

Living For God

Philippians 4:1, 8-9

¹Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

⁸Finally, 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. ⁹Whatever 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.

I. I will have self-control over my thoughts.

Philippians 4:1, 8-9

¹Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, **stand firm in the Lord in this way**, dear friends!

⁸Finally, 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**. ⁹Whatever 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.

A. I alone determine what I think about.

1. No one else except me does that.
2. I have control over what I think about.
3. It is up to me to determine what I think about.

Illustration

- Last year when the church was so kind to allow me to go on a 6 week sabbatical one of the things Jami and I did was visit Emerge Ministries in Ohio.
- Largest Christian counseling ministry in the country.
- We signed up for a Pastoral Intensive.
- We both took a battery of test to gauge our emotional and psychological health.
- These tests were used to steer three days of very intensive counseling to work on us, our marriage, our family, and our ministry.

“There are persons trying to steal my thought and ideas.”

“Someone has control over my mind.”

B. We are commanded to steer the very thoughts of our mind.

1. To navigate what we think about.

2. To have dominion over our thoughts.
 3. Not to just let our mind wonder to whatever it wants to think about but to take an active role in determining what we think about.
- C. When I am connected to the vine and the Holy Spirit is alive in me then he brings with HIM fruit.
1. This fruit is “self-control”
 2. The sign of maturity is someone’s ability to possess self-control in the area of their thought life.
- D. This is a big deal.
1. First it is a command.

Proverbs 4:23

Above all else, guard your heart,
for everything you do flows from it. (NIV)

2. Above all else.

- a. There is nothing more important.
- b. NOTHING.
- c. Above all else examples.



Illustration

- Pretend your mind is a field.
- This field is surrounded by a fortified wall.
- There is only one way onto the field and that is through a gate in the wall.
- You stand at the gate.
- You determine whoever and whatever you allow to come onto your field.
- Your field is your mind.
- In your mind are all of your thoughts that you give authority to in your life.
- Thoughts come into your field through emotions, imagination, reason, choice and will
- You have to decide what you let in and out of this gate.
- Either the truth of God’s Word or the lies of the world.

- What you see, hear and say will heavily influence what thoughts you allow into your mind.
- Ultimately you decide what you allow into the field of your mind.

Proverbs 4:23

Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts. (GNT)

3. I will protect the “house”

Application

1. Like an athlete that disciplines their body I will discipline my thoughts

Proverbs 25:28

A man without self-control

is like a city broken into and left without walls. (ESV)

I choose what I give light to or mental real-estate.

What do I allow to pass through my property?

What do I allow to camp on my property?

What do I allow to build a house on my property to live in?

The Holy Spirit helps me to do this.

He gives me self-control over every area on my life – including my thoughts.

Ask God for help.

Straw Man

I cannot control my thought life. It just happens.

Application

1. Screen what I see and hear. (empty)
2. Practice filling my mind with the right things. (fill)
3. Catch and divert destructive thoughts immediately.

II. **I will think about the right things.**

Philippians 4:1, 8-9

⁸ 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.

How to know if I should allow it to pass through the gate and set up a house.

A. You have help.

1. Although we are the gatekeepers of our hearts, we are not left to defend our gates on our own.
2. God is on our side!

Psalm 28:7a

The LORD is my strength and my shield;
my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.

2 Thessalonians 3:3

But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.

Psalm 121:5

The LORD watches over you—
the LORD is your shade at your right hand

Isaiah 54:17

no weapon forged against you will prevail...

I will choose to think about things that are

- These are the thoughts that I will let through the gate and stay in the field.

Vanessa I will discuss one at a time... Please stack them so that at the end we have all 7.

1. True

2. Noble

3. Right

4. Pure

5. Lovely

6. Admirable

7. Excellent or Praiseworthy

III. I will give God complete control over my thought life.

Philippians 4:9

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.

- A. Back to the mental picture of the field being your mind.
 1. That field is actually God's field when you surrendered your life to him.
 2. So it's God's field and I am the gate keeper over God's field.
 3. You are responsible for what do you allow onto that field.
 4. That field is your thoughts and your thoughts are God's territory.
- B. Now we realize that this field is actually a battlefield.
 1. The wars in my life are fought, lost or won in the battlefield of my mind.
 2. God want's us to take a militant posture when understanding our role.
 3. This is of utmost importance.

- Remember above all else guard your heart...

2 Corinthians 10:5

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Thought – do not grieve the Holy Spirit.

A.

Ephesians 4:30

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave

Illustration

- Every once in a while, I will have a conversation with someone while standing in the church building.
- Several months ago in the lobby of the church on a Wed. night after LifeGroups I'm talking to this guy and he says something like – You know that's really messed up – except he didn't say "messed up". He said something else besides "messed up"
- It ended in the word up but didn't start with the word messed.
- He immediately stopped himself and apologized for cussing in the church.
- I appreciate the sentiment – however more sacred than the building is the body. Don't defile the body.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

¹⁶ Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple. (NIV)

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

¹⁶ Surely you know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you! ¹⁷ God will destroy anyone who destroys God's temple. For God's temple is holy, and you yourselves are his temple. (GNT)

Thoughts become attitudes

Attitudes become actions

Actions become habits

Habits become character

Character becomes your destiny.

Conclusion

- Thoughts are the foundation: Your initial thoughts set the tone for everything that follows.
- Attitudes are formed by thoughts: The way you think about things creates your attitude towards them.
- Actions stem from attitudes: Your attitude guides the actions you take.
- Habits are repeated actions: When you consistently perform an action, it becomes a habit.
- Character is built by habits: Your established habits shape your overall character.
- Destiny is shaped by character: Your character determines the outcomes and direction of your life.

Thoughts

Attitudes

Actions
Habits
Character

Colossians 3:1-6

¹Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.