

Finding Joy

A study of Paul's Letter to the Philippians

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10- *Finding Joy* by Right Thinking.....*Philippians 4:8-9*

Philippians 4:8-9 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

I- The Mind:

The mind is a funny thing....it can take us to any place on earth in a moment. It can play tricks on us and

AT Robertson says, "*We are responsible for our thoughts and can hold them to high and holy ideals.*"

Isa 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

In *Matt 22:37-38* Jesus said, *...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment.*

Men can get so far from God that they are said to be of a reprobate mind. *Rom 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;*

II- The Battlefield of the Mind:

We also see that the mind is a great battlefield for our spiritual warfare. *Rom 7:22-23 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

We are taught that in the past our mind was against the things of God. in *Col 1:21*

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

We know that a carnal worldly thinking mind fights against the things of God. *Rom 8:5-7 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

That is why we must put on the armor of God and protect our mind because our enemy is not flesh and blood but spiritual. *Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood... 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ... 17 And take the helmet of salvation ...* The helmet was protection for the head and brain area symbolic of protecting the mind.

III- Renewed Minds:

Now it stands to reason that if the fleshly carnal mind is defective that it needs to be renewed. After all there are recalls all the time on products that are defective. Certainly, the great renewal is when we

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come to Christ for salvation but I submit that we need to constantly bring our mind under subjection of the Spirit of God.

We are encouraged to constantly be renewed in our minds. **Rom 12:2** *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

We find within our text that is under consideration now these words... **think on these things. Phil 4:9** This will teach us how to have a renewed mind.

IV- Right Thinking:

Paul states, **Finally, brethren...Php 4:8a** as God begins to wind down his thoughts to the Philippians. He then begins to tell them where to focus their minds to have right and godly thinking.

Rev. Norman Culpepper preaching on this text entitled it "*God's recipe for your thought life.*" He made the statement, "*A negative thought is a dose of death, a positive thought is a dose of life.*" (Per Vonnie Wiggins Bible notes)

There are eight things that Paul talks about here that would do us good if we discipline our mind to focus on these.

JV McGee said concerning this section: *This has been called the briefest biography of Christ. He is the One who is "true." He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. "Whatsoever things are honest"—He is honest. "Whatsoever things are just"—He is called the Just One. "Pure"—the only pure individual who ever walked this earth was the Lord Jesus. He asked the question, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" No one did. He also said, "... the prince*

*of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30). Satan always finds something he can hook onto in me. How about you? But there was nothing in the Lord Jesus. He was "... holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners ..." (Heb. 7:26). He was lovely which means "gracious." Virtue has to do with strength and courage. He was the One of courage, a real man. He took upon Himself our humanity. "If ... any praise"—He is the One you can praise and worship today. McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (Php 4:8). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.*

So let us set our mind on Christ as we look at these right thinking things.

1 ...whatsoever things are true, Thayer *Greek Definitions* defines this as "*loving the truth, speaking the truth, truthful.*"

2 ...whatsoever things are honest, The word "*honest*" is found only four times in the original Greek. It is translated "*grave*" the other three times in 1 Thessalonians and Titus. Adam Clarke says, "*Whatever is grave, decent, and venerable. Whatever becomes you as men, as citizens, and as Christians.*"

3 ...whatsoever things are just, NASB renders it "right." The way this often used word is translated is righteous. *People's New Testament* comments, "*Strict justice in all dealings; an upright life.*"

4 ...whatsoever things are pure, A clean heart and mind or thoughts that are pure is the idea here. *Strong's Bible Dictionary* uses words like, *innocent, modest, perfect* to define this.

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5 ...whatsoever things are lovely, Robertson's *Word Pictures* says, "pleasing, winsome" is what this means while People's New Testament says it is, "Such deeds as spring from love and inspire love in others."

6 ...whatsoever things are of good report; Remember the words of Jesus when He was Nathaniel approaching? **John 1:47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!** This was a man who was of good report. A Christians life should be one in which the world can look but find no fault in our actions.

7 ...if there be any virtue, Barnes Notes says concerning this use of virtue.

Paul did not suppose that he had given a full catalogue of the virtues which he would have cultivated. He, therefore, adds, that if there was anything else that had the nature of true virtue in it, they should be careful to cultivate that also. The Christian should be a pattern and an example of every virtue.

Remember the values of the women in **Prov 31** as she is referred to as a virtuous woman. **Pro 31:11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil...23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.... 25 Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.**

We could all learn a lesson from this passage.

8 ...and if there be any praise, The last of the list, which is in no wise exhaustive nor intended to be, is if we find anything praiseworthy in others and especially in God we should think on these. If we have our mind thinking on the good of others we have no time for our mind to entertain any negative thoughts.

I remind us again the Bible says to **...think on these things.** We will find joy in our heart, mind and being when we practice as a habit.

V- Paul as an Example:

As we end this section we see Paul holds himself forth to the Philippians as an example to follow in thought life. I am reminded that Paul was finding joy even in the midst of prison, so his testimony hold a lot of credence and his words and life are something we can take stock in.

Php 4:9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

What they had learned and received from his ministry to them. What they had heard him preach and seen in his life he tells them to emulate. He gives us a promise by the Holy Spirit of God that if we fasten our mind on the right things and make them a habit of practice then God's peace will abide within us. What greater thing to bring Joy in our lives than when the peace of God washes over our soul.