

Right Thinking (Philippians 4:8)

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There is a story of two monks walking in a drenching thunderstorm. They came to a stream, and it was swollen out of its banks. A beautiful young Japanese woman in a kimono stood there wanting to get to the other side but was afraid of the currents. In characteristic Buddhist compassion, one of the monks said, "Can I help you?" The woman said, "I need to cross this stream." The monk picked her up, put her on his shoulder, carried her through the water, and put her down on the other side. He and his companion went on to the monastery.

That night his companion said to him, "I have a bone to pick with you. As monks, we have taken vows not to look on a woman, much less touch her body. Back there by the river you did both." The first monk said, "My brother, I put that woman down on the other side of the river. You're still carrying her in your mind."

This story reminds us that mind is the great battle zone of our lives. Whatever finds a lodging place in our minds will ultimately end up affecting our lives, either adversely or positively, depending on what we allow to capture and captivate our minds. When we learn how to win the battle over our mind we will be victorious instead of experiencing defeat in our Christian life.

The old saying is still true: "Garbage in, garbage out" (GIGO). When we allow garbage to control our minds, then garbage will come out of our personal lives and daily conduct. In this study we are going to look at the importance of right thinking. As a Christian, we need to know *what* to think about, and *why* we need to develop right patterns of thought. In short, if we don't develop right patterns of thinking, we will live in constant defeat. We will allow our minds to be overcome by the enemy and we will become a pawn in the hands of the flesh and Satan (2 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 6:11).

Today we have what might be called "crash zones" of the information highway which cause God's people to stumble and commit sin in their hearts and minds. Computer pornography sites, newsgroups, chat rooms, social networking sites, and blogs on the Internet are all "crash zones." If you are not careful your mind

will become corrupted and you will crash in your Christian life and walk with the Lord. Added to these crash zones are worldly TV shows, dirty magazines, trashy novels, CD games, and the “such like” works of the flesh (Gal. 5:21).

David declared in Psalm 101:3:

“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.”

This is an important principle to follow in light of the modern-day media and entertainment world. The word “set” means to fix something in one’s mind, to dwell on something, to purposely allow something to overtake one’s mind. In other words, David’s desire was to avoid at all cost those visual things that ungodly people practice, which would create a fixed pattern of sin in his mind, stir up or excite his old nature, and cause his own spiritual defeat.

David declared he would keep himself pure by not tolerating evil thoughts to be generated in his mind through the actions of ungodly people (“I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me”). This was David’s decision. He would not allow vile and perverse people, along with their sinful activities, to surround his life or become part of his everyday living. He made the choice to separate from those people, places, and personal activities which would become a stumbling block to him. David knew if he was constantly exposed to the visual sins of these people that he would eventually be tempted to follow them.

2 Corinthians 6:17 teaches the same principle:

“Wherefore come out from among them (*their sinful patterns of living*), and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”

If you choose the ungodly as your best friends, then you will pay a price in the long run. You are setting yourself up for spiritual defeat. David knew that sooner or later you would pay a price. The lives of evil people will eventually pollute your own life. David knew that this was true. Therefore, like Daniel (Dan. 1:8), he purposed to not partner with the ungodly and their sinful patterns of living, so he could keep his mind pure and clean. David knew that if he counteracted the culture and chose good companions, he would safeguard his mind from sinful inclinations and spiritual defeat.

Psalm 119:63

“I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.”

The teaching of this verse is simple. Bad company results in bad living. Wrong companions can steer us away from Biblical thinking and fog up our minds regarding what is right. One of the most overlooked but critical principles in defeating sinful disobedience is to demolish sinful thoughts (2 Cor. 10:5) by replacing them with thoughts that are righteous, pure, and holy. This brings us to our main text for this study.

Philippians 4:8 declares:

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.”

A Christian must learn the secret of replacing sinful rationalizations, detestable, impure, bitter, unforgiving, hideous, shameful, debauched, and despicable thoughts with those that are in accord with God’s truth, righteousness, and holiness. Any believer that has developed unbiblical patterns of thinking must experience God’s renewing work in his mind (Rom. 12:2), so his outward conduct and actions can be transformed (2 Cor. 7:1). The transformation begins in the mind and then become visible on the outside.

The word “finally” (Phil. 4:8) indicates that Paul is about to sum up this great epistle of Philippians and conclude this particular section. He sounds like a normal preacher. Usually, when a preacher says, “Finally” he is starting to close for the first time! So Paul begins closing for the first time by telling us how to think. He concludes by saying what was previously penned in the Scripture must be reflected upon and taken to heart, if a Christian is going to live right, do right, and be right with God.

Paul has come to the grand finale of this epistle. He is summoning the believers to reflect or think on the Biblical teaching which has been written down in the first four chapters of this book. If a person will take God’s Word to mind and heart, he will find himself living victoriously and godly in the present world.

When my life is out of control, my mind is out of control! Our life is either tainted, or pure, depending on how we think. I'm convinced that all of us from time to time as Christians need to give our minds a bath. We are not thinking as God wants us to think. Therefore, we are not living as God wants us to live. Our minds are not saturated in the truth of God's Word. This is why we go off on some tangent and seek out the garbage or refuge of the world system. This is why we begin to move our life in a direction in which God is not pleased.

Christian friend, let's get back to the Word of God. Let's start thinking right about the issues of the day and our personal need for holiness. Let's get the truth of the Word of God in our minds so that it will translate itself into our everyday living. God's truth will blow all of the fog out of our mind!

Philippians 4:8 talks about "whatsoever things" and "these things." What are the things to which Paul is referring? He is talking about the things of Scripture (Scriptural things or Bible things) that he has just shared with the people in the epistle.

Philippians 4:9 supports this interpretation:

"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."

In essence, Paul is saying in verses 8-9, "If you will think about all these things, which I have shared with you in this epistle, and put them into daily practice, your life will be spiritually enhanced in a tremendous way." Why is this? It's because the Bible is our guidebook and helper in life. It is a lamp unto our life and a light unto our path (Ps. 119:105).

Let us never forget that what we think about and meditate on is what we become (Prov. 23:7). Therefore, we need to be thinking Scripturally. Many Christians are not living a Bible-centered life because they are not thinking and living on Scriptural ground. *If we think right, we will live right!* If we fail to think right, we will find ourselves living life on a lower plain instead of the higher plain associated with godly Christianity.

Not long ago I visited the historical sights of Philadelphia Pennsylvania. As we were walking toward the area where the Declaration of Independence was signed

and the Liberty Bell was stored, I happened to see about a dozen people sitting in the lawn with their legs crossed and their arms folded, practicing yoga or Transcendental Meditation. TM is a technique of meditation derived from Hindu traditions that promotes deep relaxation through the use of a mantra (a repeated formula or incantation) of reflecting upon the universe.

We must conclude that the meditation of unsaved people is not Christian. There is nothing Christian about yoga or TM. God has not called us to open our minds to the universe and meditate on just anything; He has called us to meditate on “these things” (Bible things), or those liberating truths found in the Word of God (James 1:25) which are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and admirable. God has not called us to open our minds to whatever is out there but to open our minds to what is in the Bible.

It’s the truths of Scripture that we need to reflect upon and hide in our hearts (Ps. 119:11) if we are going to experience freedom and liberty (“ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” - John 8:32). If we would get our minds off the world and back to the Bible, our lives would reflect godliness and purity, freedom and beauty, instead of contamination and carnality.

A *guarded* thought life must be accompanied by a *guided* thought life. In other words, we must guide our thoughts by the absolute standard of truth found in God’s Word. A wholesome thought life involves meditation or reflection on the promises, principles, and plain commands that are stated in God’s Word. There are many “Thus saith the Lord” statements or many commands, and also various principles developed from God’s Word, which help guide our thoughts and transform our living.

Psalm 119:9

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.”

In Philippians 4:8 Paul gives a listing or description of those things we find in God’s Word which enable us to think right and live right. Far too often unprofitable thoughts gain dominion over our souls. Did you ever catch your mind wondering into certain areas and places where it should not be? Of course you have. When this happens, you must learn to replace the bad thoughts with good thoughts. You

must have an alternative plan or way of thinking. If you begin to think about something good, it excludes the bad.

Someone said:

“The easiest way to expose a crooked line is to place a straight edge alongside it.”

How can we think right when we are being bombarded by wicked, lustful, covetous, jealous, angry, gossiping, selfish, and discontent thoughts? There is only one answer to this question; we must think Biblically! God’s Word enables us to think in a manner that is true, righteous, and holy. When we think Biblically, we will think correctly and make decisions based upon truth or Bible commands and unchanging principles. We will not allow the world, people, culture, and our surroundings to fog up our minds. Again, the Word of God will direct us in the right path and steer us in the right direction (Ps. 119:105).

In Philippians 4:8 we have a listing that might be called “the menu for the mind.” The six categories related to our thought life are connected with the Word of God. In other words, God’s Word changes our thinking and the direction of our lives. When reflecting on truth, as found in the Bible, our minds and lives can be transformed or renewed so we can correctly discern God’s will and purpose for our lives (Rom. 12:2).

How does the Bible help us to think right?

1. It fills our mind with truthful thoughts.

The Bible says, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true.” The teachings we find in God’s Word are opposite of lies, deceit, and all falsehood. They are opposite of dishonest and unreliable things. They are absolute truth. Factual truth keeps us from living in the illusionary world of fantasy and dreams. It keeps us from living the “Alice in Wonderland” lifestyle. Many people live in a make-believe world instead of a world of reality and truth based upon the Scriptures.

The focus today is on emotion, experience, and pragmatism. The importance of serious thinking about Biblical truth is downplayed. People no longer ask “Is it true?” but rather “Does it work?” and “How will it make me feel?” The present-day church is more concerned about something being divisive or offensive rather

than making sure it is Biblically true or right. Many Christians today are spiritually unstable because they base their lives on feeling rather than on Biblical thinking.

Bill Hull writes:

“What scares me is the anti-intellectual, anti-critical-thinking philosophy that has spilled over into the Church. This philosophy tends to romanticize the faith, making the local church into an experience center... Their concept of ‘church’ is that they are spiritual consumers and that the church’s job is to meet their felt needs.” (*Right Thinking*, Colorado Springs, Colorado, NavPress, 1985, p. 66).

Jesus said, “Thy word is truth” (John 17:17). In Psalm 19:9 David wrote, “The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” Psalm 119:151 adds, “Thou art near, O Lord; and all thy commandments are truth.” Thinking on whatever is true certainly means reading, analyzing, and meditating on the Word of God. Ephesians 6:14 declares: “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.”

Truth is the savior of our mind! Truth rescues us from a world of delusion and disorder. Factual truth holds everything together even as the physical belt did for the Roman soldier. If you don’t have the truth you lose everything! In a day when the world says there is no truth, or that everything is relative, we know that God has His own truth which is absolutely reliable and which will never let us down.

“What saith the Scripture?” (Rom. 4:3). This must be our final authority. Truth liberates us from all error and filthiness of the flesh. It gives us a clear picture in a day when man paints a picture that is unclear. Truth is what we must use to cast wicked imaginations out of our mind or thinking patterns.

2 Corinthians 10:5

“Casting down (*demolishing and destroying*) imaginations (*reasonings against God*), and every high thing (*a barrier that is seeking to stand between us and God*) that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God (*what the Bible says about God and His will for our lives*), and bringing into captivity every thought (*surrendering each thought of our mind*) to the obedience of Christ” (*so we might obey Christ and follow His will for our life – allowing Him to be our Master instead of sin*).

The words “casting down” are literally rendered by one Greek word which means “demolish.” In order to demolish the evil thoughts of our minds, we must engage in a truth battle and bring our thoughts under obedience to Christ. We must surrender our thoughts to our Master. Truth must always be at the center or focal point of our minds. We must actively meditate upon the truth of the Word of God to demolish or take down the plaguing thoughts that seek to overtake our spiritual lives.

Joshua 1:8

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

Right thinking involves a truth encounter. It involves an aggressive and persistent battle to keep the truth of Scripture in our minds, so we can counteract the evil that is seeking to override our thinking process. We need to “think on these things” (Phil. 4:8), or reflect upon truthful things, instead of the lies that Satan, the world, and other people send our way. God wants us to think with a clear mind and clean mind. The only way we can do this is to keep the standard of truth high!

Isaiah 59:19 declares: “When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.” The spiritual standard that we have against the enemy today is the bona fide truth of God’s inerrant, infallible, and inspired Word. Let God be true, and every man a liar!

Satan is the liar (John 8:44) and we know that he wants to corrupt our minds with his lies (2 Cor. 11:3). Satan often tries to get us to question God’s Word when he whispers in our ear, “Yea, hath God said?” (Gen. 3:1). This is the way he often approaches us. The devil tries to control us through lies but God wants to control our minds through the truth (1 John 4:6). One thing is certain, whenever we believe a lie, Satan takes over!

A ship was making its way through inshore islands when a lady asked the captain if he knew where all the rocks and shallow water was located. “No madam,” he replied, “but I know where the deep water is.” By comparison, every Christian needs to know what the Bible says regarding every action, attitude, and ambition

if he is going to think Biblically, do what is right, and not believe Satan's lies.

2. It fills our mind with honorable thoughts.

The Bible goes on to say, "whatsoever things *are* honest." The word "honest" speaks about those things that are honorable or holy in God's sight. The word portrays that which is full of dignity and something that can be revered. The Greek term means "worthy of respect or reverence." Believers are to meditate on the truths of Scripture because they have the stamp of honor, reverence, and holiness upon them. Honest things are those things which are above board. There is no salesman's spiel involved with them.

Robert Gromacki states:

"Thus, honest thoughts are dignified and serious, prompted by holy morals and motives."

The teachings of Scripture are the sacred and serious things which are diametrically opposed to the secular and humanistic things of this life. This is why we need to think upon those things which promote morals and holy incentive for living. Today, school children are given books to read which would have been considered dirty a generation ago. Christians today are reading, looking, listening, and meditating on those things that are impure and irreverent, without blushing at sin.

The same Greek word that is translated "honest" in Philippians 4:8 is also translated as "grave" in different verses throughout the Bible.

1 Timothy 3:8

"Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre."

1 Timothy 3:11

"Even so *must their* wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things."

Titus 2:2

"That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience."

The Bible is teaching that deacons, deacon's wives, and all believers should live a life that is filled with honor, dignity, and reverence for God's holiness. They should be serious about truly honoring God. This does not mean we must put on a white cape, carry a cross around, or dress like Melchizedek! It means we are called to live a life that is worthy of respect and above reproach. We are called upon to live an honorable life that respects God and His Word. Honesty is not the best policy for the Christian. It is the only policy!

1 Timothy 2:2 tells us that we should pray "For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Here is the point. When we think honestly, we will act honestly. When we think holy, we will live holy. Paul is saying in Philippians 4:8 that the Bible will enable us to reflect on honorable things, or dignified things that are holy and above reproach, and these things will then change our manner of worship, conduct, and entertainments.

We need to become reverent in our thinking process so we will become reverent or holy in our living. God wants us to think about respectable or reverent things instead of being occupied with dirty things. Too often we are flippant and careless about life and the things we do. This is because our mind is engaged on things that is irreverent and undignified before God. God wants us to keep our thoughts on honorable or nobler themes!

"I am resolved no longer to linger,
Charmed by the world's delight;
Things that are higher, things that are nobler,
These have allured my sight."

For example, if we are talking in a trashy way or a gossiping manner, we are not speaking out of dignity and reverence for God and others. If we are talking in a vulgar or shameless way, we are not reflecting upon nobler things. Crudeness and coarseness of talk should have no place in the Christian vocabulary (Eph. 5:4). Everyone knows where you are spiritually, and where you mind is, if you talk in an indecent, or derogatory manner.

Proverbs 8:6

"Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things."

Philippians 1:10

“That ye may approve (*discern*) things that are excellent (*superior*); that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.”

God wants the Christian to cultivate refinement and respect for the finer and superior things of life. We need to train our minds to dwell on the nobler or reverent things of life instead of the base things of this world. God wants us to think seriously, or reverently, so we will move in a godly direction and possess a holy purpose for our lives. If you want to change the course and destiny of your life, then change the way you think. If you want to hallow your way, then hide the truth of God’s Word in your heart.

Psalm 119:11

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

Margaret Sangster wrote:

“A bit of the Book in the morning,
To order my onward way.
A bit of the Book in the evening,
To hallow the end of the day.”

3. It fills our mind with righteous thoughts.

The text in Philippians 4:8 goes on to say “whatsoever things *are* just.” Just things are innocent and righteous things. They are the things that conform to God’s standards. They describe whatever is in perfect harmony with God’s eternal and unchanging character. We are not only to live a reverent life but also a righteous life. The Bible helps our minds to focus on the things of life that are just and righteous in nature.

The Scriptures will not direct our thinking and living into areas that are questionable in conduct and practice. Just thinking involves thoughts that are upright and fair. Righteous thinking will never result in a person spreading rumors, gossip, and creating malicious scandal or division among the saints. A gossip has a perverted mind which does not center on those things which are righteous and just. Many times the gossip will hide behind his own thoughts, agenda, and skewed facts.

1 Timothy 6:11

“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.”

A man is only as good as what he follows! If he reflects upon righteousness, he will live righteousness. Right living is the result of right thinking! Furthermore, right thinking comes from right reading – the reading of God’s truth. God still directs us by His Word. The Bible is profitable “for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). If we know what the Bible says regarding certain actions, attitudes, and allurements, we will allow ourselves to be instructed in the way of righteous living (Ps. 23:3).

An old preacher once said:

“The Bible redirects my will, cleanses my emotions, enlightens my mind, and quickens my total being.”

4. It fills our mind with pure thoughts.

The text goes on to say “whatsoever things *are* pure.” This speaks of those things that are clean in God’s sight. Pure things describe what God in Scripture defines as holy, morally clean, and undefiled (“keep thyself pure” - 1 Timothy 5:22). We live in a sex-crazed world that is bent on getting others to think unholy and lustful thoughts. Everywhere we turn we are tempted to become desensitized to impurity. This is what is taking place in America and the modern church. Everything from dress, music, movies, TV, billboards, books, and the Internet is designed to promote moral rebellion instead of purity.

We live in a world that needs the Clorox cleaner of God’s truth. The playboy philosophy is everywhere. The push by the world system to contaminate our minds is an ever-present reality. This world is not a friend of grace! We face many temptations today that are seeking to soil our minds. God has called us to keep ourselves “unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

I can remember watching a little girl play in the mud. She was pushing a stick in the muddy water, her feet were full of mud, and her clothing was stained with the color of brown. She was dirty from head to toe from a physical standpoint. However, we must remember that the devil wants us to get dirty from a spiritual

standpoint. This is why we need God's truth to impact our minds, so we can rid our thinking process of dirty and impure thoughts.

Jesus said in John 15:3:

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

The Word of God in our minds and hearts will clean up our lives. When we act upon the absolute standard of truth we will cleanse ourselves from filthiness of the flesh and spirit (2 Cor. 7:1).

5. It fills our mind with lovely thoughts.

Philippians 4:8 goes on to mention "whatsoever things *are* lovely." These are those things that are acceptable, agreeable, and pleasing to God. They are opposite of the evil and fleshly things that the world presents to our mind. These are the very things which are commendable and beautiful to God. The Word of God brings to our attention those things that are acceptable in God's sight and pleasing to Him.

David prayed in Psalm 19:14:

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."

If it does not please God, then it must go out of our mind! We must learn to fill our minds with those things which are lovely or beautiful to God. When we start filling our mind with the evil thoughts of anger, revenge, lust, gossip, greed, and other sins, we get away from the pleasing or acceptable things and replace them with fleshly things. Lovely thoughts are not thoughts of hostility, strife, division, resentment, and bitterness, but thoughts which seek to build up the lives of others and which create friendships. These are the kinds of thoughts that are lovely and pleasing to God.

A little first-grader beamed with satisfaction about a spelling test on which his teacher had written a large "100--Good work!" The boy said, "I will show this to Dad and Mother because I knew it will please them." We can just see him riding home on the bus, hardly able to wait for the moment when his parents would express their excitement with how well he had done. His desire to make dad and mom happy was obviously a very important motivating factor in his life. Dear

Christian friend, this same desire should be ours, as we seek to please the Lord by the way that we think.

2 Timothy 2:4 says:

“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”

An unknown poet wrote these words:

“Paying a visit to sorrow's abode,
Helping a burdened one o'er a rough road,
This the sweet thought making duty delight,
Turning the shadows of gloom into light,
Just to please Jesus!

Giving a smile or taking a hand,
Leading lost feet to that far Better Land,
Doing and thinking, and hearing and seeing,
Eating and drinking, and working and being--
Just to please Jesus!”

6. It fills our mind with admirable thoughts.

Lastly, the text speaks about “whatsoever things *are* of good report.” The things that are of “good report” speak of something that is “worth talking about. They It relates to what is positive and constructive rather than negative and destructive. These are things which are admirable and reputable. When we reflect on thoughts of good report, we will not be thinking about gossiping or destroying a person’s reputation. We will not be constantly thinking of ways to be negative and always be complaining. We will not be filled with critical and judgmental remarks toward others that we would not say in their presence.

A person who thinks on the things which are constructive (“of good report”), instead of destructive, will find himself living a life that honors and glorifies God (1 Cor. 10:31). All of God’s truth is of “good report” while everything outside God’s truth is essentially a bad report. Things of “good report” (reputable things) are also opposite of filthy things (obscenities). We live in a vulgar world where many people swear or curse between their puffs on their cigarettes. Hell’s smoke is

coming out of their nose and hell's words are coming out of their mouth at the same time!

Romans 3:13-14 declares:

"Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness."

All of us have the potential poison under our lips! There is the poison of the old nature under our lips that is ready to be injected in some victim that we hate. Therefore, we are a people in need of Christ's transforming work of grace upon our lives!

While I was playing in a softball tournament, I was exposed to the poison of the snake world. One particular team was ejected from the playing field because of their foul mouth. However, when these fellows were thrown out of the game, they became even more foul-mouthed. They used every swear word in the book, and I think they even invented some new ones to put in the book! My friend, swearing is poison. It comes from the sewer house of our soul – the old nature. God's Word says all swearing and indecent talk is despicable!

Ephesians 5:4

"Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks."

Shame on us when we engage in this kind of talk as Christians. We ought to wash our mouths out with Bible truth! Christians are not to have this kind of degrading vocabulary. It is plain down "filthiness" (Eph 5:4). The text goes on to speak about the matter of "foolish talking" which has the meaning of gutter language, obscene and degrading talk, dirty stories, suggestive jokes, and other similar sins. The word "jesting" means to tell jokes revolving around sin, making a joke about sin.

All of these practices are not of good report! The Christian is to think on things which are admirable and reputable in nature. When something is not of good report, the Christian duty is to turn a deaf ear to it. He is not to participate with it or promote it in any way. He is not to laugh at gutter language.

Allow me to use one more softball illustration. A while back I was playing a softball tournament against several Amish teams in the Paradise area of

Pennsylvania. They brought all of their horse and buggies and parked them in the stalls. They seemed like a religious bunch of young folks. But do you know what I found? I discovered that the Amish have an old nature just like everyone else. They were standing around mocking about sin. I heard one person jokingly saying, "Yield not to temptation." They were making fun of the Scriptures. This is jesting about sin and degrading the truth of God's Word.

Paul now concludes: "if *there be* any virtue (*moral excellence or goodness*), and if *there be* any praise (*anything commendable*), think (*meditate*) on these things" (Phil. 4:8). In other words, if anything is morally good and worthy of commendation it's the six things which we have just studied about – the true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and the admirable truths found in God's Word.

The promises, principles and pointed commands of the Word of God are full of "virtue" (moral excellence and goodness) and full of "praise" (commendable things to reflect upon). God's unchanging standard of truth will get us thinking right in the midst of a dirty world. We must bathe our minds in the Bible through the act of meditation.

We are commanded "to think on these things," which again are the true, honest, just, pure, lovely, admirable truths found in the Bible. To think or meditate on God's Word involves a committed thought process. A believer must daily strengthen the moral integrity of his thought life. There needs to be a constant effort to reflect upon the commendable things of God's Word, so that we might keep thinking godly instead of fleshly, heavenly instead of worldly, and pure instead of dirty.

Someone wrote:

"You are today where your thoughts have brought you; you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you."

The believer is responsible for renovating his mind by infusing truth into his thinking process.

Romans 12:2 says:

"And be not conformed (*molded*) to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing (*renovation*) of your mind, that ye may prove (*discern*) what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

The believer must practice a daily house cleaning as he confronts wrong thoughts. He must discard evil and debased thoughts by replacing them with the wholesome and purifying truth of Scripture. The daily, hourly, and moment by moment reflection upon the promises, principles, precepts, and penetrating commands of God's Word will act as a cleansing agent upon our minds. In the "evil day" (Eph. 6:13) we must be ready to use the Word of God, so we can demolish the evil thoughts and replace them with righteous thoughts.

Out with the bad and in with the good! Let us never forget that right thinking is the start to right living. We can't know or discern the "good, perfect, and acceptable will of God" (Rom. 12:2) for our lives if we don't think Biblically. Only when we *surrender* to God (Rom. 12:1) and *sanctify* our minds (Rom. 12:2) through God's Word, can we know what God's holy will and purpose is for our lives.

Philippians 4:8

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things."

Some of us need a revised version of our thoughts, since many times they are unethical, untrue, biased, and prejudice. When in doubt, think (meditate) on "these things" or those things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and admirable. Anything outside these parameters is not worth thinking about. Your life can never be right if your thinking is wrong! Right thinking leads to right living. You are what you eat. It's equally true that *you are what you think*.

It has been said that you cannot prevent a bird from flying over your head but you can prevent it from building a nest in your hair. So it is with your sinful thoughts. You don't have to allow wrong thoughts to control your mind and defeat your spiritual life. You can take control of your thoughts by thinking on "these things" (Phil. 4:8) - the true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and admirable (reputable) things that align with Scripture.

Proverbs 23:7 declares: “For as he (a man) thinketh in his heart, so *is* he.” In short, we live the way that we think. We are what we think. Our everyday living is centered on our thought life. There can be no escape from this reality.

A popular axiom says:

“Sow a thought, reap an action.
Sow an action, reap a habit.
Sow a habit, reap a character.
Sow a character, reap a destiny.”