

### A Destabilized Time

“In most times, and even today, in most places, most people could count on living in the same place throughout most of their lives, or knowing the same people throughout most of their lives. Working in roughly the same job or field most of their lives, believing most of the same things for most of their lives. But today we cannot count on any of those things.” – *Tim Keller, in 1995(!)*

*How can we have some measure of peace when everything is destabilized, unpredictable, and changing?*

### Find the Best in a Messed Up World

#### Analyze Your World

“...whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

This is a list of virtues derived from a combination of Jewish wisdom and Greco-Roman society.

*Two important phrases clarify what Paul means:*

“If there is anything” – Paul is telling them to pick out what is excellent and worthy of praise

“Think about these things” – literal Greek is “logizomai” from the word logic, meaning “consider carefully, reckon, ponder.”

*Why is Paul telling them to carefully ponder and think about what is excellent and worthy? Because they are to be evaluating the world around them, their heritage, culture, and society.*

Compare to Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by **TESTING** you may discern the will of God.” (emphasis added)

*If you want to have peace you need to be **thinking**. You need to be **analyzing** – what in this world is true? Honorable? Just? Pure? Lovely? Commendable?*

Use a Gospel Lens

“What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”

Gordon Fee: “[they are to] embrace good wherever they find it... but that they do so in a discriminating way... the key to which is the Gospel Paul had long ago shared with them and lived before them.

The [Christian’s] most common response to [modern] culture is rejection. The text suggests a better way, that one approach the marketplace, the arts, the media, the university, looking for what is “true” and “uplifting” and “admirable”; but that one do so with a discriminating eye and heart, for which the Crucified One serves as a template.” (1995!)

**Pray with Thanksgiving**

Why would you give thanks before the prayer was answered?

A Time of Fasting

God will “guard” your heart

The word literally means armed soldiers at the city gate, monitoring what comes in and out.

**Don’t Settle for the Peace of God**

Don’t settle until you also have the \_\_\_\_\_ (compare vs. 7 and vs. 9)

It’s not just a principle – it’s the presence of a person.

**Questions for Personal Study**

1. Are you more tempted to uncritically accept culture or to outright reject it?
2. What does it look like for you to “logizomai” – to ponder, reckon, think about culture?
3. Why can a Christian be assured of God answering his or her prayer in the best way?
4. Is your Christianity merely a series of principles, or the personal knowledge of the person of God? How can you grow in knowing the presence of God?