

Sunday, April 5, 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 2 —

*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.*

We get to **CHOOSE** what we allow our minds to **FOCUS** on.

And Paul encourages us to FOCUS on some very specific things. Like...

*“whatever is **TRUE** . . . **think about these things**” —*

*“whatever is **NOBLE** . . . **think about these things**” — Nobility is in short supply in our world.*

Sarcasm, sure.

Cynicism, you bet.

Snark, oh yeah.

Walter Hansen suggests that

“Paul’s encouragement to think about whatever is noble **leads to a life of respectful admiration of people who are noble, serious, dignified, honorable, and above reproach.** In the Pastoral [letters], [**church leaders**] (1 TIM 3:8), **women** (3:11), and **older men** (TIT 2:2) are to be noble, worthy of respect. **Calling for a focus on all that is noble also implies a deliberate turning away from all that is ignoble, dishonorable, and vulgar.** In Greek literature the virtue noble is also attributed to divine beings in the sense that they are ‘worthy of reverence, august, sublime, and holy.’ In this context the virtue connotes **whatever is awe-**

inspiring, lofty, and majestic: 'THINGS THAT LIFT THE MIND FROM THE CHEAP AND TAWDRY TO THAT WHICH IS NOBLE AND GOOD AND OF MORAL WORTH.' “

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

That gives us a better handle on this!

So where in today's world can we find nobility?

We may have to look carefully to discover it. But it's out there.

An artist who works in diligent isolation to perfect her craft.

Business owners who do right by their employees even when their business is not currently turning a profit.

Employees of excellence who “go the extra mile” for their employers — and customers — even when their wages have decreased or their livelihood is in jeopardy.

A person who is unjustly vilified and attacked, yet takes “the high road” in response.

Doctors and nurses and medical personnel who serve without adequate protective equipment — and without complaint — to give comfort and help to the most vulnerable among us. (The lack of adequate protective equipment is **not** noble; but a standing shame on all responsible.)

School teachers like our's at West Covina Christian School who are working harder than they even do under normal circumstances — making the difficult adjustment ***on the fly*** of learning new tools like Google Education or Zoom (and the list goes on and on!) — to deliver thoughtful, prayer-bathed, gracious, kind, excellent, **professional educational training and encouragement to their students through distance learning!** And with positive attitudes!

A person who “does what is right and just and good” (Proverbs 1).

That's nobility. Look for it. FOCUS on it. Point it out. Affirm it and praise it.

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Abba Father, we live in an ignoble world.

We are sick of hearing politicians praise themselves and blame others.
We are weary of media pontificators sniffing for the slightest mis-step to pounce on, while overlooking any act of decency or goodness that they could affirm or praise.

We are disappointed in ourselves when we do the same things.

Help us to live noble lives.

Help us to FOCUS on things that are noble.

Help us to have nothing to do with cynicism and snark.

May your Son be our guide:

**the Noble One who “did not come to be served but to serve”...
and who “gave up his life for his friends.”**

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May God's goodness and grace 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.