

Saturday, April 18, 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 11 —

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

Yesterday we considered the power of looking for things **worth praising...even though we sometimes find it easier to find things worth criticizing!**

The late New Testament scholar Grant Osborne pointed out that that **PRAISEWORTHY** “is the basic New Testament term for ‘praise’...which usually refers in Scripture to the praise of God (both *our praise of him* and *his praise of us*). Here in this list of virtues, Paul likely means anything that leads to receiving praise from people around us. *As a summary quality, it implies that we are to exemplify ALL the listed virtues, since they together enhance our place in society (on behalf of Christ) and draw praise from others.*” [caps added]

GRANT R. OSBORNE, *Philippians Verse by Verse* (Osborne New Testament Commentaries)

Ben Witherington III adds that “when Paul refers to the PRAISEWORTHY things, he is thinking of things that **Christians** should praise, and **God** would praise, not just what **anyone** deemed praiseworthy.”

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

So let's think for a moment about thinking. Paul has given us EIGHT things to think about. “Think about these things” uses the word *logizomai*, from which we get the mathematical word *logarithm*. Paul commands the same deliberate, prolonged contemplation of these virtues that it takes to weigh a mathematical problem.”

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

Grant Osborne points out that in these two verses (Phil. 4:8-9) Paul is calling his friends to both “RIGHT THINKING” (to focus on excellent and praiseworthy things) — and to “RIGHT DOING” (putting into practice what they have learned from Paul). **And Paul's sequence suggests the “point...that right thinking (4:8) will lead to right doing (v. 9).”**

Osborne summarizes: “**In closing, Paul emphasizes that we are to ‘think about such things’ — to carefully consider and reflect on these qualities, to allow them to permeate our minds and thereby guide our conduct.**”

GRANT R. OSBORNE, *Philippians Verse by Verse* (Osborne New Testament Commentaries)

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

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Lord, enable us today to focus our **thinking** today on “whatever is **praiseworthy**” — and help us “**put into practice**” the way of life Paul modeled for us.

Pastor Doug

P.S. Praise God for his goodness and grace in allowing us to share our first **online EASTER CELEBRATION!** But I sure miss being together in person. I miss you all! **I hope you'll join us THIS MORNING online at 10:30 A.M. for more encouragement from our Resurrected Lord!**

I praise God today for the **praiseworthy** ministry taking place by the people and staff of **BETHANY** and also the teachers and staff of **WEST COVINA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**. You are **all** working with great integrity and faithfulness as we seek to reach out to our community and serve the students God has entrusted to us! You are a bright light shining in the darkness of this crisis. 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!