

Word Study – Philippians 4:8

Sermon 20 in the Philippians Series

Philippians 4:8-9

I. The Context of the Words

The section deals with “standing firm in the Lord” v.1.
“so stand firm in the Lord”

The immediate context of verses **8-9** is found in **verses 6-7**.

To stand firm in the Lord **v. 1** -- you must think correctly and act properly **v. 9**.

II. The Passage as a Whole v. 8

Verses 8 and 9 make up one sentence in Greek.

Paul frames his “virtue list” with “whatever is” and “if any”,

We find many “virtue lists” in the NT. Example -- **2 Peter 1:5-8**.

Also the qualifications for Elders and Deacons in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 take the form of virtue lists, and there are many other Scriptures too.

III. The Words Themselves v. 8 (six adjectives)

1. True (αληθη) alatha

This word is used at least 25 times in the NT by Matthew, John, Luke in the book of Acts, Peter, John again in his first and third epistle and Paul here and in 3 other places, most notably Romans 3:4 – Let God be true but every man a liar.

Saturate your mind with truth, from God’s Word, and things that are true.

John 4:16-18 – **truly**; John 19:33-36 – his testimony is **true**.

2. Noble (σεμνα) semna

Honorable and venerable. Paul uses this word in three other virtue lists.

The qualifications for a deacon – **1 Timothy 3:8** – deacons should be **reverent** or of good character.

The wives of office bearers in **1 Timothy 3:11** – again “reverent”.

Titus 2:2 – older translations use “grave”.

The word means that which is appropriate, worthy of respect, honorable.

The opposite would be all that is base, dishonorable and vulgar.

3. **Just** (δικαία) dikaia

Pertaining to being proper or right

Phil 1:7a -- just as it is **right (proper)** for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart,
Matthew 20:4 – the parable of the owner of the vineyard – a Biblical example of “just”.

4. **Pure** (αγνα) hagna 88.28

Morally pure and blameless.

2 Cor. 11:2 – Paul desires to present the church to Christ as “a **pure** virgin”

1 Peter 3:1-2 -- Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, ² when they observe your **chaste (pure)** conduct *accompanied* by fear.

It’s used 8 times in the NT – often to encourage us to be pure.

In the LXX it brings in the OT idea of being “ceremonially clean”. .

5. **Lovely** (προσφιλη) prosphila

This word is used only here in the NT and is not found in any stoic virtue lists.

This has to do with – aesthetics. It is pleasing – it can even bring forth love.

In the LXX – in the story of Esther (5:1) it refers to Esther’s face.

“and she was blooming in the perfection of her beauty and her face was cheerful as it was **lovely and kind**”

In the realm of art -- you could ask – what good is a painting, what good is a sculpture, what use can I get out of it?

Note the care God gave in constructing and adorning the Tabernacle -- Exodus 35:30-35

6. **Good report** (ευφημα) euphama

Another word that is used only here in the NT and not at all in the LXX.

Worthy of praise and approval. Cross culturally “what people should praise”.

Hansen, “Whatever words, works or persons are well spoken of by people deserve our consideration.”

The final 2 nouns sum up the preceding 6 adjectives

If there be any **virtue** (goodness) -- If there be any **praise** – **think** (consider, ponder) these things!