

Thinking

Harmony M.B.C., September 4, 2016

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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.

Living in a world that is like a mine field where every step may put us right on top of an explosion, we come to learn that if there is one thing that is certain in our lives it is that we can predict that we will have trouble. One of our greatest tests of faith is to be able to say that this is the way it should be. Our Savior said so.

Because the world is a place of trouble for believers, it's not hard to find something to worry about. It's not hard to find things negative to fill our minds with. Because it is so, this admonition from scripture becomes a shining light for us in the midst of a worldly darkness. So, let's think about this advice and let's take it to heart and really make an effort to make it our standard operating procedure.

I. Think on things that are true.

- ◆ Why is it so important to think on things that are true?
 - First, the world is full of lies and liars
 - Everywhere you turn today from the president of the U.S. to the panhandler trying to pretend that he is homeless and needs a donation, our world is full of liars.
 - Lying is such an integral part of humanity today that we can see clearly why God has said in **Rev. 21:8** "...all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone"
 - Second, there is nothing that impacts lives more negatively than liars and lies
 - Third, thinking too much on these things can cause a kind of defeatism to set in. It can cause us to become suspicious and disbelieving and make us believe that almost everything we see or hear is false.
 - Last, that which is true is a manifestation of part of Jesus Christ
 - It is true that our Lord is coming again – think on this
 - It is true that every deed ever done will receive a fair treatment from the Lord
 - It is true that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Think on this!

- It is true that the Lord has put each of us in this moment, at this place, under our present circumstances for a purpose that is larger than we are...and that He knows fully all about! Think on this!

II. Think on things that are honest. Why?

- ◆ We now live in an age and in a country in which dishonesty has come to be the stock-in-trade of too many Americans. National leaders will do dishonest things under the table that would put one of us in a federal penitentiary, such as collect millions of dollars from foreign interests in order to promote their political campaigns and in order to sell favors to those foreign interests...folks if you don't know, it is criminal to take political donations from foreign interests; it is criminal to sell favors to powerful lobbies; it is criminal to do special favors for friends and contributors...all these things are born of dishonesty.
- ◆ Across the world, and especially here in America, many large corporations are headed up by people who have spent their lives in dishonest dealings. We heard a few years ago about the Enron scandal in which millions of shareholders were fleeced of their stock holdings mostly as a result of dishonest accounting practices and devices, but what we know now is that perhaps 90% of large companies in America operate on unethical principles because they can...not because it is right and not because God sanctions lack of ethics.
- ◆ In our small towns and cities, county and city governments conduct dishonest business practices, and law enforcement everywhere is caught up in dishonest practices related to the national drug trade and the vast amounts of money associated with it.
- ◆ Here at the citizen level, I dare to say that two out of three people you will meet on the street have some aspect of their lives that is colored by dishonesty. So we as the Lord's people are swimming in dishonesty.
- ◆ For that reason, it is important for us to remind ourselves that there is still honesty in the world. To do that, we must give some thought to instances of honesty that we witness around us.
 - The cry of a baby that is actually in distress is honest
 - The admission of an elderly soul that they are too sick or too weak to be very useful is honest
 - A judge who makes a ruling that opposes the powers-that-be, and then stands by his verdict is honest and his action is honorable
 - A parent who sorrows or cries when they must discipline a disobedient son is honest
 - Honesty is when a person will chase down a shopper to give him back a dime that dropped out of his pocket.
 - A sinner coming to Christ confessing his sins before the Lord and asking for mercy is honest

- A born again believer admitting transgression to the Lord is honest

III. Think on things that are just. The words we use most frequently today that are synonymous with just are “fair and impartial.”

- ◆ In America, our society has almost lost sight of what real fairness and impartiality. Nowadays it is absolutely forbidden to say anything about a Muslim, a Mexican immigrant or a black person, but it is perfectly acceptable for a Muslim, Mexicans, or a black person to say anything they want to about Orientals or Caucasians. Is this fairness? Is this impartiality?
- ◆ Today, a woman can go to an abortion clinic and without consulting her unborn child, put it to death and walk away. Is that fairness? Is that impartiality?
- ◆ Today, judges are routinely handing down verdicts against whites for hate crimes against those they call minorities, but a trial in which a minority is tried for hate crimes against whites is almost never seen. Is this fairness? Is this impartiality?
- ◆ Today, if you are a Christian, you will be tried for standing for your beliefs if that standing offends someone who wants and demands that you abandon your beliefs to serve them. Is that fairness? Is that impartiality? No! This is the most perverted form of justice so-called that we confront in American culture today. It is the use of so-called freedom of religious to claim the right to persecute Christians for practicing freedom of religion.
- ◆ With all the unfairness, partiality, and discrimination against righteousness we are immersed in, thinking about things that are just is essential because it is the only way we will be able to keep reminding ourselves that there is fairness in the world and more importantly, in heaven.
 - When the Lord calls all of mankind before Him to give an account, there will only be fairness and impartiality at that trial!
 - When someone steps up to help someone else in need, regardless of the color of their skin, or their station in life, or their nationality, or their spiritual condition...that is fairness and impartiality to think on.
 - When a judge hands down a verdict that favors the person who is right, regardless of the popularity or unpopularity of the opinion, that is fairness and impartiality to think about.
 - When a murderer is given the death penalty, that is fairness and impartiality to think about
 - When government treats all its citizens alike instead of making special concessions for certain ethnic groups, that is fairness to think about.

IV. Think on things that are pure.

- ◆ Purity, innocence, or chastity is a rare commodity today in America. From an early age, our kids learn from the very culture we live in to be full of deceit, trickery, hatefulness, rebellion, and selfishness...all of which are death to

innocence. As much as we don't like to think about it, the opposite of purity or innocence is corruption or guilt. When we think of it that way, we see what a hateful thing that opposite is before the Lord.

- We see innocence when a baby runs to its mother's arms when it feels threatened (think on this kind of thing)
- We see innocence when we see the hungry eyes of starving children looking out from posters that are produced to collect donations (think on this)
- We see innocence when a young child comes to Christ simply and obediently and confesses to trust in Him
- We have purity to think about when we see a brother or sister in Christ stand fast for the truth even when they are mistreated or even arrested (think on this thing)
- We experience purity when we read the word of God (**Psalms 12:6** - The words of the LORD *are* pure words...) – let's think on these

V. Think on **things that are lovely**.

- ◆ Our world, for all the phony talk about world peace and world order, is a place where the children of God have enemies on every hand. The hatred of Islamic terrorists, the hatred of major players in our federal government, the hatred and animosity toward us from liberal mainstream religion, the hatred of the devil against us overall, is an ugly picture. Folks, we have no friends among the devil-controlled forces of this world and friendliness is what this word "lovely" is about.
- ◆ We can alleviate the feeling of being isolated or targeted in our lives by thinking about friendship, about loveliness. We can diminish the impact of the ugliness and enmity in this world by thinking on that which is lovely.
 - Sometimes we have family that shows us friendship.
 - We always have the people of God as friends but we have to remember that the bible teaches us "A man *that hath* friends must shew himself friendly" (**Prov. 18:24**). In fact, lost people can discover that the people of God can be their friends. We can think on these kinds of things.
 - This planet can be friendly to the Lord's people. Think on how lovely this earth is that our Lord has created!
 - Think on how lovely the fellowship of the Lord is!
 - Think how lovely the promises and encouragements from the word of God are!

VI. Think about **things of good report**.

- ◆ If you turn on the news today, you can get a head full of reports on things going on in the world that are evil. Evil reports plague our lives and disturb our peace and calmness. The next newscast we hear today will no doubt tell us something to cause alarm, worry, or concern. The next phone call we get from someone may well be a

report about something evil. We live with this stuff every day. It is sure to darken our day and disturb our sense of well being.

- Example 1: September 3 – WorldNet Daily: *State Bends Law for Muslims...but not Christians – This Alabama law is clear (no head covering when getting a driver’s license), but county officials have decided to give Muslims an exemption on the basis of faith. But when a Christian woman sought to be given the same exemption based on her religious beliefs, she was flat-out denied.*
- Example 2 – Headline from the 1776 Coalition news email: *“The United States owes more money than exists in the entire world!”*
- Example 3 – Headline in Breitbart News – *“Mexican Cops: Downtown Border City Gun Battle with Drug Cartel a ‘Run of the Mill’ Incident”*
- Example 4 – The Horn News – *“Clinton billed email server to taxpayers – Hillary Clintons controversial email server compromised American’s safety – and her illegal setup was paid for by YOUR tax dollars.”*
- ◆ The headlines and articles you see in the news are almost all like this. So, we are drowned in a whirlpool of evil reports because evil has swallowed the world!
- ◆ So why do we need to think on things of good report? Because, as the Lord’s people we need to be reminded by our own thinking that there are good reports happening in this world. It will help us to hold on to the truth that the things of God are yes and amen!
- Last Sunday night, those of you who were here witnessed to a list of things that were of good report...we call them praises here at church. You reported how God had answered prayers, how he had blessed you with protection, with healing of loved ones, with a wonderful church family, with grace and mercy, how he had given you things you had asked for. All good reports to think about!
- It is a good report to think about when we hear that the courts of our land have returned an opinion that upholds the principles of our constitution.
 - Example One: (May 23, 2016 – cnsnews) - *Ohio Students Ignore Order to Drop Lord’s Prayer from Graduation*
 - Example Two: (Jan. 5, 2016 – WND) – *Another State Rebels Against Same-sex Marriage*
 - Example Three: (2009- Conservative Tribune) *Breaking: The State Rebellion Against Obamacare Just Started*
 - Example Four: (July 4, 2016 – WSLN TV10) *Volunteers spend the fourth helping West Virginia flood victims - Monday, dozens of volunteers, many of them from out of state, chose to spend their 4th of July holiday serving others. The volunteers have been delivering two hot meals a day to people, and helping to clean out houses of trash and debris, but on a day like the 4th of July, the volunteers being there might have sent a bigger message, that while everyone is celebrating, the victims aren’t forgotten.*

VII. If there is **any virtue** or anything to **praise**, think about these.

- ◆ First, virtue, like purity is in short supply in America today. Virtue is about “manning up” and “womaning up.” Most of you know that the very attitude of our society encourages and promotes the idea of refusing to take responsibility. Our culture has become a place where people can and do refuse to assume responsibility for their actions...it’s all about blaming somebody else.
 - If our utility bill is not paid on time, why, it’s the utility company’s fault for not calling us up and reminding us in advance.
 - If we forget to pay our credit card payment, why, the credit card people should have notified us before the due date passed.
 - If we leave something out in the rain and it gets ruined, why, the weather man should have called us and told us it was going to rain...and he should have told us to go out there and pick up that item and bring it in.
- ◆ Folks, I think all of us know we live in a blame-game society. Why is that? It is because **our culture is almost devoid of virtue**. But **IF THERE IS ANY**, let’s think on that.
 - All of you here today made it your personal responsibility to get up and get ready and come to church. Nobody made you...but you assumed that responsibility ...that’s virtue.
 - Tomorrow morning, I trust each of you will get up and assume the responsibility of going about the duties you have for the day. I trust nobody will have to force you out of bed, push you to get busy about your responsibilities. Your dependence on yourself and the Lord’s help is virtue! Something to think about in order to help you forget about all the laziness, slovenliness, lack of responsibility that exists in our culture!
- ◆ Last, IF there is any **praise**, let’s think about that too. And members of this church prove every week that there is praise to express, and praise to think about!