

Intro:

Last week Pastor Dennis spoke from Philippians 4. He talked about 3 things we can do to experience God's peace. I want to finish working through that passage of scripture today, but first want to give you a quick recap of last week in case you missed it.

Philippians 4:2-9 p. 832

#1. Keep Your Relationships "Right." Vs 2-3

There is nothing that will steal the peace and joy from your life QUICKER than a bad relationship.

| | | | |
|-------|---------|---------|-----------|
| ~Home | ~Spouse | ~Child | ~Neighbor |
| ~Work | ~Friend | ~Church | |

Any time one of those relationships goes bad, it will drain every single ounce of joy and peace out of your life

#2. Keep Your Attitude Right. Vs 4-7

You don't have control over what happens to you. But you DO have control over how you RESPOND to what happens!

You can choose your own attitude! You can decide: I am going to choose to see the best, the right, the good, the positive.

3. Keep Your Prayers Right! Vs 6b

Instead of letting your mind run wild in the "What If" game, that spins your mind and heart up, and makes you anxious... Pray!

Today we are going to tackle the last two points. If you didn't hear the message last week I recommend you go onto our website and listen to it. The Sermon archives are on the home page. It will sort of be like the Star Wars movies. You get numbers 4 and 5 this week and then you can listen to the Prequel points 1, 2 and 3 later.

I really believe that this topic is a significant one for both Christians and non-Christians. Many people are seeking peace and not finding it. Take a look at this:

<http://www.sermonspice.com/product/4907/peace>

If we don't feel at peace what do we feel? Worry, distress, restlessness, anxiety, uncertainty... the list goes on and on. There are a tons of surveys about anxiety but here are just 2 statistics from one survey.

41 percent of employees from a range of industries reported high levels of anxiety in the workplace.

More than half of college students sought help for their anxiety issues.

Please understand that I am not minimizing the fact that there are people with anxiety issues that are caused by medical; or other reasons and medical treatment and medication and counseling are important resources to be taken advantage of when necessary. But there are many instances when we have a lack of joy or peace because of spiritual issues...and that is what I want us to consider today.

What happens when you feel overwhelmed or anxious? We can be affected physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually when anxiety and fear control us.

4. Keep Your Mind Right, or think about the right things Vs 8

When your mind starts to race, and your heart starts to pound, and your fears start to overcome you take stock of verse 8. We could spend a week on each one of these words in verse 8, but I want to just touch briefly on each one of them. I want us to see the big picture rather than get lost on the details.

The word Think literally means = *to take and inventory and reach a conclusion!*
Set your mind on the RIGHT things!

Warren Wiersbe takes and synthesizes the Greek here, and writes this:

“Wrong thinking leads to wrong feeling, and before long the heart and the mind are pulled apart and we are strangled by worry. We must realize that thoughts are real and powerful, even though they cannot be seen, weighed, or measured. We must bring ‘into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.’” (2 Cor. 10:5)

1. THINK ON WHATEVER IS TRUE.

The word means, “true as to fact, true in character...it denotes the actuality of a thing”. True: It must *match the word of God*. God Himself is the only final test for truth. Because of our sinful nature, the only way we can know the truth and walk in it, is to know God and His Word. We can't let our emotions or feelings determine what is true for us. “It just felt right”. Or sometimes we are very pragmatic: It works so it must be true. It must stack up to God's Word.

2. THINK ON WHATEVER IS NOBLE OR HONORABLE

The word means “that which inspires reverence or awe; dignified, worthy of respect something to be worshipped.”

Avoid things that bring my thinking down. – Mark 7:20-23

Take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. – 2 Corinthians 10:5

Be transformed by the renewing of my mind. – Romans 12:2

Our goal is not to be conformed to the pattern of this world. Instead, I desire to be conformed to Christ. We must spend time in God’s Word. The more we read, study, and meditate on the Word of God, the more our thinking naturally avoids things that do not fit the description of “noble.”

3. THINK ON WHATEVER IS RIGHT. = just, honest, correct

This word is used in scripture both about God the Father and Jesus. To think on what is right means to think on the holy nature of God, especially as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, and to model our behavior after Him.

4. THINK ON WHATEVER IS PURE. =clean, chaste, modest

As Christians, we must say no to our impure culture and yes to moral purity. Again how do we know God’s standards? By knowing His Word. Psalm 51:10 “Create in me a pure heart, O God and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

5. THINK ON WHATEVER IS LOVELY. Lovely = pleasing, agreeable, and attractive. This doesn’t mean “physically attractive” because we can be “attracted” to things that are wrong. Within this context, meaning that which is both pure and attractive. Jesus’ character is attractive, even to many non-Christians. They admire Him, call Him great teacher, etc. We should think about Him and what he did for us.

6. THINK ON WHATEVER IS ADMIRABLE

Admirable: This comes from a compound word meaning to speak well of something. F. F. Bruce in his New International Biblical Commentary says it is something that “deservedly enjoys a good reputation”.

Paul then sort of sums up, almost as if saying...” If I have left anything out”

If anything is excellent = virtuous or proper

How do we know what God considers excellent? We have to know His Word.

If anything is Praiseworthy = commendable

Every attribute and deed of God is praiseworthy, and so we should daily think about how great God is and about the marvelous works He has done, both universally but also personally. Even though all of us are sinful we can find things in people that are commendable or praiseworthy, not because of their goodness but because of God's grace. These qualities should bring glory to God not to us.

THINK ON THESE THINGS.

We need to think about and reflect on these things. They should influence or decisions and behavior. We carry some responsibility. Yes, God is involved in our lives, and He alone gives us the ability to think correctly. It is hard to describe but God does the work yet He gives us work to do.

A great quote from Mark Twain "What a wee little part of a person's life are his acts and his words! His real life is led in his head, and is known to none but himself. All day long, the mill of his brain is grinding, and his thoughts, not those other things, are his history." Jonathan Edwards, the great Puritan preacher in the 1700's said, "The ideas and images in men's minds are the invisible powers that constantly govern them." We need to allow our thought life to be submitted to God.

What Paul is NOT teaching: the power of positive thinking. He is teaching the power of God in our lives when we allow him to guide our thinking.

5. Keep Your Actions Right. Vs 9

You see, peace and joy are not just a matter of the mind. They are by products of our ACTIONS!!! Peace and joy are elusive... Like trying to hold sand in your hand in the waves at the beach. You can't just say: "I am going to be peaceful...you won't be!" "I am going to be joyful...you won't be!" I have been known to drive people crazy. They are worried or stressed and I say "just relax." That is not particularly helpful.

Notice what he says about actions here in verse 9.

Vs 9 Those things that You have Learned and Received: It is one thing to "Learn" it; Quite another to "Receive" it!

Learning: lit = to understand: It is a cognitive act of the mind

Receive: lit = to associate with oneself" An active integration into your life!

We have “learned” we should have keep our relationships right, keep our attitudes right, keep our prayers right; Keep our thoughts right, keep our actions right.

But when we reconcile relationships when have received it.

When our attitudes are like the attitude of Jesus in Philippians 2 we have received it.

When we actually pray, regularly, consistently about everything we have received it

We have “learned” we should focus your mind on right things: When we start doing that, you will have received it!

We have learned that our actions should agree with scripture but when they do we have received it.

In James 1:22 we are told to not just be a hearer of the Word, but a doer of the Word. Paul tells the Philippians to follow his example. For us, it is one thing to “hear” it...but it is quite another to “see” it lived out in someone’s life. That is why being a part of a church, or group or ministry is so important. Kids are a great example of this..... put it into practice.... It is an ongoing daily effort.

Do those things: Vs 7 Peace of God will be with you

Do those things: Vs 9: God of Peace will be with you as well!

So, what do we do now? God wants us to have peace and joy and His presence. And, you CAN have that...but first we must have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Only then do we have the strength and ability to do these things we have talked about today. You may feel overwhelmed and anxious now because of all the things you have to “do”. I want to encourage you with this. Following Jesus is about being not doing. As we draw closer into relationship with Him, he gives us the desire and strength to do these things and they bring us peace and joy not a burden to bear.

Gal. 5:22 But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

John 16:33 I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 12:11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

You have to make a decision.

You must trust God and allow him to do the work in you so you have the strength to do what he expects of you.

Isaiah 26:3 you will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.