

9/20/26

Right Thinking Results In Right Living

Phil. 4:8-9

Paul has revealed consistently through the letter the problem at Philippi, it was the lack of unity and joy.

Paul has just finished admonishing two women, Euodia and Syntyche, who were at odds with each other, so he entreated a brethren to help them be reconciled, calling him a true companion. vs. 2-3

The problem in affect was a symptom of a more specific cause, the issue of disobedience and not taking things to God in prayer; therefore anxiety robbed them of their peace, due to not thinking right.

So Paul now uses this situation to exhort the body at large teaching them that if they are going to live right, they must think right. Phil. 4:8-9

1. The relationship between vs. 6-7 and vs. 8-9 is what I am at heart, the real me, which will be directly due to what occupies my mind.
2. There are various words for mind, think and meditate and they describe the disposition of moral attitude, which determines our will and actions.
3. The word “nous” is translated understanding in vs. 7, it is the result of our thought process, reflection and meditation “dianoia”. Eph. 2:3

4. There are other words, but basically what I allow to go through my mind and control my mind will come out in life, the true character of the inner man.

- a. As a man thinks in his heart so is he. Prov. 23:7a
- b. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Matt. 12:34e
- c. Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it springs the issues of life. Prov. 4:23

The\ proposition of Paul is, “Right thinking will result in right living” described in three ways. Phil. 4:8-9

- I. The priority for right thinking. vs. 8a-b, i-j
- II. The particulars of right thinking. vs. 8c-h
- III. The product of right thinking, vs. 9

I. The priority for right thinking. vs. 8a-b, i-j

* “Finally, brethren, If there is any virtue and if there is anything praise-worthy---meditate on these things.”

- A. The priority is addressed to the believer. vs. 8a-b
 1. Paul’s proclamation has priority in view of coming to the end of his letter, “Finally”. vs. 8a
 - a. The word finally was used by Paul earlier and some suggest a long digression, but it is not necessarily true. Phil. 3:1; 4:8
 - 1) The word can mean “furthermore” and would be a better translation as such in the previous text. Phil. 3:1

- 2) The word can also mean “finally” in closing, as in our text. Phil. 4:8a
2. Paul is directing himself to the family members “brethren”, those who can obey the command for right thinking. vs. 8b
- The word is “adelphos” which means a kinsman based on the same origin or work. Phil. 1:12, 14; 2:25; 3:1, 13, 17; 4:1, 8, 21
 - Once they were dead spiritually but now were alive by God’s grace and the Holy Spirit. Eph. 2:1
 - Once they could not obey God, but now they had the capacity.
 - Once they understood this, then the only things they could lack, would be the will to obey.
 - * The very same ones who can give their anxiety over to God, can as well choose the priority for right thinking!
- B. The priority is stated as being two-fold. vs. 8i
- Those things that have virtue
 - The expression, “if there is any virtue”, does not imply doubt, but rather affirms and would be better translated “since”.
 - The word virtue “aratee” means the highest excellence, focusing on moral or ethical quality sourced in God.

- * In Classical Greek the word is used for the highest quality of anything, be it land, tools, etc.
- c. The word is found only four other times in the New Testament.
- 1) Peter says we are called to proclaim the “praises”, the highest excellence of God who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. 1Pet. 2:9
 - 2) God’s divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and “virtue”. 2Pet. 1:3
 - 3) For this very reason we are to give all diligence and add to our faith “virtue”. 2Pet. 1:5
 - * The Christian life is one lived for Christ, that Christ may live through a person and manifest a life of excellent quality! Phil. 1:21; 2:5; 3:10; 4:13
2. Those things that are praiseworthy.
- Next “if there is anything praise-worthy” “epainos” meaning that which is approved of or commendable and deserved to be mentioned.
 - The context would have to mean God’s, not man’s.
 - 1) Paul told the Corinthians that if any person was going to glory, he was to glory in the Lord. 1Cor. 1:31

- 2) Paul told those who might think their excellence was of themselves, “What do have that you have not received? Now if you have received it, why do you glory in as if you had not received it?” 1Cor. 4:7
 - c. The believer has been predestined by God to the praise and glory of His grace. Eph. 1:5-6
 - * Paul has already related this to Christ living through them. Phil. 1:11
- C. The priority is to be a habit of thought. vs. 8j
- 1. The command is to meditate on these things, those having “virtue” and “praise-worthy”.
 - a. The imperative command presupposes the ability to obey.
 - b. The discipline is a willful decision, not an accident.
 - 2. The word meditate “logizomai” means to reckon, calculate, take into account, with the idea of pondering or dwelling on.
 - 1) The word is used for the chief priests, Scribes and elders, as Jesus asked them about John’s baptism whether it was from heaven or man, and they “reasoned” among themselves. Mk. 11:31
 - 2) Paul used this word 35 of the 41 times it appears in the New Testament, it is a favorite word.

- 3) Paul used it for himself when he said, he did not “count” himself to have apprehended. Phil. 3:13b
2. The apostle Paul has been laying the ground-work for this important exhortation from the beginning.
- a. He gave himself as an example of thinking right, telling them that he was in prison by Divine appointment. Phil. 1:12
 - b. He modeled right thinking as believers attempted to add to his afflictions in prison, but was only glad the gospel was preached. Phil. 1:16
 - c. He commanded them to stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, thinking the same, striving together for the gospel as he. Phil. 1:27
 - d. He told them that they were to put on the mind of Christ, the epitome of a servant, as himself, Timothy and Epaphroditus were examples. Phil. 2:1-8, 17-30
 - e. He told them to do all things without murmuring by right thinking understanding we are a light to the world. Phil. 2:14
 - f. He told them to receive Epaphroditus with right thinking, a Christ-like servant with esteem, not thinking he failed. Phil. 2:29
 - g. He told them the goal of right thinking is to determine to experience Christ living through him. Phil. 3:10

- h. He told the two women to agree together by right thinking and be reconciled. Phil. 4:2
- i. He summarized this concept by telling them to ponder and dwell on thinking what was of moral and ethical excellence and will bring praise to God! Phil. 4:8i-j

Illustration

Have you ever been thinking about something so much that when you were asked a question you responded with what was on your mind, or said a word in conversation that you were thinking and it made no sense, to your embarrassment?

Application

1. What Paul is declaring should not be confused with modern day meditation.

- a. By positive thinking.
 - b. By imagery, creating your own reality.
 - c. By T.M.
 - d. By Psychological methods, whether they call themselves “Christian” or not.
 - e. By contemplative prayer of the Emergent Church, after the desert fathers of the 3rd and 4th century.
- * Any one or combination of these will degrade corrupt the gospel of Christ by integrating and contaminating of it!

- f. Christian meditation is based on the Scriptures in order that God might speak to us and give us understanding, reminding us who we are.
2. Whenever the believer is wise to make right thinking as their priority, they are victorious in their spiritual warfare by recognizing some basic things.
- a. To recognize that his heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Jer. 17:9
 - b. To recognize that his carnal mind is an enemy against God. Rom. 8:7b
 - c. To recognize that his sin nature lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, these are contrary to one another. Gal. 5:17; Eph. 6:12
 - d. To recognize that Satan’s attacks is against the knowledge of God not really me. 2Cor. 10:3-5
3. Whenever the believer’s priority is to think right, he must use spiritual weapons.
- a. Prayer a calling out for God’s help. Phil. 4:6-7
* Prayer is as essential as breathing!
 - b. The ongoing filling of the Holy Spirit. Eph. 5:18; 6:10
* The filling of the Spirit is not an option or suggestion!
 - c. The word of God. Ps. 19:7-14; Ps. 119; 2Tim. 2:15
* God’s word is to dwell richly in us. Col. 3:16

The priority for right thinking is for believers!

II. The particulars of right thinking. vs. 8c-h

* Paul does not give an exhaustive list, but a list of six things, long enough to get his point across and seem to be in pairs.

A. The first two deal with **integrity**. vs. 8c-d

1. I am to discipline my mind to ponder on “whatever things are true”. vs. 8c
 - a. The phrase whatsoever things “hosos” means as many, everything and all under each category.
 - b. The word true “alethes” means that which is reliable and honest, decent in character with the sense of not being hidden or concealed or false, be it thought, word or deed.
 - c. John used the word to assure the truthfulness of his gospel. Jn. 19:35; 21:24
 - d. Calvin called it, “The integrity of a good conscience”.
2. I am to discipline my mind to ponder on “whatever things are noble.” vs. 8d
 - a. The word noble “semnos” venerable or honorable having dignity, the quality that makes things worthy of respect opposed to being scorned.
* The KJV translated it “reverent”.
 - b. The word appears only three other times in the pastoral epistles and used for the qualifications of deacons, their wives and the older men who are to manifest godly

character because of their position in the body and responsibility. 1Tim. 3:8, 11; Tit. 2:2

B. The second two deal with **motives**. vs. 8e-f

1. I am to discipline my mind to ponder on “whatever things are just”. vs. 8e
 - a. The word just “dikaios” means that which will produce a right relation with man or God, being conformable to God’s standards.
 - b. The word is used of Joseph who being a just man wanted to put Mary away privately. Matt. 1:19
* He didn’t want justice, but to be just!
2. I am to discipline my mind to ponder “whatever things are pure”. vs. 8f
 - a. The word pure “hagnos” means clean or chaste, undefiled but not restricted to sexual purity, but all of life in mind and body.
 - b. The context is our thoughts that only God knows, apart from us, therefore it refers to purity of heart, the motives.
 - c. The word is used of those who are expecting the return of Christ and purify themselves as Christ is pure. 1Jn. 3:3

C. The last two deal with **actions**. vs. 8g-h

1. I am to discipline my mind to ponder on “whatever things are lovely”. vs. 8g

- a. The word lovely “prospheilees” means what is pleasing and agreeable or admirable, attractive inciting true love, not sexual.
* This is the only appearance in the New Testament and not found in the current lists of the ancient world.
 - b. The believer is to think on those things that will produce a conduct towards others that will be in accord with the attractiveness of grace and gospel of God’s love.
 - c. Paul told Titus to command servant to adorn the doctrine of God by their conduct towards their masters, instead of a distracting contradiction. Tit. 2:10
2. I am to discipline my mind to ponder on “whatever things are of good report”. vs. 8h
- a. The phrase good report “upheemos” refers to that which is praiseworthy, attractive and admirable to the highest standard, being profitable.
* This also appears only once in the New Testament, well-spoken or reputable.
 - b. Those things that as I think on, they motivate right actions that will bring glory to God and His Kingdom on earth.
 - c. Jesus quoting the “Shama” as the greatest commandment said, love God with all your heart, soul and all your mind, instead of might. Deut. 6:4-5

- 1) The word for mind is “dianoia” the thoughts, meditation.
- 2) The discipline of my mind is evidence of my love for God and character.
* This was Paul’s prayer. Phil. 1:9-11

Illustration

The technical slang among those who work with computers, it is abbreviated “GIGO”, garbage in, garbage out.

- 1. The errors cannot be blamed on the computer, but on the one who fed the information.
- 2. Your brain will forget more than 90% of what you and I learn during our lifetime, but I will still store up 10 times more than the Library of Congress of 17 million volumes. #3286

Application

- 1. What kind of thoughts do I allow to control my mind?
* Thoughts of self-righteousness, jealousy, envy, deceit, resentment, bitterness, hate, unforgiveness or revenge, etc.
 - a. I am not to be ignorant regarding Satan’s devices lest he take advantage of me and I give him opportunity or a foothold. 2Cor. 2:11; Eph. 4:27
 - b. I am not to make provisions for my sin nature or allow Satan through his craftiness to corrupt my mind from the simplicity or purity of Christ, as he did to Eve. Rom. 13:14; 2Cor. 11:3

- c. I am to be sober and vigilant, due to the fact that the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, therefore I need to resist Satan steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by my brothers in the world. 1Pet. 5:8-9
- 2. What is the reason for so many failures in life in the life of Christians?
 - a. Hosea tells us plainly, “My people are destroyed for their lack of knowledge”. Hos. 4:6
 - b. Micah also tells us, “He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?” Mic. 6:8
- 3. What kind of mind am I to be cultivating?
 - a. The renewed mind of Christ in righteousness and true holiness. Eph. 4:22-24
* The new man is renewed in knowledge according to the image of God. Col. 3:10
 - b. The mind of Christ that submits in humble obedience. Phil 2:5
* God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. 1Pet. 5:5f-g

The particulars of right thinking are essential for the believer!

III. The product of right thinking. vs. 9

- A. The product has a process. vs. 9a

- 1. First Paul told them they learned from him, “the things which you learned.”
 - a. The word learn “manthano” simply means to be informed and to increase in knowledge.
 - b. Jesus used it of Himself, “Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me”. Matt. 11:29
- 2. Second Paul told them they had excepted that knowledge as their own conviction and way of life, “and received.”
 - a. The word received “paralambano” means to take to oneself, affiliate or joint with.
 - b. The word is a technical term for the receiving of tradition for the purpose of handing it down intact to others.
 - 1) Such as the words of Paul that what he had received of the Lord, he was giving to the Corinthians, regarding the Lord’s Supper. 1Cor. 11:23
 - 2) Such as when he warned the Galatians of receiving a different gospel than the one, he gave to them, accusing man or angel. Gal. 1:9
- 3. Third Paul told them they had listened to him with their own ears as he proclaimed God’s gospel truth to them, “and heard”.
 - a. The word heard “akouo” means to be endowed with the faculty of hearing.
* The phrase “acute hearing” comes from it, as opposed to be deaf!

- b. To perceive with the ear what is being announced with understanding.
 - 1) Jesus used it on the Sermon on the Mount, “You have heard it said to those of old”. Matt. 5:21
 - 2) John used in his message to the seven churches, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”. Rev. 2:7
- 4. Fourth Paul told them they witnessed him live out these truths he proclaimed, “and say in me.”
 - a. The word saw “oida” simply means to see with perception and assimilate what is being seen.
 - b. The word is also translated by the word “know” with the idea of perceived understanding.
 - 1) The word is used for the Magi who saw His star. Matt. 2:2
 - 2) Paul told the Corinthians, “Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? 1Cor. 6:19
- B. The process will result in the product. vs. 9b
 - 1. The product is described by two words in our English translation, “these do”,
 - a. The word in the Greek is one “prasso” simply means to practice, perform, to be busy with, to carry on with repeatedly or habitually.

- b. This is the bottom line to all learning, application.
 - 1) The word is used for those repeatedly practicing the works of the flesh. Gal. 5:21
 - 2) The word in our text is used for those who repeatedly practice the fruit of the Spirit.
- 2. The apostle Paul commands them to do after his example, quite a statement.
 - a. He was not declaring he was sinless or arrived at a state of perfection, he established that earlier. Phil. 3:12-13
 - b. He is not boasting, but simply declaring that he had lived out what he believed and taught to them.
 - c. He was encouraging them to trust Jesus for this as he did earlier. Phil. 2:13
 - * They were to think on these things and do them!!!!
- C. The product of doing has a promise. vs. 9c
 - 1. The promise is simple, “and the God of peace will be with you.”
 - * For approval, protection and provisions, etc.
 - a. They had God, “Now the **God of peace** be with you all. Amen.” Rom. 15:33
 - b. They were on the winning side, “And the **God of peace** will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord

Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.” Rom. 16:20

- c. They were in the family of God, and were to be of good comfort, of one mind, to live in peace; and the God of love and peace would be with them. 2Cor. 13:11
 - d. Paul prayed for the Thessalonians, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1Thess. 5:23
 - e. God would enable them, “Now may the **God of peace** who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.” Heb. 13:20-21
2. God Himself will be with us in fellowship, through the affairs of life.
- a. In the good time.
 - b. In the bad time.
 - c. In the time of testing.
 - d. In the day of sickness and death.
- 2Tim. 4:7-8; 1Pet. 4:19
3. God will be approving of our lives and rejoicing with us, as well as providing the

peace that surpasses all understanding in anxious times by our prayers.

- a. Paul opened the letter greeting them with grace and peace from God their Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Phil. 1:2
- b. Paul has also given to them the key to have the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding. Phil. 4:7
- c. Paul now gave to them the way they would maintain the peace of God in fellowship with the God of peace.

Illustration

Sow a thought, reap an act.

Sow an act, reap a deed.

Sow a deed, reap a habit.

Sow a habit, reap a character.

Sow a character, reap a destiny.

Application

1. The product of doing is not automatic just because we have biblical knowledge in our possession.

- a. The man who knows to do good and does it not, it is sin. Ja. 4:17
- b. Don't be a hearer only but a doer of the word or you will be deceiving yourself! Ja. 1:22

2. The product of my life will be directly related to the process going on in my mind.

- a. The believer contrary to what he used to be, is to allow his entire life to be dominated and

controlled by the gospel, as a living sacrifice.
Rom. 12:1-2

- b. The gospel should not be an addition to our, but our lives altogether.
- c. The Scriptures warn us, “Don’t be deceived, God is not mock whatever a man sows, that he will a so reap.” Gal. 6:7-8
- 3. The product of right living is due to my yielding to God’s power for right thinking.
 - a. Paul told them, “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.” Phil. 2:12-13
 - b. Paul prayed for the Ephesian that God would give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him that the eyes of their understanding be enlightened by the mighty power of thw Spirit towards those who believe. Eph. 1:17-19; 3:16-19
 - c. It is spiritual warfare, a good fight and winable fight. Eph. 6:10-18
 - d. “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” Eph. 3:20-21
- 4. The product of the promise is conditional based on what and how we think, the doing of it.

- a. The promises of God in the Old Testament as well as many of the New Testament are all conditional, if you do this, I will do this.
 - 1) Salvation is conditional, based on repentance, otherwise you are not saved!
 - 2) The Beatitudes on the Sermon on the Mount are conditional, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”, no poverty of spirit, not kingdom of heaven!
 - 3) Jesus speaking to His disciples about being the vine and they the branches said, “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they burn. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you”. Jn. 15:6
- b. The words of Jesus cannot be any clearer, than the following, listen carefully.
 - 1) Jesus said, “Everyone who hears these saying of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand”, and when the storms came his house fell. Matt. 7: 26-27
 - 2) But, “Whosoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them...” I will liken him to a wise man, which builds his house on the rock.” Though the storms come his house does not fall. Matt. 7:24-25

The product of right thinking is of the greatest benefit to the believer!

Conclusion

The proposition of Paul, “Right thinking will result in right living” described in three ways.

- I.** The priority for right thinking is for the believer!
- II.** The particulars of right thinking are essential for the believer!
- III.** The product of right thinking is of the greatest benefit to the believer!
 - * Right thinking will result in right living, the process equals the product!