

Read Scripture: Philippians 4:8-13  
It's All Your Mind

NIV

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. <sup>9</sup> Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

<sup>10</sup> I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. <sup>11</sup> I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. <sup>12</sup> I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. <sup>13</sup> I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

**REFLECTION**

Change. Don't we all need a makeover? Worrywarts need peace: those who struggle with greed or envy need to learn the art of contentment. Truth be told, most folks hunger to be different in various big and small ways. So, here is one of the most valuable questions we could ever ponder...how do people change?

**SITUATION**

Writing from a Roman prison to his beloved Christian friends in Philippi who are struggling to live for Christ and to grow in their faith, Paul shares the truth that a healthy God honoring lifestyle begins with a healthy, God honoring mind-set.

**EXPLORATION**

1. Why are our thoughts so important?
2. What is significant about the qualities Paul chose for evaluating and ordering one's thoughts?
3. Paul seems to be suggesting that when our thinking is spiritually sound, our circumstances will stop stealing our joy. How can this be? Have you experienced this in your life?

## **INSPIRATION**

"You and I are infected by destructive thoughts. Computer viruses have names. Mental viruses are known as anxiety, bitterness, anger, guilt, shame, greed, and insecurity. They worm their way into your system and diminish, even disable, your mind. We call these DTPs: destructive thought patterns. (Actually, I'm the only one to call them DTPs.)

Do you have any DTPs?

When you see the successful, are you jealous?

When you see the struggler, are you pompous?

If someone gets on your bad side, is that person as likely to get on your good side as I am to win the Tour-deFrance?

Ever argue with someone in your mind? Rehash or rehearse your hurts? Do you assume the worst about the future?

If so, you suffer from DTPs.

What would your world be like without them? Had no dark or destructive thought ever entered your mind, how would you be different? Suppose you could live your life sans any guilt, lust, vengeance, insecurity, or fear. Never wasting mental energy on gossip or scheming. Would you be different?

Oh, to be DTP-free. No energy lost, no time wasted. Wouldn't such a person be energetic and wise? A lifetime of healthy and holy thoughts would render anyone a joyful genius...

A lot like the twelve-year-old boy seated in the temple of Jerusalem. Though he was beardless and unadorned, this boy's thoughts were profound... When it comes to his purity of mind, we are given this astounding claim: Christ "knew no sin" (2Cor. 5:21). Peter says Jesus "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). John lived next to him for three years and concluded, "In Him there is no sin: (1 John 3:5)...

But does this matter? Does the perfection of Christ affect me? If he were a distant Creator, the answer would be no. But since he is a next door Savior, the reply is a supersized yes!

Remember the twelve-year-old boy in the temple? The one with sterling thoughts and a Teflon mind? Guess what. That is God's goal for you? You are made to be like Christ! God's priority is that you be "transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2). You may have been born virus-prone, but you don't have to live that way...God can change your mind. (from Next Door Savior by Max Lucado)

## **Reaction**

How disciplined is your mind-that is, do you work at corralling untrue and unhealthy thoughts?

Are you a contented person?

How much are your moods dependent on your circumstances?

## The Big Picture and Devotion

Paul message to the Philippians that they are to stand firm by pursuing peace, joy, gentleness, trust, prayer, and right thinking-matter that Paul has taught and modeled for them.

Paul is warmly thanking the Philippians for once again supporting his mission, but he also takes the opportunity to explain that he has learned to be content, with little or much.

## Devotion

God, we have so much to learn. By your Spirit teach us how to reprogram our thoughts so that they line up with yours. Impress upon us the great truth that our life will never change until our mind is changed.

Renewing of our mind

Psalm 119:15

Romans 12:1-2