

Thursday, April 16, 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 7 —

*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**” —

“if anything is **EXCELLENT**” . . . **think about these things**” —

I wanted to have another go at “excellence.” I don’t feel like I quite nailed it!

Just kidding.

But I did want to share a couple more thoughts for God’s Word on the subject.

COLOSSIANS 3:17 (NIV)

¹⁷ And **whatever** you do, whether in word or deed,
do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.

If we are doing everything “in the name of the Lord Jesus,” that would seem to **necessitate** doing everything with excellence, would it not? Because “in the name of” means we are acting as a **representative** of the Lord Jesus; and it means we are acting in alignment with the **character** of the Lord Jesus.

And “giving thanks to God the Father through him” would seem to imply that everything we do is also to be ***an act of worship, praise and thanksgiving to God!***

The encouragement that Paul addressed to “slaves” in his day could easily be applied to modern-day “employees” in our challenging daily work environments:

COLOSSIANS 3:22-24 (NIV)

²² Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, ***not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor,*** but **WITH** sincerity of heart and **REVERENCE FOR THE LORD.**

²³ ***Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,*** **AS WORKING FOR THE LORD, not for human masters,**

²⁴ ***since you know that you will receive an inheritance FROM THE LORD as a reward.***

IT IS THE LORD CHRIST YOU ARE SERVING.

Four times Paul highlights how our work is actually carried out **for the Lord**, not for our “earthly master” or “human master.” Paul brooks no complaints from us like “Yeah, but he should see **my** boss!”

Our work should be done “with reverence for the Lord.” Our work should be done “with all our heart, as working for the Lord.” Our work should be done in conscious awareness of that “Audience of One” — our Lord and Master — who observes the excellence with which we work and intends to “reward” us accordingly. And again, in case we missed it the first time, Paul clarifies that “it isn’t primarily your boss or supervisor or manager or lead that you work for directly . . . **it is the Lord Christ, the Anointed King, that you and I are serving!**”

What an incredible privilege!

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May we be drawn today to focus on, reflect on, and strive to live out and exemplify in every arena of our lives “whatever is excellent,”

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!

I praise God today as I’m writing this as I think about the **excellence** being shown by the people and staff of **BETHANY** and also the teachers and staff of **WEST COVINA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**. You are working with great diligence and commitment — with

excellence! — as we seek to reach out to our community and serve the students God has entrusted to us! I am deeply proud of you!

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.