

Saturday, April 4, 2020

Turn off the outside “noise” for a couple of minutes and consider this message from God’s Word.
I am praying that it calms your spirit and encourages your heart.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9 (TNIV)

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters,
whatever is **true**, whatever is **noble**, whatever is **right**,
whatever is **pure**, whatever is **lovely**, whatever is **admirable** —
if anything is **excellent** or **praiseworthy** —
think about such things.

⁹ Whatever you have learned
or received
or heard from me,
or seen in me—
put it into practice.

And **the God of peace** will be with you.

— PART 1 —

*I found that when a passage of Scripture has been very familiar to me for a long time — such as this passage! — if I will simply **slow down** . . . take my time . . . and read thoughtfully and reflectively, it can become alive to me in new and fresh ways.*

I like information. *Generally.* Is it just me, or is it a challenge to keep up with the swirling, churning “fire hydrant” of information flooding our screens and minds way these days? Things are to the point where I am struggling with information overload. You probably know that “The term ‘information overload’ was coined by Bertram Gross, a Professor of Political Science, in a book in 1964.... However, it was popularized by Alvin Toffler, the American writer and futurist, in his book ‘Future Shock’ in 1970. Gross defined information overload as follows:

‘Information overload occurs **when the amount of input to a system exceeds its processing capacity.** Decision makers have fairly limited cognitive processing capacity. Consequently, when information overload occurs, it is likely that a reduction in decision quality will occur.’ “

<https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/information-overload-why-it-matters-and-how-to-combat-it>

(That definition both **described** and **embodied** “information overload” for me! I’m sure this has to do with my **“limited processing capacity.”** *Thanks, Prof. Gross.*)

Thousands of years earlier the writer of Ecclesiastes 12:12 complained that ‘Of making many books there is no end, and much study wears the body’ [ECCLESIASTES 12:12]. Many days I can identify with him! How about you?

One way of dealing with this problem is for us to **CHOOSE** what we allow our minds to **FOCUS** on.

After all, we can't focus on everything at the same time. As Rick Warren likes to say, "You can't chase two rabbits at the same time."

Now where was I?

Who do we focus on right now as a source for the truth? Most nights, without any effort we can hear from a newscaster (local and national) and his or her colleagues, our President, our Governor, our Mayor, a Congressperson or two, and a handful of medical authorities, with some "man or woman on the street" interviews. (Well, I guess nobody is on the street right now!)

And that's just before "Jeopardy"!

Which is why Paul encourages us to FOCUS on some very specific things. Like...

"whatever is TRUE . . . think about these things" — "Truth was a major virtue in the Greek world, but also in the biblical world. But the term here means more than intellectual truth; **it refers to what is authentic, reliable, really real.**"

BEN WITHERINGTON III, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*.

Paul here is offering us some much-needed **"discipline for our minds."**

J. ALEC MOTYER, *Philippians* (The Bible Speaks Today series).

He is giving us something to focus on. *"Whatever is TRUE..."*

*"The challenge to think about whatever is true requires the search for **truth in the most comprehensive sense**. Although Paul normally associates truth with the truth about God (ROM 1:18, 25) and the truth of the gospel of Christ (GAL 2:5, 14; 5:7 2 COR 4:2; 11:10), **in the context of this list of virtues he affirms whatever is true to be the proper subject of Christian thought. Thinking about whatever is true requires discernment to see the difference between what is true and what is false....** Paul expects that the one who loves not only **thinks about** the truth but also **"rejoices with the truth"** (1 COR 13:6). Paul's command to think about whatever is true **endorses the claim that "ALL TRUTH IS GOD'S TRUTH."***

In obedience to this command, Christians work out an integration of whatever is true with "the truth of the gospel" in all areas of life.

G. WALTER HANSEN, *The Letter to the Philippians* (Pillar New Testament Commentary).

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Abba Father, we are wallowing in "too many words" right now.

And it's challenging to sort out what's true from what isn't.

What's "true" on one channel is labeled "false news" on another.

So we ask you for wisdom, which you promise to give us (JAMES 1:5).

Help us to cultivate good minds. Level heads. Clear thinking.

Help us to learn to distinguish truth from error,

the whole truth from "partial truths."

Guide us through your Son: the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

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May God's wisdom and truth be poured out on you today,

Pastor Doug

P.S. We would love to hear from you! How are you doing right now? And we would love to pray for you! Email us at info@bethanyonline.net

P.P.S. Keep checking this page — we will try to post fresh encouragement **every day** during this crisis!

P.P.P.S. And watch our **LIVE-STREAM Worship Service** this coming Sunday at 10:30 a.m. for more encouragement.