

January 26

Philippians 4:8 (NIV) 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.

Beth was an excellent worker. She had consistently received accolades for her job performance. Therefore, others never hesitated to work with her because Beth's drive would positively affect their performance. Unfortunately, even though others were willing to work with her, few had become friends with her. Beth also had an uncanny ability to see the worst in any situation. When a new employee entered the office, Beth would begin to focus on his or her shortcomings. She berated her boss as not being smart enough to do the job adequately. When a big news story broke, Beth could always snatch gloom from hope. So, people were willing to work with her but were not willing to be her friends. Her constant focusing on all that could and would go wrong was emotionally and spiritually draining.

Ever since Donald Trump was elected president, the news has been filled with stories speculating on all that could go wrong. Negative story after negative story follows the President and any who work for them. This verse from Philippians directs us to think of whatever is true. However, I have noticed that many people choose to focus on what might be. They focus on the things that could go wrong so that they see the worst in others. When we do this, we leave little room if any for what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, and praiseworthy. This tendency to focus on the worst robs us of our praise and fills our talk with words that seldom bring any hope. Again, I am not saying we ignore the realities around us or the problems. However, even the darkness is light to God. Paul wrote this verse to the Philippians who lived in a world ruled by the Romans, yet Paul instructs them to make the decision to lift up their eyes and focus on Jesus. Then they would be able to see what is right and good and honorable and praiseworthy.