

Epistle to Phil - Man - Wonder why Paul
did not write an Epistle to The North Carolinians
There are so many of them!

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"WHAT DO YOU THINK?"

Phil. 4:6-9

INTRODUCTION:

Our last study dealt with the (subject of worry) And Paul said three or four things as we took up V. 1-3 - Reserve Time To Work On Your Problems.

In V. 4 - retain the element of joy.

In V. 5 - reflect moderation as a quality of life.

V. 6 - rely upon prayer in everything.

I. Emotional Equipement

v6-

Suppose we take up right where we left off. Where Paul is getting some wonderful advice. "Don't worry about anything, but in all of your prayers, ask God for what you need. Always asking him with a thankful heart."

This will revolutionize your experience. This is why we have courage in God's presence. We are sure if he will hear us, if we ask him for anything that is according to his will. I John 5:13-15.

Paul calls attention to God. Our prayers are not to beg God's attention. But we pray as a result of the spirit working in us. There is love and care which he wills - that he gives us. You remember the main point in the parable that Jesus told about the widow, at midnight - who was asking a friend about food. And going

to the door, knocking, seeking and asking. Luke 11:9-10. Prayer always begins with God. This is the point that Paul is helping us to get above the storms. In nothing, be anxious - be careful for nothing, and in our human nature it is easy for us to fail.
I Peter 5:7.

But Paul suggests prayer to God. At the bottom of the solution - it is always the same. Let your requests be made known unto God. Come into the presence with God and open your heart to him, just as if God did not know all about it. It is like a mother trying to soothe a troubled, sobbing child. She understands and sympathizes with the child. And God loves to hear and for you to bring your supplications to him.

And Paul says in everything, we are not to pick this or that. But Paul says every situation we are to bring it unto God.

This comes from a yieldedness that we have.

The troubles of our daily life that are very painful and depressing sometimes - Paul says worry about nothing. Martha was bothered about many things. Luke 10:41. That means to be divided in mind. It means to seek this worry out, or that worry, or use this means or that.

The Christian is to not worry in this respect. But he is to cast his worries upon Christ. Seeing that he cares for you.

It is certainly useless - we cannot constantly get rid of our worries. Before they worry us. Or joy would cease. God bids us to ask and he promises to give what we ask. There are these terms in everything. In every case. That may worry you by means of your prayer and petitions. And on this subject of asking, Jesus used these three terms. Ask, seek, knock. We are to pray, not to shrink. In what better terms can any trouble of ours rest but in God's hands? The assurance that God gives us. There is something better above what we ask or think. He is able to give.

v. 5 What Paul is trying to do is get the Christian to be calm. Because the Lord is at hand. Never forget the nearness of your Lord! This is where many of you fail. We have missed the secret. We have forgotten the nearness of our Lord. Perhaps, we have never really let him come near and made him our very own Saviour. And forgetting this nearness, this is really the secret of real victory. If anybody had an excuse for worrying it was Paul. His beloved friends at Philippi - they had disagreed with one another. v. 2 We have no idea what the dispute between the two women consisted of. But added to this burden, was the possibility of his own death. He had a good excuse to worry. And he takes time to explain it to us.

Of course, Paul was pulled in different directions. He had fears and he had things that were pulling him apart. If you really worry, then there will be definite physical consequences People have headaches, neck pains, ulcers, back pains, indigestion.

The point of view is here, Paul says worrying is wrong. And it is a great thief of joy. It is not enough to tell ourselves - you just quit worrying. Because you will never capture the thief that way. You know why, worry is an inside job.

It takes more than good intentions to get the victory. And to secure the mind.

Hence, Paul says there are two or three things that you have got to do! One is you have got to pray right. You have got to think right. And you have got to live right. And of course, V. 6 deals with the matter of prayer. That here is a problem. We say, well, that is big enough. Let's take it to God. But too often, we rush into God's presence and we do not tell him all of our needs. So we have got to take the steps as Paul suggested. Worrying is a thing that is human. There are situations that add to other situations which many times a Christian is tempted to take into his own hands.

Put the stress - we can take everything to God in prayer. Now, it is in everything that we must pray. There is nothing too great for God's power. Nothing too small for his tender care. Like a little child takes the greatest and the smallest thing that troubles him to his parents. And a little child is quite sure there is an interested mother or father, and he is very disappointed if he does not receive him and if they do not listen to him.

In prayer, we bring these requests to God. We can pray for ourselves. And this is a marvelous thing that you can pray for your own self.

V.L.B. Now Paul says something else here - he says, let it be done with thanksgiving.

That must be the universal thing that accompanies your prayer. Every prayer must include thanksgiving.

As you think of the past and the present blessings. Every prayer must surely include thanks. Paul insists that we must give thanks in everything. It implies gratitude and perfect submission to God's will.

And when we do this, we will remember the love of God - that ever desires for us the best. You remember the wisdom of God and what is best for us. We remember the power of God which alone can bring to pass - that which is best in our lives. Hence, we come with appreciation and give thanks. As a child says thank you - every Christian can immediately do this. And Paul's formula here is to come with thanksgiving - not a double-mind, but a single-minded person who will ask God and who will show his appreciation.

Do not forget Paul counsels - take everything, don't worry about anything. But pray about everything. That is the admonition.

If you link this with the idea the Lord is at hand and pray about everything, then it will work miracles in your heart. There is a story about a missionary on the ill-fated ship ZamZam sunk by the Germans. In the early days of World War II. The ordeal of being torpedoed and forced to leap into the sea, and be picked up by the crewman of an armed German freighter, was enough to worry and strain the nerves to the breaking point.

The passengers and a considerable number were missionaries. And they were separated on the basis of male and female with the ladies spending the first night aboard in a hole in one end of the ship. And the men in a hole, at the other. The next morning they were permitted to come top-side and mingle. Were you nervous,

were you cold, were you afraid, could you sleep. These and other questions were being asked and answered. Finally a missionary a veteran with several terms on the field, a spared man who was far older than most of his traveling companions was asked how he managed through the night. The substance of his answer, "I thought at first I couldn't possibly sleep. The floor was terribly hard. And as you can see, I don't carry much padding with me. But when I began communing with the Lord, he reminded me of the words in Psalm 121. My help cometh from the Lord which made Heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved. He that keepeth thee, will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel will not slumber nor sleep."

"I was greatly struck with those words. He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. So I said Lord, there really isn't any need for both of us to stay awake tonight. If you are going to keep watch, I'll thank thee for some sleep. And he said, I got it."

v.7-

Now of course, there is plenty of room for worry And that man had gratitude for his rescue from the sea that night. It could have swallowed him. And he could have worried. But prayer was a simple and unforced thing like a child. And it brought him physical slumber and peace.

Christians, you are often insecure in this realing world of ours. And there are so many man-made securities. Built on towers. Atomic bombs and armies, money and fame, but they are like tissue paper. They will not bring security.

Paul is trying to get across the idea - here is an anchor that holds. That will take care of your worries.

Now we have first talked about equipping the emotions - getting rid of worries by prayer.

Man Bobby said - Boy knocked fish table over - thought killed the turtle - cried - took down love Bobby, funeral etc - still - finally don't say after " get see cream had party - quit! - trying hole - turtle moved - think going to kill him" Bobby said "let's think about it" -

II. MIND EQUIPMENT - V. 8

V. 8

Now Paul says, finally brethren, whatsoever things are true. And he goes on and concludes think on these things.

Policeman asked the man, what were you thinking about & how did the accident happen?
Man - "My wife fell asleep in the back seat!" Obviously she did the thinking while in car.

He has settled the struggle of worry with prayer. And equipped the nerves and the emotions of man - his anxieties, his feelings, and now he comes to equip his mind. And the real power of a man's mind is found in how he thinks.

Sow a thought - reap an action. Sow an action - reap a habit. Sow a habit - reap a character. Sow a character - reap a destiny.

Paul spells out for us the things that a man, as a Christian, ought to think about.

How often have you had the question in daily conversation - "Well, what do you think?" Or what is your opinion on this particular subject. How do you see this thing. And what we think, shapes what we are. Prov. 23:7. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Heart 100%

The quality of our thoughts - effects what we feel and how we handle life.

evil and he says, ye have heard it said of old times. Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of judgement. But I say unto you, Matt. 5:21-22, that whosoever is angry with his brother, without a cause shall be in danger of judgement.

You chose your thoughts. James says, the chief function of the human will is to direct the mind to a chosen subject. And to hold the attention to that subject until that work is done. In this power, he says lies the difference between men. The successful man and respected man chooses his thoughts wisely.

Man is a thinking creature. All the way back to the garden. He is responsible to reject evil. Or to hold to the good. Eve's sin in one way was listening to the serpent. It lay in harbor in those evil thoughts, that the temptor put in her mind.

No wonder Paul says, think on these things that are best for you. Paul, by the Holy Spirit, gives us six tests to apply in any and all thoughts. Phil. 4:8 the Scripture here has a 6-4 challenge to apply to each of the multitude of things that we meet in life. I think here is a test. And each time when we give it to our thoughts, whether it is true - honorable, just, pure, lovely, good report, virtuous, praise-worthy. A six-fold test that will forbid the entrance of other things that should not be there in the mind.

Thinking and doing are condition on what the God of peace does in your heart.

To think rightly is to do rightly. And these will bring blessings.

Almost everything in my life and your life depends upon thought. Just like the

forest floor. There must be an acorn and that little acorn will sprout and grow into a mighty tree. Man needs to keep his heart with all diligence. For out of it are the issues of life.

Now before I come to the six things - let me say ^{SOME-} thing. Thinking is doing, they tell us. And because thinking about things prepares you for doing them. Now if you allow a matter to revolve around in your mind. You turn it over and over and you let it dwell there, and the first thing you know - you have layed the wires which will convey some message--and it may be some great crisis in your life. You often rehearse this matter so often, and here it is. It prepares you for doing.

And this is the way a fireman and a policeman is preparing. He has rehearsed to him the experiences that are going to happen. And this, and this is going to happen. Now you need to re-act in this way. And the train ^{ING} is carried on in such a way, that that man is entirely prepared to react in that responsible way.

When some event takes place, then the fireman and the policeman know exactly how he is going to respond. His action comes as a result of thought - that has been a fore-runner in the preparation of his mind.

Another thing, thought is important because it has an effect upon the whole character. As you think, so you are almost doing it without knowing it. If a man cherishes a bad thought - it will deteriorate him and he cannot help it. Rom. 1 The Scripture says, they refused to retain God in their minds. In their thoughts. They cherished the vile and the lust. And God gave them up to their passions and to their own defilement, unholy, unpure, untrue thoughts. Our characters grow out of

our inward thinking. If a man is generous in his thoughts - he will be generous in his actions. If a man is loving and tender in his thoughts - he will bear the same in his dealings with others. If a man is stingy in his thoughts - he will be the same way in his actions. Thoughts weave the garment, that you wear.

Another thing, thought has an influence on the ideals that you pursue. Young people ought to give attention to this. Columbus thought long about the conclusion of the world and the earth. And his convictions led him that he could take a ship - and go Westward and he could discover land. Washington had thoughts about a government, and a new nation. And led in the formation of the United States. Men, women, and young people - are formulating themselves.

Now if you are going to be something - you have got to be more than a dreamer. You have got to let these things take shape. Now you can alibi and say - my heart is as good as any man's heart. As to my thoughts - I take more notice of them. Now there are scores of people who take no notice of their thoughts. They leave the gates to their souls wide open to every intruder. It is Heaven or Hell that enters. And as it comes in, these demons will surely destroy it. Now this is a reason why you sometimes find your heart filled with passion. It is because you have been thinking about it. For out of the heart comes hatred, malice, and lack of charity. And we do not watch the gate of our thoughts.

Now we cannot just be now and then giving our attention to the matter of our thoughts. And say that I can arrest the tide of evil. Anytime that I chose to do it. But just in a few hours - if you leave the gateway open, you are going to have problems with your thoughts.

Now let me come to these things that Paul talks about. Now Paul is not talking like a philosopher. One of the Greeks. No. He is talking about the things of the Gospel and the things of Christ that will bless your life. They will equip your mind.

- 1- First, ~~be~~ or true brother. The first thing he says is keep out of your mind the false and admit the truth. Now this is the downfall of government, politics, and business. All the bookkeeping systems - they crumble sooner or later when somebody puts a little falsehood in it and it is not true.

Now this is realistic in the sight of the Gospel. We must have this in our lives. This is the first step to ruling out fiction, waste, corruption in a man's mind. He must sanctify his mind through the truth. And thy word is truth. John 17:17. This is a precious test which Paul gives us.

Dr. Walter Cavert reported on a survey on worry that was made. And he indicated that the thing that really mattered in life, that people thought about, only 8% of these things actually happened. 92% of the other things were imaginary and never happened at all.

Now the prize to control your mind through lies. Whenever we believe a lie, it takes over. So whatever is true is grounded in God. Now the Gallop pole always wants to learn what the popular opinion may be. And while they are learning it, they find out how many times it shifts. Even our business standards change. But we must see truth here in the light that Pauls sees it without exception. Truth is something

that promises to perform. And truth offers a man happiness. And something that a man can rely upon.

2

Second, that which is ^{Honour} [honorable] Now, you know that God cares. And he cares what we believe. And an honorable thing is ("will it bear the light") This is the next step. Many things are true. But they may not be honorable. There are stories of crime that may be true. But we are not to be occupied with the dishonorable things. The thing that stains the soul. Some newspapers are thoroughly corrupt, I think, in this respect. They publish very few things that are honorable. And that will bear the test. That are noble. That invite reverence. They give thought to reverence. Does your thought produce reverence. Does it reveal the nature of God. If it does, your feelings are transformed.

I think one of the things right here, and people talk so much about this today - that maybe it gets to be trite. But I think reverence for sex here, for another person is something that is very important.

I read about a woman that was propositioned for an affair. With no strings attached. But she had prepared for this by years of noble thought. And she said, I love you too much to do that. She responded that she went on to explain - I enjoy my friend's attention, but I will not be used in a brief encounter that has no lasting concern or care for marriage.

Now this is the thing that Paul is talking about and it will help you. That which is honest, he says. Now this is not an old worn out word. This is a word that is worthy.

Honored - College Prof. received Examination Paper, just before Xmas Holiday.
"I'm sure only God knows the ans to -14- This question! Merry Christmas!
Across the page, Prof. wrote - God gets an A; you flunk! Happy New Year!
It has been described this way - it describes a person who has been moving

throughout the world as if the whole world were the temple of God.

There is dignity of holiness in this. There are things in this world that are cheap and that are passing. That attract the light-minded. But those that are grave and serious and dignified - then Paul said, think on these things, that are honest.

Now this does not mean that a man is to hide his head in the sand and avoid what is unpleasant and displeasing. But it does mean that a man will not focus his attention on dishonorable things - and permit them to control his thought.

3

Third, Whatsoever things are just. Is it fair. Do you plan to get the best of a bargain. Do you return money that has been given you -- too much at the counter. Do you take delight in false balances. False weights. The things that are just. He says. This means as the man who gives to God and man - that which is their due. It is a duty that he faced, and it is a duty that he has done. Such a mind and thoughts on pleasure. Comfort, easy things, easy ways. Now the Christians thoughts are on duty for man and duty for God. So, is it right. Sin is anything which separates us from God. Or any other person. So do not let your thoughts contribute to this way.

Now, you say - I teach the law, I live by the law. But he says, whatsoever things are just. Be absolutely just with other people. In your estimate of them in giving them their dues. If they be above you, and you criticize them - and try

to bring them down on your level, you deal with them as you would wish them to deal with you. Be just, in your speech and your habits.

4 Fourth, he says whatsoever things are pure. Here is the fight for a young man's life. That somehow arrests the impure. Things that comes to his mind and his heart in God's sight. Is it pure. And we are talking about morally pure. That which is undefiled. It describes that which has so been cleansed. That it is fit to be brought into the presence of God. So fit to be used in the service of God. Now the world is full of things that are shabby, soiled, and smutty. But many a man gets his mind and thinks on these soiled things. But a Christian has his mind so clean, that it will stand the test of God. It is pure. Moral purity. Eph. 5:8, 12, 4:17. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. There in no wise shall enter into God's holy city anything that defileth. What fearful impurity God sees in the world and in men's heart. And how awful is the end of it. The hour is coming, when God will say, he that is filthy - let him be filthy still. Rev. 22:11.

I read the illustration of a man who looked into the city water pool. It was filled with merky green water. He said, you mean I have got to drink that water. The man said, why it is safe. He says we add some purifying chemicals to the water. And it becomes crystal clear. And the filtering system keeps it that way.

This is what Paul is talking about - you need a purifying system. That your thoughts need to be free, in Jesus Christ who cleanses chemically your mind and pumps these thoughts through the filters of the Gospel. Isn't it marvelous to see someone who has a clear thinking mind.

5 Fifth - whatsoever things are lovely. That conduct which is consistent. I Cor. 13.

Which proceeds from the heart of love. And blesses others. It is lovely. And it produces loveable action. We can never think too much about the grace of God. Now this word lovely means winsome. Moffett translates it attractive. That which calls forth love. Now a mind that is set on vengeance will call for bitterness. And fear in others. A mind that is set on criticism and rebuke, will call forth resentment. But here is a Christian - he sets his mind upon lovely things. Sympathy, forbearing love, and he is a winsome person. He becomes beautiful and attractive because his whole thought life is lovely. If a thing is really lovely - it comes from God. A beautiful rose, a sunset, a noble tree, a charming landscape. All of this is God's work. And a pure heart is a lovely heart. And this is the first fruits of your thoughts. Whatsoever things are lovely.

6 Sixth, good report. Whatsoever things are of good report. Now if you listen to

talebearers - you are going to break this rule. Love thinketh no evil of his neighbor. Think of every good quality and talk of them. Such thought returns to bless you.

If there be any virtue, if there be any praise - Paul says I want you to think on these things. A good report is worth talking about. And it ought to be the major and the

highest thing in your thought. Man said to Friend "Can you keep a secret?" He said "Yes, but the people all tell can't!" was the friendly reply,

Gracious, whatever was a good name - it is not easy to get at the meaning of this word. It means fair speaking. It describes the things which were fit for God to hear. There are ugly words, false words, impure words, - far too many of them. On the lips of the Christian and in the mind of the Christian. He is going to be equipped with

words that are only fit for God to hear.

Lady at club meeting - Hear, Hear, she exclaimed "I'll have something to tell"

"Because I promised not to repeat it"

It is like Mary, of whom Jesus said, she hath done what she could. Like the man with the ten talents of whom the Lord said, well done. Thou good and faithful servant.

Why not let these six tests come into the gateway of your mind and soul tonight and challenge every thought. And as they stand there, you say the ideal is high. Yes, but listen, we must believe that each of these attribute and they were won by Christ for us all.

Now Paul gathers up this equipment for the mind and says, this is the pattern of the Christian excellence and he says if there is anything worthy of praise - he says, finally - then I want to encourage you to think on these things. Every good man is moved and uplifted by the praise of good men.

Now Paul emphasizes the word think. With some humor, somebody has said - 10% of the people think. 20% think they think. The rest would rather die than think.

Now actually Paul uses a strong word here - it means in a sense to calculate - as a builder who was carefully measuring something before attempting to build. He takes into account these things. And a man will take these things into account as he commits himself to them and as he practices them. There was a small boy that reported that he said the Bible begins with Genesis and ends with revolutions. Well, he should be forgiven for his inaccuracy, but there is great truth in that announcement. I want to tell you something - if you begin in Genesis and go all the way through the Bible, it is going to be a revolution in your thoughts and in in your deeds.

And Paul was saying to these Philippians - you take the true and the honorable.
The just, the pure, the lovely, the gracious. And make this a pattern of your
behaviour.

In passing, some of you Christians waste your mind power. We can direct our
minds as we have seen and set them on things that are above. Col. 3:1-2. I wonder
if you get the force of this. Heaven is our home and Christ is our goal. This
earth is not where we are going to stay. And we need to put first thoughts first.
If God is to have first place in the order of your life, first place as the Psalmist
said - I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is on my right hand and I
shall not be moved. Psalm 16:8. Blessed is the man who meditates on God's word day
and night. He shall be like a tree planted by a river, Psalm 1.

Professor William James says, we are spinning our own fates - good or evil, never
to be undone. Every small stroke of vice or virtue leaves its mark and he says
nothing can wipe it out. "Of course, Mr. James was speaking as a scientist. But I
think God can wipe out some things. But how may we purify our thoughts and how may
we eliminate these evil thoughts that come to us. Man shall not live by bread alone
but by every word that proceeds out of his mouth, and the mouth of God. Matt. 4:4.

David one time said, God, I wish you would search me and know my heart. I wish
you would try me and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me and
lead me in the way of ever lasting. Psalm 139:23-24.

Listen, when you have found some precious thought - hold it in your memory. And

meditate upon it as you go to (sleep). Sometimes a line of Scripture will do. I will come again and receive you unto myself. That is a very easy pillow for the soul. And remember this, that he says, when you awake - I am still with you. The manna is fresh every morning, as God gives it according to your needs.

You can be transformed tonight by the way you think - if you will turn your thoughts upon the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thinking on these things, God help us to do it. And we may turn to him as our Redeemer.

III. SOUL EQUIPMENT - V. 7, 9.

I've talked to you about the equipment of your emotions in V. 6. And about the mind equipment in V. 8. And now the soul equipment in V. 7 and 9.

Peace

Early Christians knew that it was be insecure - one faithful disciple 3rd century, being pursued by the soldiers of the Roman Emperor. From city to city - finally into mts. Halfway up mt. side almost caught. This is the end he thought - darted into a cave - few min meditation for sol. Captured him & delivered to king.

Once inside cave - fashed out spiders began to work their mysterious tooms. Crisscrossing back & forth soon web design. The Christian almost got his punishment at demonstration of God! Sol on horse started up, dismounted, unsheathed sword & started toward this cave. The centurion exclaimed "foolish man do you not see those spider webs? No one has gone in or out of cave for long time. Not waste time here. Remounted horses, Emperor's hand on way. - Man testified your fate