



“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

by Al Parr

Whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (Philippians 4:8) “The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart” (Psalm 19:8). Therefore, we should give careful attention to what Paul wrote.

WHATEVER THINGS ARE TRUE

Several important qualities are listed in this verse, but notice that the first quality in the list – the quality of greatest emphasis – is the quality of TRUTH. Truth must be the first test of all that a Christian thinks, says and does. If a doctrine is not true it should not be believed. If words are not true they should not be spoken. If a behavior is not true it should not be practiced. If a thought is not true it should be put away from the Christian’s mind just as quickly as possible. Jesus, whose name we wear, is True (I Jn. 5:20; Rev. 19:11). How can we profess to be His followers – His disciples – and not ourselves respect the truth most highly?

WHATEVER THINGS ARE HONEST

Honesty is not highly prized in the world today. That’s a pity because the world needs honest people in all walks of life. Without such honesty there is little hope for any peace or comfort at all on earth. What about our own honesty toward others? Do you always tell the truth in all situations (Ephesians 4:25)? Do your actions match your words (II Corinthians 8:21; I Peter 2:12)? More importantly, do your words and actions match the words of God (I Peter 4:11)? The world needs honest people. Christians are honest people. The world needs you. You can make a difference (Matthew 5:13-16).

WHATEVER THINGS ARE JUST

Our God is a just God (Revelation 15:13). The word “just” as used by Paul in this verse means “keeping the commands of God; approved of (or acceptable to) God.” Are these the kinds of ideas, words and actions that occupy your time? Many who call themselves Christians devote much time to worldly activities and thinking that are not approved by God. There are those who argue that they must make money in order to live, and so they try to make this fact justify their participation in activities of which God does not approve. Live so that you will receive the words of blessing in the Judgment Day (Matthew 25:34).

WHATEVER THINGS ARE PURE

This word concerns that which promotes reverence, or that which is sacred. It specifically refers to that which is “pure from carnality, chaste, modest, clean.” It includes not only pornographic literature, but also the style of dress and behavior that reveals more of the body than the public ought to see (and the speech that glorifies such manner of dress and behavior – Ephesians 5:11-12). Christians must cover themselves when in view of the public (I Timothy 2:9-10) because they are servants of God (Exodus 28:42-43).

WHATEVER THINGS ARE LOVELY

It seems that we have always around us those who talk about nothing but what is wrong, bad or unpleasant in the world, in the church or in their lives. God requires His children to be concerned rather with that which is acceptable, or pleasing (Proverbs 25:11). Christians are to encourage one another (Hebrews 10:24), not discourage one another (Colossians 3:21). Christians love one another, and love does not think evil (I Corinthians 13:5). Don’t be a complainer and fault-finder; look for the good in people and situations and talk about that (Romans 12:9).

WHATEVER THINGS ARE OF GOOD REPORT

People of God are not “tale-bearers” (Psalm 50:19-21; Proverbs 11:13; 20:19). If information does not speak well of another person, don’t poison your mind with it, what you allow to reside in your mind is what you will become (Proverbs 23:7). Someone has said that every word that comes from our mouth should pass three tests: [1] does it glorify Christ? [2] is it true? [3] does it promote good in others? If any of these answers is “No” then all will be better off if we never say the words.

IF THERE IS ANY VIRTUE

This word is defined as “a godly way of thinking, feeling and acting.” It also has reference to “moral goodness.” The apostle Paul wrote to the church in Rome that we should be “transformed by the renewing of your minds” (Romans 12:2). When a person becomes a Christian he begins to learn a new way of thinking, and this new thinking produces a new behavior in him. The world goes about thinking of itself, and believing that this physical world and this short life are the total definition of human existence. The Christian knows that God lives, Heaven is real and the Judgment Day is coming. He knows also that these eternal truths cause him to want to live by a higher moral standard than the world follows.

IF THERE IS ANYTHING PRAISEWORTHY

Christians look for something in others that they can praise (I Corinthians 11:2), and they don’t fail to praise the good in others when they find it (Romans 16:1; I Corinthians 13:6-7; II Corinthians 8:18; 12:11). Christians also seek to live so as to receive the praise of God (I Peter 1:7). This isn’t just a good idea, it’s the command of God.

MEDITATE ON THESE THINGS

The apostle doesn’t say that we should just quickly notice these ideas and move on to some other idea or activity. He says that we must seriously think about each quality that he has listed. The word he uses here really means “to consider, take into account, weigh, meditate on.” This means that we should set aside some time in which we will stop thinking about other ideas and think about these qualities. The word also means that we should “by reckoning up all the reasons, ... gather or infer.” This means that our thinking should lead us to logical conclusions, and that those conclusions should lead us into proper behavior.

“As he thinks in his heart, so is he.” Who are you?

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