautiful roses. One is a **pessimist**, one is a **true optimist**, and the other is what I shall call an **unreal optimist**. Please notice three different attitudes toward the rose bushy.

The Pessimist

The **pessimist** looks at the beautiful rose bush, but he sees nothing beautiful about it, because it has thorns on its branches. The beauty, color, texture and wonderful odor of the rose means nothing to him. The simple fact that the bush has some thorns wipes out any beneficial attributes it may have. The pessimist sees life as nothing more than a bunch of thorns. As a result, he destroys his own happiness and discourages the happiness of others.

The Unreal Optimist

The **unreal optimist** looks at the rose bush and is so overcome by its beauty and odor, that he totally ignores the reality of the thorns! With this unstable attitude he reaches down to grab a limb and the thorns rip his hand badly. He became so enamored with the beauty that he ignored the reality of the thorns. A man with this attitude constantly exposes himself to unnecessary harm.

The True Optimist

The **true optimist** looks at the rose bush and can fully appreciate all the beauty God has provided in the rose. He is grateful for the pleasure it brings to humanity. He is also mindful that there are thorns down below, and when he cuts a branch he is careful to protect his hands. Yes, he knows the thorns are there, but the loveliness of the rose far outweighs the threat of the thorns. A person with this attitude can live with a good degree of happiness, because he believes the **good of life** far outweighs the **evil of life**.

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