

Tuesday, April 14, 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 6 —

*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 **concentrate our attention** on some very specific things. Like...

*“whatever is **TRUE** . . . **think about these things**” —
“whatever is **NOBLE** . . . **think about these things**” —
“whatever is **RIGHT** . . . **think about these things**” —
“whatever is **PURE** . . . **think about these things**” —
“whatever is **LOVELY** . . . **think about these things**” —*

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

“THE CAPACITY OF the human brain is the subject of ever-widening scientific wonder. Its twelve to fourteen billion cells are only a shadow of its complexity, because each cell sends out thousands of connecting tendrils so that a single cell may be connected with 10,000 neighboring cells, each of which is constantly exchanging data impulses. These twelve to fourteen billion brain cells times 10,000 connectors make the human mind an unparalleled computer. The mind’s activity has been compared to 1,000 switchboards, each big enough to serve New York City, all running at full speed as they receive and send questions and orders. Put another way, there is more electronic equivalent in one human brain than in all the radio and television stations of the entire world put together!

The human brain does not miss a thing. It is capable of giving and receiving the

subtlest input — from imagining a universe in which time bends to creating the polyphonic texture of a Bach fugue or transmitting and receiving a message from God himself — feats no computer will ever accomplish.”

R. KENT HUGHES, *Philippians, Colossians, & Philemon: The Fellowship of the Gospel & the Supremacy of Christ*.

So Paul instructs us that our brains with their extraordinary capacity are meant to be harnessed, to be focused in particular directions. One of these directions is on “whatever is ADMIRABLE.”

Walt Hansen says “The term translated *admirable* occurs only here in the NT... The word denotes **whatever is ‘praiseworthy, commendable.’** The [noun] form of this adjective refers to a ‘good report’ (2 Cor 6:8). Related to the term *euphonic*, the term (*euphema*) means ‘fairspoken, fair-sounding.’ **Whatever words, works, or persons are well spoken of by people deserve our careful consideration.**”

G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians* (Pillar New Testament Commentary).

In this light, Frank Thielman suggests that “It is also important to remember that the world, although fallen, belongs to God. In the face of dramatic social changes that threaten the peaceful existence of evangelical piety in our culture, **many evangelical Christians in recent decades have adopted a pessimistic attitude toward the world around them, retreating into an anti-intellectual stance.** Instead of viewing the natural world as God’s creation and an appropriate object of investigation, evangelical Christians have sometimes [narrowed their focus]. . . .

In this passage, however, **Paul asserts the need for believers to cast their intellectual nets widely — to allow all that is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy, wherever it is found, to shape their thinking.** He then urges them to practice what they have learned from him of the Christian tradition. Christians today should not retreat from face-to-face encounters with the best unbelieving minds of the age, but should read them and hear them in the hope of learning truth, justice, and excellence from them and thereby becoming more obedient followers of Christ.

FRANK S. THIELMAN, *Philippians* (NIVAC)

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May we be drawn today to think about and reflect on “whatever is admirable,”

Pastor Doug

P.S. Praise God for his goodness and grace in allowing us to share **online** our first “distance learning” **EASTER CELEBRATION!** I hope you were able to be with us! But I sure miss being together in person, don’t you? I miss all your beautiful faces!

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 our “ENCOURAGEMENT FOR TODAY” webpage — 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.