



Dwell On These Things

Every day we are bombarded with negativity. News and social media feeds continually gnaw at us to focus on the bad things going on in the world and our lives, and if left unchecked this can have a serious impact on our ability to trust God and be joyful in every circumstance, as we are instructed to do in the preceding sentences of this chapter of Philippians. So how can we combat the world's blitz on our minds and souls that aims to take away from the *peace of God that surpasses all comprehension*?

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:8-9 NASB

Paul's letter to the Philippians is one of the more encouraging epistles found in the New Testament, and here we see why. As we've learned before, the church was healthy overall, and except for a few nudges Paul did not have errant teaching or false belief to deal with as he did in other churches, such as with the Galatians and Corinthians. So here in verses 8 and 9 we see a gentle, pastoral appeal to right thinking instead of issuing a stern correction.

Perhaps the best way to look at verse 8 is to compare each trait with its antonym so we can gauge where our thoughts may be residing, which directly translates to the level of joy and peace we experience in life.

Whatever is:

<i>Trait</i>	<i>Antonyms</i>
<i>True</i>	false, counterfeit
<i>Right</i>	wrong, errant
<i>Pure</i>	filthy, adulterated
<i>Lovely</i>	terrible, rotten
<i>Of good repute</i>	shameful, unethical
<i>Excellence</i>	mediocrity, inadequate
<i>Worthy of praise</i>	dishonorable, deplorable

When viewed side by side we can really see the difference between each quality! On one side we have what could be classified as character traits of the Lord, and on the other, character traits of the world. Contrasted, it is no wonder that Paul so meticulously detailed these in this passage and instructed believers to ***dwell on these things***.



The word rendered ***dwelt*** is from the Greek *logizomai* and it means to *reckon with, to consider, and to take into account*. Herein lies a choice. We can choose to dwell on the negatives, all the bad going on in the world, all the shameful, disgraceful, dishonorable, and terrible things that are happening, or we can choose to dwell on what Scripture says to... things that are true, right, pure, lovely, excellent, and worthy of praise. Actively deciding to put aside the bad and focus on the good, ties in perfectly with what we learned in the preceding verses where Paul told readers to ***rejoice in the Lord, be anxious for nothing, and pray with Thanksgiving*** (vv. 4-6) so that ***the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus***. (v.7).

Think of Paul's counsel as a repeating cycle. Focusing on all the good things God has done for us and all His beautiful attributes naturally causes us to rejoice. When we rejoice, we can release our anxieties because we walk in faith and trust of the Lord. We can then pray with thanksgiving and praise, knowing that He hears us. And this allows us to again focus on good things... wash, rinse, repeat!

Paul finishes this thought by saying, ***"the things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."*** What things had they learned, received, heard, and seen in Paul? The immediate context speaks of the very things found in this passage. If we put these into practice, Paul declares the ***God of peace will be with you***. In verse 7 he discussed ***the peace of God***, now in verse 9 He points to the ***God of peace***. As though closing this circle of rejoicing, being thankful, releasing anxiety, thinking on good things, and practicing what we know to be godly behavior, we not only are given the peace of God, but are promised that the God of peace will be with us.

Such an incredible and encouraging promise of hope and joy!

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