



# 'Back to Basics for Believers Series'

## Sermons in the Epistle to the Philippians

### Message 23 – 'Pure Thinking' Philippians 4:8 - 9

As Paul comes to a conclusion in this excellent letter to the Philippians, chapter 4 has illustrated practical outworkings of the lessons and principles that he has highlighted throughout. In the verses that we have before us, the issue of pure thinking arises, that being right thinking that influences right living, under the hand of God, and this grants peace. We can see the following:

**Filtering the Filth (v8)** – Paul stresses that when a person has been saved by grace and trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, his mind is renewed by the Spirit of God. His focus shifts, and as a result he has a desire for things that are good and focused upon the Lord. In the power of the Spirit of God we are to bring all thoughts under control, and place them into submission unto the Lord. Paul says in these verses that we need to filter the filth, and the best way to do that is to pursue the best of things and dwell upon them. We must realise that thoughts are real and powerful, even though we cannot see them, measure them, or weigh them.

**Feeding the Footsteps (v9)** - In v9, Paul speaks of a number of ways to feed the steps to such a mindset in this exhortation. You cannot separate outward action and inward attitude. He refers them to the source and power of such thinking.

1. The Word of God – Paul says that he had preached and taught them concerning such things. It is in the Word of God that a person finds the things to fill his mind. His thoughts are to rest upon the Word of God.
2. Spiritual Examples - He urges them to follow his example, in the sense that, if they heed his example, they are heeding a man who is completely given and submitted to following in the footsteps of Christ. By following such an example they will be able to see how he kept his thoughts and life upon the principles that he is exhorting them to in these verses.
3. Discipline - Paul very clearly says, 'those things...do'. There is the energy and power of self-discipline with the enabling and assisting of the Holy Spirit.

**Finding the Fairway** - The peace of God will abide in us when we are in the will of God. Paul's writings look at God's rule for doubtful things.

Principle 1 – **The Christian is no longer under Law, but under Grace** – Romans 6:14: It is clear in this verse, that the answer to difficult issues is not legalism. Yet, grace is not an excuse for license. When grace is at work in a life it never makes rebels, grace works to make people who love God, and desire to please Him.

Principle 2 – **All things are not Beneficial for the Christian** – 1 Corinthians 6:12: Everything is permissible, but is it beneficial?

Principle 3 – **The Christian must pursue the Better Things** – Philippians 4:8,9: We are to decide between what is doubtful and dubious by choosing what is best. Of course the best is always to choose those spiritual things which we have been made alive to by grace. When it comes to Christian conduct, faithfulness to the Word, led by the Spirit, and balance is so important.



## Penzance Baptist Church

'Upholding the Ordinary Means of Grace'

Pastor Jonathan Stobbs