

# Think on these things

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[0:00] Let's go to Philippians 4.

Let's stand together as we read the word of God, shall we? Philippians 4 from verse 4. We're going to go to verse 9. Therefore, my brethren, feel free to read along with me. Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved, and long for my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

I beseech you, Odeus, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, true yoke fellow.

Help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow labourers whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always.

[1:19] And again I say, rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 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 port, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

And closing on verse 9, Those things which ye have both learnt and received and heard and seen in me do, and the God of peace shall be with you.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for your precious word. Still our hearts, Lord, give us that peace that passes all understanding, that keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Lord, the peace of God and the peace with God. We pray for unction. Uction. Lord, we pray for understanding, that you would be glorified in every heart.

[2:42] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Please be seated. Think on these things. These verses hold for us really the ultimate answer to mental health.

It's really the ultimate answer, isn't it? For mental health, for a mind that is sound, a mind that is at peace, a heart that is stilled before God. And Paul writes here of rejoicing.

He talks of praying and of the peace of God. And we're going to home in on really verse 8. But the context there we see of rejoicing in the Lord always, being careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, making our requests known to God.

You know, it's got the sense of don't be worried about anything, but pray about everything. It's got that sense of all-encompassing, isn't it? It tells us here what to think upon and what action to take. And he says, the God of peace shall be with you. What a comfort. This whole passage really is quite uplifting.

[3:52] We're really going to home in on just the verse 8 in particular. Those things to think upon. What are we to think upon? In a world where there's multiplied messages coming at us from all directions, there's manifold things we can think about and be occupied with and be mindful of.

You know, the big thing in the world these days is mindfulness. Mindfulness, which is really kind of like a Buddhist meditation practice.

We're certainly not commending that. But there are some things to be mindful of. There are some things God wants us to be mindful of, to be minded about. And that is here in these verses.

Think on these things. Not to think on some blanking out of your mind, but our thinking is zeroing in on these godly and good things. Because what we think about impacts our lives.

What we think impacts our living. And we're changed by our thoughts. What we think about makes a big difference to our whole life.

[4:59] As someone has well said, you're not what you think you are, but what you think you are. What we think we are. There's that sense where what we're minded on, what we're setting our affection on, it impacts the course of direction of our feet, of our lives, of our life purpose.

What we think we are. The question is, what do we feel our minds with? What do we set our minds on?

Amen. Amen. We'll get to that, brother. Colossians 3 verse 2 is allied to this. It says, Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Where do we set our affection? Where do we set our love, our adoration, that which delights us, which occupies our mind, our desires?

Paul tells us, think on these things. These things right here. In verse 8. The main battle that Christians face is the fight that goes on between the ears.

[6:16] Isn't it? Assuming you've got something in between the ears. In that grey matter, in those grey cells. I know for me, there's getting less of them. But we know that we need to occupy our mind.

What's between our ears with that which is good, and godly, and wholesome. And there's a battle going on for what's in between our ears. There's a battle going on for our thought life.

Satan attacks the mind. We know the word tells us how it blinds the minds of those who believe not. Some minds are actually blinded such that they cannot realise spiritual truth.

So there is a spiritual battle, and it's always going on. This conflict, this raging warfare that is intending to attack our mind, our thinking, our thoughts.

The Bible tells us of renewing our mind. How that is a practice we should do as in a continual renewing, a revitalising, a refreshing of our mind.

[7:18] And it also tells us that we have been given the mind of Christ. In Proverbs 23, verse 7, Solomon says, As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

What we think in our heart really is who we are. And right thinking leads to right living. So how we think, what we think on, is critical.

The question is then, how are you using your mind power? Did you know that the average person has 10,000, 10,000 average thoughts each day?

That's a lot, isn't it? 10,000 every day. That works out at 3.5 million thoughts a year. You have amazing creatures here tonight.

3.5 million thoughts per year. And if you live to be 75, and I know some have exceeded that, if you live to be 75, you have over 26 million different thoughts.

[8:24] It's mind-boggling, isn't it? The thoughts, the thinking processes, the mind is an amazing machine, a computer, a supercomputer, isn't it? And the principle behind Paul's words is simple, that sin always begins in the mind.

And so does holiness. There's this fight going on in the heart, in the affections, in the soul, in the mind, in the thinking. Paul says, think about these things. It's important that we lock our mind on that which God directs us to, which is verse 8 here.

Think on these things. It's a command in the present tense. It's got the sense of, keep on thinking about these things. So, a thinking and a thinking again and a continual thinking.

To think on these things, continually think on these things. Find what is true and think on that. Find what is lovely and think upon that. Find what is virtuous and think upon that.

And the God of peace shall be with you. That's the promise. If you're a Christian here tonight, you have within you the power to obey every command in this passage.

[9:34] You know, God wouldn't command something that we cannot do. He commands us that which we can do. So we can take heart and believe God. Act on his promise. Act on his command.

Think on these things. God cares about our thinking. He cares about what we think about. And he wants us to have control of our thoughts in a good way, in a righteous way, in a wholesome way.

As we read, for example, in 2 Corinthians 10, verse 5, it says, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought, every thought to the obedience of Christ.

That's an amazing challenge, isn't it?

And he's telling us that, the Lord is telling us to do such as that. Now, another fact about your brains, about your mind, is your mind does not turn off.

[10:51] It never turns off. Thankfully. Our brains are always at work, believe it or not. Even while you're asleep.

It's amazing, isn't it? It's mind-boggling that our minds are still engaged, even in your sleep. You're thinking, you're processing, you're planning, trying to resolve problems.

I know sometimes my best sermon preparation is when I'm just having, when I sanctified sleep. I get these impressions and thoughts and leading.

So I find I get a certain prompting as I just rest and relax.

And that mind doesn't switch off. It's an amazing computer. Our mental computer's never shut down. And what's more, when we get saved, God gives us a new mind, a new heart, a new mind.

[11:51] He puts his heart, his mind, the mind of Christ in us. Excuse me. So here in Philippians, Paul gives us eight things to think on.

Or six or eight, depending how you think it through. But eight things we'll look at here tonight to think upon. Eight things to occupy our thinking. The Lord wants us to occupy our minds in a healthy way with good thoughts.

So let's look at these eight things together. Firstly, we see verse eight, Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true. Think on true things.

What is true? I know our brother was prompted to say the Bible. That's what we think about, isn't it? What was that, brother?

John 8.34, Truth shall make you free. This is truth, isn't it? The truth, the word of truth. Thy word is truth. The word of God is true.

[12:54] From cover to cover, every page, every chapter, every verse, every word. True, true, true.

Nothing but the truth. The whole truth. True. What's true? Think on what is true. In other words, what's genuine? What's real? Could use the Aussie vernacular, what's fair dinkum?

What is true? What is it that we know is absolutely true? It's entirely true. He is entirely true. The Lord Jesus is true. He says, what does he say? I am the way, the truth, and the life.

He is all together true. He is of all things. Really, the Lord Jesus is all of these eight things. He is, Philippians 4 verse 8.

Think on Christ. Think on these things. What is true? Pilate asked, what is the truth? And they're staring him right in the face. What is true? What is the truth?

[13:56] Jesus is himself the truth. Of course, the Bible is truth. What are we to think upon? Think on the Bible.

God's word. You could reflect Psalm 19, as I've quoted it of recent times too. All of those features of Psalm 19 are likewise true of Philippians 4 verse 8.

As we would be conscious of this one, Psalm 19 verse 7, the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.

The judgments of the Lord are true. There's that word, and righteous all together. Think on whatsoever things are true.

[15:03] Think in contrast. What does the world dwell upon? That which is the opposite of true, false. False doctrine, false teaching, false practice, the false systems, the false gods.

Think in contrast of the messages we're constantly bombarded with through much of media today. TV, movies, music, magazines, social media, websites.

What do they send to us? That which is false. That which is contrary to God. That which is not noble. That which is impure.

That which is unlovely. That which is detestable. That which is abomination unto God. So it's good to filter out such things and think upon those things which are true.

Secondly, number two. It says, think on whatsoever things are honest. Things that are honest. In other words, what's honourable. What is noble. What is dignified.

[16:05] What is righteously holy. And what is honest. Honesty is the only policy, really.

And the devil is the father of lies. He's the opposite of honesty, of what is righteous. Dishonesty. Dishonesty. It's like lying, isn't it? It's a feature of the world.

Whatever you can get away with about being dishonest. People at tax time, they just like to fudge. And get away with what is wrong.

But the Bible says we should think on that which is honest. We should be honest such that we are above reproach. Honest things. It speaks of things that are worthy of respect.

It speaks about a dignity of holiness, of decency. Things that are honest. Things that are honest.

What are they the opposite of? Things that are hollow and cheap and superficial.

[17:05] Like a cheap copy of the original. We want to have the honest truth. Paul is saying exclude from your mind all that is dishonourable and admit only that which is worthy of God.

Think on those things that are honourable. That which is of honour. That which is honest.

Determine to focus on what accords with Christian values. Make it your determination.

Young man, young woman, older men and women. Think on that which is honest. That you'll know that which is honourable. Not that which is dishonourable.

That which would dishonour your God. That which would be not worthy of Him. Number three.

Think on whatsoever things are just. Whatsoever things are just.

What are just things? It speaks of that which is right. That which is righteous. Think on that which is righteous. It speaks about right conduct. Am I thinking thoughts that are righteous?

[18:06] That which is right in line with what God says. Does it line up? Is it right? And this is that measuring stick, isn't it? That this is that plumb line that God sets.

That which is by which we measure things. Which we determine. Does it line up? Is it that they speak according to thy word? Is it line upon line?

Is it precept upon precept? Is it in accordance with the word? If it's out of kilter, then it's wrong. That which is right must be that which is right before God.

It's right in alignment with what God says. Am I conforming with God's standards? It's about getting our thinking in alignment with what God would declare is right and righteous.

How do we determine that? By filling our mind with the word of God. As others have indicated and as we know, it's right to have biblical thinking.

[19:08] And how do we get biblical thinking? Fill your mind with the word of God. Try to meditate on the word such that it's in you.

It's grafted. It's implanted. It's part of the core of your being such that you know the word. And biblical thinking, righteous thinking, it comes not so much naturally but it becomes the it becomes the pattern of your life I suppose, isn't it?

If you have a biblical thinking pattern, you'll have a biblical walking pattern. We need to be biblically correct with our thinking. Think on that which is right as opposed to that which is wrong or unjust.

We've seen what the world trumpets to us today. Largely the media is trumpeting to us that which is unrighteous, that which is unjust, that which is wrong, that which the Bible says, no way the world is going that way.

And we see everything's being redefined. So you can't take what the media defines as right because often it is not right. It is the opposite.

[20:28] As we know, the word tells us that they shall put light for darkness, bitter for sweet, darkness for light. Think on just things. What sort of things are just?

Number four, what sort of things are pure? Think about pure things. What does that mean? That which is pure, that which is wholesome, that which is clean, holy, undefiled.

In contrast, what does the world measure? What does the world seem to be preoccupied with? That which is smutty, that which is soiled, that which is defiled.

There's a defilement. In other words, it's dirty. I know one of the preachers at the convention we just were at, was saying, if it's dirty, it's, if it's, if it's dirty, it's doubtful.

That's where it went, wasn't it? If it's, if it's dirty, it's doubtful. You know, in other words, I mean, I came here and someone might have been drinking out of this cup.

[21:34] If it's dirty, it's doubtful. There's a sense where, hey, we're going to be questioning, you know, as to, you know, in the kitchen, we know we've got some wonderful kitchen hostesses and hosts here today, but if you had someone who's looking after the kitchen ministry that was kind of a little bit careless, there could be question marks there.

You know, just, you might not want to partake if it's a question there about it. You want that when you have something to eat, when you go to somewhere, a place to eat, you want to know that the kitchen is clean, don't you?

Not defiled. But the world seems occupied with that which is dirty, that which is unholy and not pure. You know, imagine going to a hospital and you're about to have a major surgery, all your teeth done, and you go there and the medical professional, you know, and then they start to treat your mouth or whatever it be.

You know, they want to make sure that they scrub their hands over and over before they start to put their hands inside your body, inside your mouth. They want to make sure those hands are clean, that they're clean over and over again.

You know, you see these signs in the hospital now that kind of urge you to say, have they washed their hands? As in making the medical people accountable such that they are clean.

[23:04] That which is pure matters, doesn't it? It matters in the hospital when you have a surgery to be performed that the surgeon's hands are clean. And what about as Christians too?

Shouldn't we have a clean heart, a clean hands before our Lord? Should we not have that cleanliness in our ministry such that we are sanctified, we're fit for the Master's use?

Think on that which is pure. What does the world want to feed our children? The opposite of pure, doesn't it? What does the media love to pump through whatever means they can whether it be through modern movies or TV whether it's violence, there's hatred, there's stinking thinking, there's that which is impure and even that which is seemingly pure is soiled, it's contaminated.

contaminated. When you start to dig into it and research what often stands behind some things, we need to be discerning Christians.

I know there's questions here of personal conscience here as to where you draw the line for yourself and your family but there's a sense where the world and its messaging is largely contaminated.

[24:35] Decide to think on what is pure. What is pure? Number five. Next, think on things that are lovely. Whatsoever things are lovely. What is lovable?

What is gracious? What is lovely? What does it say of our Lord? He is altogether lovely. When we think of our Lord, he is one who we can adore and know he is worthy of our love and affection.

Think of that which is lovely. Of the one who is lovely. We can think of that which is lovely. In contrast, the world would focus on that at times which is filled with bitterness and strife.

That which is full of animosity and a contradiction towards God. We've got to constantly test and measure and examine and discern.

In Romans 12 verse 1 through 2, our Lord through Paul says, God wants us to adore, to desire, to have that delight in that which is good, acceptable and perfect.

[26:10] The will of God to prove that, to have our minds so transformed that that is what preoccupies us. That's what occupies our thinking. That which is lovely.

What is acceptable unto God. These are challenges when we can consider through life. I hope that we might have a recollection of some of these truths as we face Monday and we think about what are we going to start thinking about through this week ahead.

Can we measure things by these principles of Philippians 4 verse 8? Number 6 it says, think on whatsoever things are of good report. What are things of good report?

In other words, things that are admirable, things that are commendable. Maybe it's testimonies. Maybe it's biographies of believers, of Christians. It's good to read some Christian biographies of revivalists and reformers, of missionaries, of past and of present through missionary reports.

We think of that which is commendable, that which is commended, that which we should command, that which we should admire, that which we should be challenging by and inspired by, that which is a good report, that which is a good thing to hear, a good news story, to think high and noble thoughts, think on good report things.

[27:39] It's always a good thing to feed one another with good reports, with good testimonies of what God is doing in our lives, in the lives of our brothers and sisters. Look for the good things and hone in on those such that they are the messages we want to take hold of and repeat to ourselves and confess to others and share, to pass those testimonies on, the good reports.

Next, number seven, he's finished with the think on things of, he says, if there be any virtue, number seven, any virtue, it speaks of uprightness.

What is excellent? Like Daniel, he was a man with an excellent spirit. There was an excellence about him. He didn't settle for kind of half way.

He didn't settle for near enough is good enough. He wanted to get to the excellent, to that level of excellence. And, you know, I think that's what we should aspire to, isn't it?

That we don't settle for sloppy. We want to be excellent, have an excellent spirit like Daniel. It speaks of uprightness, it speaks of virtue, it speaks of for men manliness, it speaks of courage, it speaks of good character.

[29:04] These are the things we should aspire to, that we should want to have virtue. And for women, of course, a virtuous woman, a virtuous woman is commended. Virtuous women are in short supply.

Virtuous men are in short supply. Brothers and sisters, if you find a virtuous woman, young man, you've found a good thing. A virtuous woman and a virtuous man, a faithful man, the few, far between.

But we should aspire for that, we should want to have that which is virtuous. Our world cares little for virtue. Things that are a virtue are disregarded and kind of tossed aside and almost mocked and scorned.

That people should care about virtue, about moral virtue. May we determine rather to seek for that, to aspire to that, to endeavour after virtue and honour and character.

Next is number eight. And lastly, if there be any praise. If there be any praise. Think upon that which is praise worthy. That which is of honour, that's which you want to tell of his praises.

[30:16] You want to say and sing that which is worthwhile, that which is praise worthy, that which is due praise. Think about the things for which you can thank God and praise him.

The opposite of thinking about that which is praise worthy is that which is shameful. That which we should not even refer to as it were, the things that are done of the ungodly, the works of darkness that we should scarcely want to mention it, the things that are shameful.

Should these things guide our programming as it were, as to a judgment call we make on what we tune into, on what we turn to, on what we open and view, is it that which is of praise or that which is of shame?

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. The sense is keep thinking about these things.

[31:37] Fix your minds upon them, dwell on them, think on them continually. It's the sense here. As it's been truly said, watch your thoughts, they become your words.

Watch your words, they become your actions. Watch your actions, they become habits. Watch your habits, they become character. Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.

Think on these things. Mental health. A mind that is stayed on thee.

It will keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. May we fill our minds with God's words.

Now, it's not to say some people don't need pills, but the best pill is the gospel.

I've heard it put, the best pill is the gospel. The gospel. The word of God, that's the best pill. When you need a pep up or a whatever it be, the word, the pill, the gospel, the gospel.

[32:51] God's truth, God's principles, God's promises. And sometimes we can dwell on things that get us down and look, we're all there, we've all been there.

Some may have more of such thoughts than others, but sometimes we have negative thoughts that kind of overwhelm us and we feel overcome. There's a saying that is true, you can't keep a bird from flying over your head, but you can keep it from nesting in your hair.

So the sense is we can have thoughts that are anxious thoughts from time to time. situations that we can feel are burdening us and we have thoughts that are of stress, of sorts.

A Christian can suffer stress, a Christian can suffer emotional and mental pressure because we're only human. This kind of worldly proverb is the sense you can keep them from nesting in your hair. Don't dwell on it. Don't let those things dwell upon you, but rather dwell on the word. Dwell in the word. Think on these things. And as we think on these things of Philippians 4 verse 8, those bad thoughts won't gain a foothold.

[34:11] We can overcome those thoughts. We can cast down the imaginations, every high thing that exalts itself. And we can have the peace of God, the peace with God, the God of peace, and not let the devil get a foothold.

You know, there's the reality that we all can be subject to difficulties and hard times and we can get overwhelmed.

Every Christian can. And there's nothing to say you're a weak Christian if that happens to you. You know, we've had situations like that that we can relate where difficulties overwhelm.

Christians can have times of desperate despair and difficulty. I mean, we know Elijah had such a time where he had a time, a very low time.

It's about replacing the negative and toxic things with that which is of virtue and that which is of praise. And when you have those moments, as the Philippians 4 context talks about, be anxious for nothing.

[35:19] you know, it talks about the sense of let your requests be made known to God. Don't worry about anything, pray about everything.

In everything, seek after prayer. Seek that which is of virtue and that which is of praise. You know, there's a doctor who stated that the average person has more than 200 negative thoughts a day. So you might say, preacher, that's me. I'm more than that. 200 negative thoughts a day. Worries, jealousies, insecurities, situations such as that.

Depressed people have as many as 600 negative thoughts a day. Troublesome things through the mind. What is the answer? Think on these things.

Brother, sister, if that's you tonight, and we all have those moments of going through the valley, of times of hardness, of difficulty, where we're overwhelmed, grief, burdens we carry.

[36:25] What is the answer? Think on these things. Think on these things. And I put to you tonight that holy thinking leads to holy living. We all have a battle raging within us and there's a familiar little proverb that people have used to describe this fight that's going on within.

Where there's a missionary met an old Indian Christian. I think it was an American Indian and a missionary. And there was some inter- discussion about this fighting going on, this struggle of the Christian life.

and this old Indian Christian talked about this battle that was going on inside of him. And he said it's like a black dog fighting a white dog. And which dog wins?

Asked the missionary. And the Indian said the one I feed the most. The one I feed the most. You know, as someone has said, feed your faith and starve your doubts to death.

Feed your faith and starve your doubts to death. We all can have times of doubt, of despair. Feed your mind with the truths of God's word. Feed your mind with think on these things.

[37:45] And here tonight I can assure you brothers and sisters here today that we can know the peace of God. As we read in Philippians 4, it's always a good one to turn to.

When you have those times of, as it were, mental health challenges, where your mind is besieged and bombarded, what are we to do? Rejoice in the Lord.

And again I say rejoice. Always. Be careful for nothing. Don't be full of care. Anxious. Pray. In everything, by prayer.

Make your request known. And the peace of God shall. Keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. What a blessing. What a promise.

What an assurance you can have tonight. When you have those times of challenge mentally in your mind, you're thinking, where you're just, well it's just too hard.

[38:45] It's really overwhelming me. What are we to do? Think on these things. What's true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, any virtue, any praise.

And it says, the God of peace shall be with you. I'm addressing really Christians here tonight. You may not know the God of peace.

You may not know God. You may not know the peace of God. I urge you to put your trust in him.

The peace of God is made possible because of the cross where God makes peace with man.

Where he bridges that gulf, that gap, that chasm between a holy God and a sinful man. And we can know he reaches us through the cross, through the precious blood.

Every means that had to be made was made at the cross for you to be saved. Simply trust him.

Trust him now. And know that Jesus can save your soul and transform your heart, mind, your whole life.

[39:55] in that one moment of trusting him. You can be assured your destination changes from hell to heaven and you're assured of an eternal home in heaven because of the precious work of Christ at the cross for you.

And I urge you tonight, put your trust in him. And as a believer, be assured. And when you face those times of despair, of doubt, difficulty, think on these things.

Let's pray. Our Lord and God, we thank you that you are the Prince of Peace and that your word tells us perfect peace. Have they that know you, that trust in your word.

Lord, we know the Bible tells us of peace, peace that passes all understanding. we thank you Lord that we that were at war with you have been made friends.

We that were enemies have been reconciled to you. Help us Lord to apply these truths of casting down imaginations of every high thing, anything of pride, anything that would rear itself up as a construction against that which you would want for our lives.

[41:16] Lord, help us to have a mind set on things above, our affection set there. Lord, such that we think on these things that are good and godly, wholesome and healthy for us.

Lord, if there's any here tonight struggling with mental health, as it were, as we all can, as I can, as anyone can, Lord, that we can have a mind that is stayed upon thee.

That we can have a mind that has a peace and an assurance as we confess and apply your promises, Lord, we can know a peace that keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

We praise you, Lord, for that. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.