

This Stuff, Not That Stuff

Text: Philippians 4:8-9 Date: December 19, 2021

Joy Sucker #2—Worldliness

Worldliness is a Joy-Sucker. Embracing a worldly lifestyle will drain your emotional, spiritual, even physical batteries like few other things. What you think and do not only impacts who you are becoming, but it also impacts your ability to experience joy and peace.

So, in Philippians 4:8-9, Paul basically says, “Think this stuff, not that stuff. Do this stuff, not that stuff”

Think About This Stuff, Not That Stuff (vs. 8)

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.

Our sinful thoughts are influenced by:

The World

In Colossians 2:8, Paul says: *⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces^[a] of this world rather than on Christ.*

The Flesh

And this world system is actually just an overflow of the human heart. In 1 John 2:15ff, John said *¹⁵ Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. ¹⁶ For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷ The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.*

The Devil

In John 8:44 Jesus called the devil the “father of lies”.

The problem is that we are so accustomed to our thoughts and attitudes of our hearts that we are not even aware that there is a problem. And so Paul gives us a grid.

- Is this thought true?
- Is this thought noble?
- Is this thought righteous and pure?
- Is this thought lovely and admirable?
- Is this thought praiseworthy and morally excellent?

And not to oversimplify this, but whenever I realize that there is stray thought of the world, the flesh or the devil, I am to take it captive and make it be obedient to Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5:

³ For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

ILLUSTRATION

There is nothing and no one more true, pure, admirable, etc. than JESUS. This is why Paul said in Colossians 3:1-10 to keep our thoughts and affections on Christ, His Gospel, and His Kingdom rather than worldly things or that of the flesh.

We tend to think about what we love. And love what we think about.

What are you thinking about? What occupies your mind on a regular basis? That is a clue to what you truly love.

On a related note, do you honestly NOT think about Jesus and the Gospel very much? Then that too may be an indicator that your love for Him has room, maybe much room, to grow? Right?

Because we think about what we love. BUT... we are also wired to *love what we choose to think about.*

But see, you can make a choice to set your mind and your heart on things above. And what you choose to think about, you will grow to love.

Do This Stuff, Not That Stuff (vs. 9)

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.

Godly thinking will in fact lead to godly behavior. In Romans 12:2 Paul says this:

² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Questions for Personal Reflection/Group Discussion

1. Read James 4:4. What does it mean (and not mean) to have “friendship with this world”?
2. Why is so important to monitor what we think about on a daily basis?
3. Talk about how can you intentionally choose to think about Jesus and the glory of the Gospel?
4. What are the things that distract you from thinking about Jesus and the glory of the Gospel?