

Digging Deeper (Philippians 4:8-9)

Code of Conduct – Honor Code

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Various translations are provided for your benefit. Read this passage each day this week in whichever translation you desire.

⁸ Finally, brothers, 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. ⁹ What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. ¹

⁸ And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. ⁹ Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you. ²

⁸ For the rest, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of reverence *and* is honorable *and* seemly, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely *and* lovable, whatever is kind *and* winsome *and* gracious, if there is any virtue *and* excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think on *and* weigh *and* take account of these things [fix your minds on them]. ⁹ Practice what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, *and* model your way of living on it, and the God of peace (of untroubled, undisturbed well-being) will be with you. ³

⁸⁻⁹ Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies. ⁴

Day One: Establishing Filters – What do *you* think about?

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Php 4:8–9). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

² Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Php 4:8–9). Tyndale House Publishers.

³ *The Amplified Bible* (Php 4:8–9). (1987). The Lockman Foundation.

⁴ Peterson, E. H. (2005). *The Message: The Bible in contemporary language* (Php 4:8–9). NavPress.

Filters are used to eliminate things in order to achieve a desired result. (Heiser, M. S. (2015). *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*)

Here's the thing – Paul is asking us to think on “these things.” This is not a new or unthought of concept for the Apostle. Look at what he says to the churches at Ephesus and Colossae –

In [Ephesians 4:1–3](#) we find some insights into what makes a godly person. “I ... urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

And later in the same chapter we read, “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” ([Ephesians 4:31–32](#)).

“Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things ... Do not lie to each other ... clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love ... Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts ... And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” ([Colossians 3:2, 9, 12–16](#)).

How do we get to a godly life? God has already done a renewing within our heart, now we need to allow him the opportunity to renew our mind. J. B. Phillips put it this way – “Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God mold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves you toward the goal of true maturity.” (Romans 12:2-4, J. B. Phillips, *The New Testament in Modern English*)

Prayer for today: God, please open my mind to those things that will make me more like Jesus.

Day Two: Identifying Filters – Parameters for thinking (verse 8)

Every thought we think, in every hour we live, must be, not necessarily about Christ, but it must be the thought Christ would think were he placed in our circumstances and subject to our conditions. – Hannah Whitall Smith

Several years ago many people wore bracelets that had these letters on them “W W J D”. What would Jesus do? – is a great question for us. Hannah Whitall Smith understood this decades before when she says what would Christ do “were he placed in our circumstances and subject to our conditions.”

Our actions require our thought process to be engaged. We have to think right so we can act right. Paul is preparing us for a list of filters for our thinking so that our actions will be Christlike. Christlike behavior and actions are sorely needed in our world right now. Are you willing to be that person reflecting Christ's person and passion? Our families and communities need to see that.

Today ask God to help you establish his parameters for your thinking that you might show true maturity.

Day Three: Filters for Integrity – True, Honorable and Just (verse 8)

“We cannot expect the world to believe that the Father sent the Son, that Jesus’ claims are true and that Christianity is true, unless the world sees some reality of the oneness of true Christians.” – Francis Schaeffer

What does it mean to be *true*? Dictionary meanings are “steadfast, loyal, honest, just, truthful, legitimate, rightful.”

What does it mean to be *honorable*? Dictionary meanings are “attesting to creditable conduct, consistent with a reputation that is not tarnished or sullied, characterized by integrity : guided by a keen sense of duty and ethical conduct.

What does it mean to be *just*? Dictionary meanings are “acting or being in conformity with what is morally upright or good: Righteous; conforming to a standard of correctness.”

Christlike behavior is not only described in the scriptures (although that is the very best place to find what it means) but common dictionary meanings place the character right in front of us. True, honorable and just are not merely lofty thoughts and goals but should be the standard for believers. For these qualities to take center place in our lives we have to consciously make these qualities a center place in our minds. “Think on these things.”

Today practice thinking of those things that are true, honorable and just. Ask God to correct your thinking when it strays from these qualities.

Day Four: Filters for Character – Pure, Lovely and Commendable (verse 8)

“Christ is lovely, Christ is very lovely, Christ is most lovely, Christ is always lovely, Christ is altogether lovely.” – Thomas Brooks

In Jesus first sermon he reminds us “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8) Character is an important filter in the believers life. Paul is calling us to lives of purity, loveliness, and commendability. We are to be accountable for our character. If truly our purpose is to be Christlike pure motives, lovely motives and commendable motives must be at a focal point in our lives.

Quite frankly, we know within our spirit as believers that character filters will be identifiers to other believers, but more importantly to those who do not know Christ. These are characteristics that reflect our relationship with one another and with Christ. Character traits speak louder than words. May our character reflect our Lord.

Today challenge yourself to live with a pure heart before God. Remind yourself you are on a pathway to be with God for eternity.

Day Five: Filters for Holiness – Excellence and Praise (verse 8)

“The foundation of true holiness and true Christian worship is the doctrine of the gospel, what we are to believe. So when Christian doctrine is neglected, forsaken, or corrupted, true holiness and worship will also be neglected, forsaken, and corrupted.” – John Owen

Excellence is a high standard! From the very beginning *excellence* is evident. A quick look at Genesis reminds us. “It was good.” (Genesis 1:3, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25) is God’s word after each creative act. When God completed his creation, he makes this final declaration “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.” (Genesis 1:31)

That is a high standard. Unfortunately sayings like, “Good enough for government work” have entered our conversation. If you don’t believe God has excellence in mind for you and me, see the words from Paul. “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men” (Colossians 3:23 NIV). “Whatever you do, do it enthusiastically, as something done for the Lord” (Holman Christian standard version)

When we live and work in such a way praise can be and should be a natural and expected response. Our focus on doing what is excellent is in itself praise to God. Notice the last portion of Colossians 3:23 – “something done for the Lord”. In fact, if you look at the preceding verse the word *wholeheartedly* is used for how slaves are to serve. Our work is a valuable form of praise to our Lord. Practice it today.

Today look for ways to raise the standards in your life to the standard of excellence.

Day Six: Practice Your Filters (verse 9)

“It is doubtful whether any sin is ever committed until it first incubates in the thoughts long enough to stir the feelings and predispose the will toward it favorably....All our acts are born out of our minds and will be what the mind is at last. This is clearly taught in the Word: ‘Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.’ ” Genesis 6:5; Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 15:18–19; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 4:8 (A. W. Tozer *The Set of the Sail*, 72, 73.)

Solomon, who received a gift of wisdom from God, wrote: “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.” (The Amplified Bible Proverbs 23:7). It is no wonder that the Apostle Paul would remind us of such a truth. What we think is what we are. Hence, he pens the words of our study passage “think about these things” (Philippians 4:8). It really matters what you put in your mind so that your practice follows.

Today, Think, think, think! Practice, practice, practice!

Day Seven: Peace (Εἰρήνη) through practice (verse 9)

Today we focus on the last few words of our passage “the God of peace will be with you.”

Εἰρήνη [peace] appears a total of 92 times in the NT. With the exception of 1 John it appears in every NT writing, most frequently in the Gospels (25 occurrences, of which 4 are in Matthew, 1 in Mark, 14 in Luke [+ 7 in Acts], and 6 in John), and in Paul’s letters (26 occurrences, with the highest frequency in Romans [10]); elsewhere most frequently in Ephesians (8). (Balz, H. R., & Schneider, G. (1990–). In *Exegetical dictionary of the New Testament*)

Peace with God, from Paul’s view point, as you have seen Paul put into practice the disciplines of “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”
peace with God is assured – “the God of peace will be with you.”

A few thoughts for you to ponder.

“We are not at peace with others because we are not at peace with ourselves, and we are not at
peace with ourselves because we are not at peace with God.” – Thomas Merton

“If we lose inward peace, we lose more than a fortune can buy.” – Charles Spurgeon

“Peace is the smile of God reflected in the soul of the believer.” – William Hendriksen

Today rejoice in the peace which God provides you.