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Think on These Things

Philippians 4:8

Prayer: *Greetings, church, greetings to all of you out there in YouTube land. We are just grateful to be able to gather together and just to in obviously increasing numbers to praise you, Lord. And part of the praise and thanksgiving that we have for you, Lord, is just that you've given us your word, you've given us your Son, you've given us your Spirit. So we pray this morning as we open up your book, Lord, that you would give us the privilege of the presence of your Holy Spirit. Lord, just guide us, walk with us as we open up your book. And again we pray our prayer that you make it of permanent value, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, Paul is concluding his letter now to the Philippian church. We spoke last time about the statements that he made concerning kingdom citizenship. If you recall he was encouraging Euodia and Syntyche, they were two women in the Philippian church, he was encouraging them to work out their differences based on the fact that they were folks whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life. We talked about how that is the most important passport you

will ever, ever have. Those whose names are written in that book are those to whom the gospel will make sense. And so Paul concludes by saying in *Philippians 4:8*: *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.* So Paul is telling us to meditate, to let our minds dwell on these things.

It's funny how a command given 2,000 years ago could assume such relevance in a culture such as ours. We live in a place where there is constant war and the battlefield itself is our minds. I don't know that Paul could have even imagined the type of battles that exist in the 21st century as opposed to the very first, but even then Paul was convinced that the battle would take place inside our heads. Paul said this in *Romans 12*, he said: *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.* Paul's describing us as living sacrifices, those who are now vessels in which God's Holy Spirit lives and he's turned our way of thinking upside down. Actually it's just the opposite, he's turned thinking that was previously upside down now right side up. Having had our minds and

eyes opened by the Holy Spirit, we now begin this process of sanctification, of growing in the knowledge and grace of kingdom citizens. And what Paul is suggesting here is exactly what Christ spoke of when he said that anyone who chooses to follow him must take up his cross and be willing to die to himself. Paul sees that correctly as the sacrifice of ourselves. We are to die to ourselves daily. At present our bodies are not offered up as a dead sacrifice on an altar but as a living sacrifice willing and now enabled to undergo a transformation into full kingdom citizenship. But how does that happen? Paul says it starts with your mind. *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Let me just translate what God is saying here into practical reality, and let me explain the "why," the "what," and the "how" of this war that takes place inside of our heads. First is the "why." I mean why is this a battle in the first place? Well, Paul is saying to all new believers that we are surrounded by a world that is actively involved in shaping the way we think, the way we act and the way we respond. And that world is organized and ruled by a power that is antithetical to Christ and his kingdom. The ruler of this world is Satan. He rebelled in heaven, he summarily got kicked out, he landed on earth and he's since then made it his

headquarters. Jesus himself in *John 12* referred to Satan as *the ruler of this world*. It is from earth that Satan operates. And it is his goal to conform his citizens to his kingdom and to make them think the way he thinks. That's precisely what being conformed to this world is all about, and trust me, this world wants nothing to do with God's world. We know exactly what this world aspires to in terms of character and aspiration because God has laid that out as well. You see, both kingdoms have the ability to transform their citizens into living representatives of their kingdom of origin. The kingdom of light has the power to transform its citizens into bearers of that light in the same way that the kingdom of darkness transforms its citizens into living conduits of that darkness. The Kingdom the light produces one type of fruit that flows directly out of the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit living within those kingdom citizens and you've heard it many, many times before, it's the fruit of the spirit. *Galatians 5:22: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.* That's our side of the ledger.

Similarly, there are those in this world who are conformed to it who draw their life force and direction from the spirit of this

world, and it too has the power to transform in the worst possible way. Again *Galatians 5:19*: *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.* I mean you'd be hard pressed to find a starker contrast than these two kingdoms, both which operate on an earthly sphere, and that's why we are at war with them. You see, God's intent is not just to keep those two kingdoms separate but to seek out and capture those who are held by the darkness and lead them into the light and that's the "what" of our marching orders in this war. Jesus referred to it as a spiritual home invasion, where he ties up the owner while we plunder the -- plunder and rescue those who are captured and held hostage. I mean this is the way Jesus put it in *Matthew 12*. He said: *How can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.* See, the reason why we are to be in the world but not of it is that God has set us apart as his ambassadors so that he could speak through us in this process of rescuing and calling us out from this world of flesh into the kingdom of light. *1 Peter* sums up our role. It says: *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession,*

that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. But how do you accomplish that if the world of darkness thinks of itself and refers to itself as a kingdom of light? You see, it turns out that this "what" aspect of this war is a lot more complicated than you think.

Case in point. This past week was the Grammy awards. I didn't see the Grammy awards but apparently there was an incredibly obscene performance that went out during prime time when young people could easily have been watching. I heard conservative pundits decry how broken our culture is and how degrading it is to have prime time television displaying what used to be thought of as pornography. What's even more confusing is to have the artist responsible for this performance describe herself not as engaging in anything perverse or degrading but instead as simply affirming the power of female sexuality while at the same time describing herself unabashedly as a follower of Jesus. Here's where this gets complicated. I mean it's not as if this type of dance was something new and shocking, I mean, as the writer of Ecclesiastes put it, there's nothing new under the sun. The kingdom of the world has been exploiting the flesh for eons. And just a few weeks back we spoke of a similar dance performed for Herod that wound up costing John the Baptist his head. If you remember, Salome and her mother Herodias knew precisely what they were doing when they

exploited their sexuality to entice Herod into executing John the Baptist. But there's a difference. And the difference is 2,000 years later this same type of performance is now recast as an artistic expression worthy of praise. You talk about confusing. This is why the "what" aspect of this war requires supernatural wisdom because this is precisely how the kingdom of this world plays his hand. I mean just think about it, if abortion is now considered a human right, if gender is considered fluid and malleable, if marriage between two of the same sexes is considered normative, then why wouldn't it follow that a perverse and degrading performance is now considered artistic expressions of female empowerment. You have to understand how this works. You see, it's been said that the greatest battle ever waged has never been a battle between good and evil. It is always a battle between different ideas of what is good. I mean Hitler and Stalin and Pol Pot and Mao, none of them believed that what they were doing was evil. History proved they murdered hundreds of millions of people, but they all believed that their cause was good because that's exactly how the enemy works. Listen to what Paul said in *2 Corinthians 11*. He said: *And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.* Twisting darkness into a semblance of light is literally diabolical but it's incredibly

effective. And that's the enemy's SOP. That's his standard operating procedure and that's why this battle exists primarily inside the mind.

So we say, okay. Well, how do you fight back? Well there's two different ways that you can respond in these circumstances. You can hyperventilate and cry about the sky falling or you can acknowledge that there are indeed two very different kingdoms and that the kingdom of this world is doing exactly what God said it would do and thus no surprise. Jesus himself was matter of fact about this world and its ruler. When he had a confrontation with the ruling authorities, he basically told them they were just like their father, and this is what he said of their father. He said: *You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.* You see, Jesus was absolutely nonplussed by the overt evil he was confronting because he knew exactly where it was coming from and exactly how it operated. And because we have his truth and his insight as to how the world operates, we too should have the same ability to recognize its origins and its abilities. In fact God is very clear about how we should respond to such overt displays of the dark world's character when it comes to such things

as obscene Grammy performances. *Ephesians 5* says this, it says: *For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.*

You see, if we just take a step backwards and look at what our culture is doing from the perspective that God gives us in his word, we can see an almost hysterical attempt to, as God's word says, to deceive with empty words. We find exactly what the prophet Isaiah declared when he said: *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!* God's word says we refuse to partner with them because we understand exactly where they're coming from. And again for one simple reason as the scripture says: *At one time we too were darkness, but now we're light in the Lord.* And so our task becomes again as the word

says, to walk as children of light. And this is where it is critical to understand the difference between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. Well, the problem is the kingdom of darkness attempts to masquerade as the kingdom of light, so it attempts to cast its darkness in terms of light. I mean it literally attempts to recast good as evil and evil as good. And so instead of a Grammy performance that is perverse and salacious and evil, it becomes a form of empowerment where the individuals performing are not simply engaged in evil and perversion but are asserting in some way their freedom, their autonomy, their ability to express themselves fully.

Do you see what's happening here? I mean, do you see why the "what" of this is so complicated? I mean you can see how any person who is simply in and of the world is at a complete loss to find out what is up, what is down, what is sideways because the standard in which the world has to judge and understand these things is constantly in flux, it's constantly moving, adjusting itself downward along a slippery slope insisting all the while that what you once knew as evil is actually quite good. You just didn't realize it. And what God has given us in his word is literally a high beam spiritual light that pierces that darkness and it cuts right through it and it exposes it. Hence it obviates the need to get hysterical because it demonstrates what God knew from the very

start, that evil lies hidden in darkness and it's God's light that exposes it. Again *Ephesians 5: But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."* Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

"But understand." That's the "why" of this war. Satan has chosen this very planet as his headquarters. We share this planet with the prince of evil and he wants nothing more than to rule it completely and drive us out. The "why" of this war has to do with the strategy that he employs, and that is never to identify evil as evil and to insist that it is in fact good. So like I said, the war's never between evil and good but between different ideas of what is good, and this is where God's word becomes critical because it is the light that is able to pierce the darkness and demonstrate what is good and what is evil.

And that brings us to a third question and that's the question of "how." How do we understand what the will of God is? Well, we have a book. We have a book that he's left us that details as much as we can handle just what God's will is. And when we look to

God's book about his will for winning this battle for the mind that's taking place between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, we find these words of Paul. He says: *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.*

There's eight qualities in the kingdom of light that are absent from the kingdom of darkness, and Paul wants us to think them into our minds. First and foremost is truth. Let your mind dwell on whatever is true. Again we have the clear statement of Jesus about the way the ruler of this world regards truth. Jesus says: *He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.* You have to understand that a believer in Jesus Christ is someone who has the Spirit of Christ living within him. So because of that one of his primary motivations is a deep love of truth. After all, our Lord describes himself as truth. *John 14: Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* Jesus is not saying here I know the truth and I'm teaching the truth and I can show you the truth, that's not what he's saying. He's saying he was the physical

embodiment of truth itself and that his presence here on earth was to illustrate and call out the lie that the ruler of this earth had subjected this world to. It's safe to say that when truth is at the core of your being, you love the truth. Truth is who Jesus was. That's why Jesus loved the truth and that's why all of his followers love the truth and that's also why there's nothing more threatening to a kingdom based on lies than truth embodied, than truth embraced, than truth practiced.

What was truly awful about this Grammy performance is not just that it was salacious and perverse, we've already seen that, that's nothing new. What gave that performance all the earmarks of the enemy, of the ruler of this world was the lie that it was sold under. This is female empowerment. Just imagine all the twelve and thirteen-year-old girls watching this trying to understand on the most basic level what is truth and what is a lie? You get an inkling of how truly evil this kingdom is. And similarly the most appropriate response to the performers is pity. It's not the holier than thou type of pity that you found in the pharisees but the deep sorrow pity that sees these folks so thoroughly taken by the lie that they can't even see it. God says to let nothing into your mind through your senses that does not promote truth.

Second is honorable. It's honorable or dignified or noble. Let

your mind dwell on whatever is honorable. Again to go back to that Grammy performance, I did see a ten-second clip, it was on that conservative pundit show and it indicated that dignity or nobility was the very last thing that anybody would have ever thought of when viewing this. I mean the word means gravity, that's that same kind of a sense as that word that got bounced around a few years ago, we call it gravitas. It means a certain weightiness. The opposite of dignified or noble would be sophomoric or flippant. God says there's some things that have a gravitas of their own that demand respect. Sexuality is one such thing, so is death or sorrow or pain, worship. Making sex into a carnival like it's some kind of Jerry Springer show indicates that you just don't know what dignity and nobility even look like. Again *Ephesians 5* says: *But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*

Years ago I just gave up watching sitcoms and most dramas and almost every contemporary movie because there was no escaping the filthiness or foolish talk and crude joking. Folks, this is the

world artfully and patiently shaping and crafting a new normal. And all you have to do is go back ten years to read and experience what their normal was compared to what our normal is and then go back twenty years and you'll find yet a different normal and you'll see how each succeeding normal has gotten cruder and more filthy. That's precisely by design. You see, the most impressive tool in the enemy's toolbox is incrementalism. It's moving that line ever so slowly in increments so small you're not likely to recognize them. The beauty of the word of God is that it's absolutely impervious to incrementalism because God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. Years ago somebody challenged me about this verse, he said I would love to see it printed out and attached to the bottom of every single television so you couldn't look at the screen without seeing right there in front of you: *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.* That changed the way I watched television. I genuinely felt the Spirit of God within me revolting at the very things the world was saying. Isn't this funny? Isn't this cute? Isn't this clever? It's none of those. To be sure, there are still some things, drama and otherwise on TV that are noble and are dignified but it requires a great deal of discernment and energy to ferret it out and it's energy I no longer

have. I do watch TV but I watch mostly nature shows and shows about Alaska because I'm so grateful that I don't live there. Literally.

When it comes to honor, Jesus had more honor and more dignity and more nobility than every human who ever walked the planet, especially when you consider the grave indignity he endured simply by taking on human flesh. That's not even considering the indignity he withstood as the king of the universe being stripped, being nailed to a cross. Paul states it very clearly that we should focus our minds on that very nobility and dignity. He says: *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.* So we dwell on honor personified and that's the Lord Jesus Christ.

Third is just or righteous. Let your mind dwell on whatever is just or righteous. And the focus here is integrity. *Proverbs 20* says: *The righteous who walks in his integrity -- blessed are his children after him!* Years ago one of my Bible teachers gave me some advice about child rearing that still today stands about as

one of the best pieces of advice I've ever received. The man was a psychiatrist, he was employed full time in the military. He was a man who had a lot of experience in counseling lots and lots of Army families, and he said that he had seen families who hold their kids very, very close to the vest all the way to families who hold their kids very, very loosely, giving them much more freedom than perhaps he said he would. But he said he felt that neither style defined the measure of raising successful kids. What he believed made all the difference in the world was whether or not you possessed integrity. I mean the word "integrity" comes from the word "integer" which is a whole number not divided. A person who lacks integrity is a person who is divided into many different pieces. There's a piece of you for the church, folks, there's a piece of you that you show to your friends, there's a piece of you that you show to your family, a piece that you show to your spouse, a piece you show to your boss, but none of the pieces are the same. That's a lack of integrity that no amount of parenting style can make up for and it's a recipe for disaster. What God wants, what truth demands is that we be a people who love righteousness and integrity whether or not anybody else is looking. And that applies specifically to what we take into our minds. And once again Jesus leads the way. It's interesting to note that Jesus' integrity was affirmed even by those who hated him.

Mark's gospel describes an incident between Jesus and his enemies. This is *Mark 12*. It says: *And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk. And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?"*

But when your enemy's telling you, number one, that you are true; number two, that you don't care about other's opinions; number three, that you are not swayed by appearances; and number four, that you truly teach about the way of God, you're doing pretty well when it comes to integrity. Jesus was singularly undivided about one thing and one thing only and that was glorifying his Father by as his enemies put it, truly teaching the way of God.

And fourth is pure. Let your mind dwell on what is pure. Purity goes along with honor and integrity. I think it goes without saying that this era differs greatly from other historical eras in two ways. Number one, not only is our culture immersed in and awashed in sexuality but our attitude toward it has reached the intended nadir that the enemy pointed us towards years ago. I mean there was a time when pornography was associated with shame. Now it's associated with humor, with celebrity. Folks actually joke about their porn habits. Porn stars now regularly sign autographs

at the equivalent of the Oscar awards for pornography. This is exactly what the enemy designed as a substitute for healthy sexuality that can only occur within the borders of marriage, because it fits the enemy's templet perfectly. Everything about pornography is a lie. And just this week we saw exactly where the enemy wants to have those who are caught up in it go. A young man was arrested just this week for committing mass murder at massage spas. The man confessed that he was a sex addict, that he was addicted to porn but he also had another confession, that he was a committed Christian, been a member of the church for years. This man clearly had mental issues that led him to the exact place that Jesus says the enemy wants to lead all of us. Remember, he was a murderer from the beginning. He doesn't stand in the truth and because there's no truth in him, and when he lies, he speaks out of his own character for he is a liar and the father of lies. There's a reason why Jesus spoke hyperbolically about the dangers of impurity. He said this in *Matthew 5*, he said: *If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.* What is Jesus saying? Well, he's using hyperbolic language to point out how a radioactive, how deadly, how incredibly poisonous impurity is

because the drive to feed that monster never, never stays static. Every time you feed it, it grows. And the enemy's goal for every single consumer of pornography is lies, death and destruction of relationships, of marriages and of people. If you're struggling with porn, there is a way out and we've discussed this before but it's -- it's way beyond the scope of this message but please, if you are struggling and you feel like you're losing, contact me, give me a call or drop me a line, I mean, let's bring this into the sunlight. Let's apply the power of God's grace and let's get healed from that.

Fifth is lovely. Let your mind dwell on what is lovely. Christ is loveliness personified. Again we go back to the fruit of the Spirit. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.* What's interesting about those fruits, those fruits encapsulate and they sum up the life of Jesus because Jesus was perfect love, perfect joy, perfect peace, perfect patience, perfect kindness, perfect goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. He was the perfect expression of each of those fruits in a living human being. He was literally loveliness personified. Jesus made it clear that the way to gain the fruit of the spirit was not by actively seeking each individual fruit but by doing exactly what Jesus told us to do. In *John 15* he

said: *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

Okay, great. How do you abide in Jesus? You study him, you dwell on him, you meditate on him as loveliness personified. And the more you do that, the more you abide in him, the more like him you will become. Says who? Well, consider what Peter and John's enemy said about them. This is Acts 4:13. It says: *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. They'd been with Jesus. And it transformed these crude common men into people who were nothing less than astonishing. That's why there's nothing more profitable than focusing on Jesus.*

Now the final three Paul offers up as a summation of the previous five. He says: *whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.* Paul says let your mind dwell only on those things that are commendable, excellent and praiseworthy. Now hopefully at this time when I ask you to conjure up in your mind what is commendable, what is excellent, what is praiseworthy, the first thing that should come into your minds is not a what, but a who,

and the "who" is the Lord Jesus Christ. Whoever is commendable is Jesus Christ, whoever is excellent is Jesus Christ, whoever is worthy of praise is Jesus Christ. And here's why we should dwell on these things. There's something absolutely unique about human beings that exist in no other creature and it's really all summed up in Paul's final three. He says: *Whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

No, I've spoken about this many times before, it was C.S. Lewis who pointed out that the pleasure that human beings experience in things commendable, excellent and praiseworthy is enhanced and it's completed by the ability to praise it. A sunrise, a mountain lake, a glorious night sky, we see those things and we can't help but say, would you look at that. Isn't that amazing? Those are not just idle phrases. Those are part of what it means to be a human being. You see we were made by God to offer up praise and worship. Everything in creation was made for that but we alone are made with the intention of participating and sharing what is glorious. That's a role reserved for us as the crown of God's creation. God says we are -- quote -- *the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.* And declaring it completes the pleasure of it. I've often used the example that if you were served let's say the best meal that has ever been prepared in the

history of the world, somebody said I had the best meal ever and it was handed to you in a corner to be eaten alone, I tell you the pleasure of that meal would be greatly diminished because you have no one to praise it for. If you tasted a great steak, your first response would be to say to your companion, "This is amazing. You've got to try this!" Did you ever wonder why that is? Do you ever wonder why no other creature shares that same characteristic? I pointed out if you gave that steak to your dog it might recognize the first part of it, that it's truly amazing, but don't ever expect it to agree with the second part that it's going to decide to share it with the neighborhood poodle. Animals don't work that way; only humans do.

Listen to how C.S. Lewis put it in his *Reflection on the Psalms*. He said: "I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share

it with. The Scotch catechism says that man's chief end is 'to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.' But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him." Folks, you can't enjoy a God you don't know and you don't know him without actively thinking him into your mind, and you can't think of him rightly without thinking through the word of God. And that's the answer to how we go about this battle for the mind.

You know, it's the computer age that gave us the phrase GIGO, G-I-G-O, "garbage in yields garbage out." The idea being that computers operate on a strict mathematical logic and whatever you input it with is what it's going to eventually output. If you put garbage into it, it's going to eventually spew out garbage. I think it's pretty obvious that the exact same thing applies to a far more sophisticated computer that sits inside your head right between your ears. God says to guard especially the input side. I mean the world's especially good at garbage in, garbage out. But God's word is especially good at producing goodness in, goodness out. And that's why Paul gives us this directive and that's why our focus needs to be on the one who is goodness personified. So *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. Let's pray.

Father, I just thank you for who you are. I thank you for your excellence, I thank you for how praiseworthy you are. Lord, I just pray that each of us would understand the grave importance of focusing on those things that lead us to you, those things that grow us in our understanding of you. Give us the ability, give us the heart, give us the desire to seek after you, to pant after you, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.