

## **THE BUILDING OF THE BIBLICAL MIND**

**Phil 4:8-9**  
**December 11, 2011**

**INTRODUCTION:** In this passage, the Apostle Paul's Spirit-directed arrow strikes at the bull's eye of much of the low living in Christendom. What a reminder that attention must be given to consecrated thoughts. Impure thinking produces inconsistent living. Whoever lacks virtue in their thinking cannot help but to act indecently. Holy living follows sanctified thinking.

**Proverbs 4:23**  
**“Keep your heart with all diligence,  
For out of it spring the issues of life.”**

God's people must not only act as Christians, but even more, think as Christians.

**Proverbs 23:7a, “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”**

Only Christ can give such victory to a believer. Therefore, we should pray:

**Psalms 19:14**  
**“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
Be acceptable in Your sight,  
O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.”**

**Psalms 139:23-24**  
**“Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
Try me, and know my anxieties;  
And see if there is any wicked way in me,  
And lead me in the way everlasting.”**

### **I. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BIBLICAL MIND.**

- A. BUILT ON TRUTH.**
- B. BUILT ON HONOR (“NOBLE”)**
- C. BUILT ON DIVINE STANDARD. (“JUST”)**
- D. BUILT ON PURITY.**
- E. BUILT ON THAT WHICH IS PLEASING TO GOD. (“LOVELY”)**

Only place the word is used in the New Testament. Translates sweet, gracious, generous, or patient. It was often used to describe the fine arts or music; orderly. The opposite of confusion and disorder. Means beautiful and attractive. It speaks of that which calls for love. It is that quality that causes love to respond to it.

We are to think about the things that reach down within our hearts and cause us to respond in love. Can translate *winsome*. Love should always be the undergirding force of all our relationships in Christ. A Christian without love is like a ship without a rudder.

When **“lovely”** becomes described as the way we think, we will build bridges, not barriers; we will throw bouquets, not bombs; we will love, not cause discord; we will be selfless, not self-centered; we will promote harmony, unity, not cause strife.

**THINK ABOUT THIS TRAIT; WHO COMES TO MIND? Edna Whitmire, Abby Brown, Neal Hughes**

## **F. BUILT ON THINGS THAT EDIFY. (“GOOD REPORT”)**

*“Because of the fall in the Garden of Eden, we have a bias towards the degenerate. The secret of a guided thought life is an active assertion of the will, in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, ‘to think on these things.’”*

*John Phillips*

This word is pregnant with meaning; signifies the delicacy which guards the lips, that nothing may be expressed in public worship that could disturb devotion or give rise to scandal. Refers to that which does not offend. Speaks of the capacity to look for something helpful to say even if you can’t agree with everything that is being done. If you have to disagree, do it in such a way that even your disagreement has helpful suggestions incorporated.

*“A Christian does not have the luxury of being unkind.”*

Good report speaks of all that rings true to the highest standard. Refers to anything that is good to speak about.

The word seems to go back to a pagan practice. At the altar of a pagan god, at the point when the sacrifice was being offered, there was always in the Greek world a time of silence. It was as though the only thing to be heard was that which was worthy of the gods who were to be appeased. The word can be translated, *“Think upon those things that are fit for God to hear.”*

What if the only words spoken were words fit for God to hear? Listening to such words, builds us up. Believer’s thoughts are elevated by Scripture to fix on the loftiest themes.

## II. THE COMMENDATION OF THE BIBLICAL MIND. 8

**“if there be any virtue”** – does not suggest doubt, but it has the meaning of **“since”** or **“because.”** Since you are a Christian, you should think on these things. **Why?**

### A. ITS MOTIVATION.

**“virtue”** – it motivates us to do better. In classical Greek, the word referred to any kind of excellence. It could be the excellence of a farmer harvesting his crops, or the excellence of a tool performing its job. Speaks of accomplishing that for which it was designed or created.

Virtuous things are those things that *enhance* our relationship with God, that can lift us up, that can improve and mature our fellowship with God.

### B. ITS COMMENDATION.

**“if there be anything praise worthy”** – it is worth commending to others.

#### **Psalms 119:165**

**“Great peace have those who love Your law,  
And nothing causes them to stumble.”**

*Victor Frankl was a Jewish psychiatrist who spent three grim years in a Nazi prison camp. He lived each hour with the realization that he might be among those who would be exterminated that day. Many who were interred with Frankl died from worrying about their death. Frankl chose not to do that. He developed a positive outlook which enabled him to peer through the broken slats in the wall of his cold hut and take pleasure in the beauty of a sunset. He developed a sense of humor so that he could laugh even in the midst of his pain. He found meaning in his suffering and he tried to help others find that meaning also. As he reflected back upon his prison experience he wrote:*

*The experiences of camp life show that man does have a choice of action. There were enough examples, often of a heroic nature, which proved that apathy could be overcome, irritability suppressed. Man can preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, even in such terrible conditions of psychic and physical stress...everything can be taken from man but one thing: the last of human freedoms –to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s way. And there were always choices to make. Every day, every hour, offered the opportunity to make a decision...*

*In the final analysis it becomes clear that the sort of person the prisoner became was the result of an inner decision, and not the result of camp influences alone. Fundamentally, therefore, any man can, even under such circumstances, decide what shall become of him mentally and spiritually.*

*The Word of God confirms the truth of Frankl's words. We do have a choice to make about our thinking. We are expected to make the correct decision. The Prophet Isaiah wrote, ‘**You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon You, because he trusts in You.**’ (Isaiah 26:3) Paul instructed the Corinthians that they were to bring **“every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”** (2 Corinthians 10:5)*

### III. THE COMMITMENT OF THE BIBLICAL MIND. 9

Not only did the Apostle Paul teach the truth to the Philippians, he epitomized his teachings by his godly example/emulation. Preaching and teaching is valueless unless supported by an exemplary life.

#### A. A CAREFUL EXHORTATION. 9

##### 1. Learning Experience

**“learned”** – information he gave them, what he declared, teaching; the word for disciple; learning, instructing.

##### 2. Personal Experience. 9

**“received”** – word used for receiving something, there is a take-away. It implies that they responded to the information by taking it to themselves.

**ILL.** Tony Nolan – *“I receive that”*

Comes from a technical term for God’s revelation.

**1 Thessalonians 2:13, “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.”**

To appropriate, to receive as to express

**2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”**

#### B. CONCRETE EXAMPLE. 9

##### 1. Hearing - Taught

His testimony/reputation before they met him and in his absence.

##### 2. Seeing – Caught

Firsthand experience with him; observed his character

J. Dwight Pentecost, *“Maturity in the Christian is not measured by what a man knows but by what a man does.”*

**“saw in me”** – Paul dares to point to his life in Philippi as an illustration of a *biblical mind*. The preacher is the interpreter of the spiritual life and should be an example of it. He is challenging them to pattern their lives after his.

### C. CONSTANT ENCOURAGEMENT. 9

#### **“these do, and the God of peace will be with you”**

The practice of God’s truth leads to a life that experiences God’s peace.

#### 1. Exhortation.

##### **“God of peace will be with you”**

#### 2. Protection.

**Philippians 4:7, “and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”**

Speaks of the developing of spiritual stability in their lives.

D.Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *“I defy you to read the life of any saint that has ever adorned the life of the Church without seeing at once that the greatest characteristic in the life of that saint was discipline and order. Invariably it is the universal characteristic of all the outstanding men and women of God. Read about Henry Martyn, David Brainerd, Jonathan Edwards, the brothers Wesley, and Whitfield – read their journals. It does not matter what branch of the Church they belonged to they have all disciplined their lives and have insisted upon the need for this; and obviously it is something that is thoroughly scriptural and absolutely essential.”*