

Christianity, The Religion of DO

Philippians 4:8-9

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things. 9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Paul says, "Don't worry, think about these things, things that are pure, lovely, well reported of, virtue, things that bring praise. Meditate on these things."

But he does not stop there. Now he tells them that he expects them to do what they have learned, received, heard and saw in his life. And he tells them that if they do, that the God of peace will be with them.

In the same way that we know what we should be thinking about we also know what we should do. There is a direct connection between what we think and do as the writer of Proverbs tells us. Pr 23:7 For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.

"The fact that this comes so closely after verse 8 is significant. Right living results from right thinking. If a person's thought-life is pure, then his life will be pure. On the other hand, if a person's mind is a fountain of corruption, then you can be sure that the stream that issues from it will be filthy also. And we should always remember that if a person thinks an evil thought long enough, he will eventually do it." MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. (A. Farstad, Ed.) (Php 4:9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The apostle Paul had led an exemplary life. Therefore he could say that they should follow him.

Php 3:17 ¶ Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

1 Corinthians 4:16 (NKJV) 16 Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

1 Corinthians 11:1 (NKJV) 1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:6 (NKJV) 6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,

I. The things which you learned

A. Becoming a Christian comes with a real learning curve.

1. We once were aliens from the ways of God.
2. But we have been converted out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God.
3. Everything has changed.
 - a. 2Co 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old

things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

- B. But newborn babes in Christ desire to know the truth.
 - 1. 1Pe 2:2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby
 - 2. Babies that don't eat well will never grow as they should.
- C. The word "learned" in this passage is the verb form of the word that means "disciple".
- D. So to learn is to be a disciple.
 - 1. These Philippians had learned the faith from the apostle Paul.
 - 2. They had followed Paul as he followed Jesus.
- E. But learning something and doing something are much different.
 - 1. Not all doctors are healthy people.
 - 2. Not all lawyers, judges and law enforcement officers are law abiding people.
 - 3. And not all those who profess Christianity follow Jesus.

II. The things which you received

- A. This seems to be a code word for the faith they had received.
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 11:23 (NKJV) 23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;
 - 2. 1 Corinthians 15:3 (NKJV) 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
 - 3. Galatians 1:9 (NKJV) 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.
 - 4. Galatians 1:12 (NKJV) 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.
 - 5. 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2 (NKJV) 1 Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; 2 for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

III. The things which you heard

- A. Hearing is important and was more important then than now.

1. Today we have so many ways to communicate the gospel, books, tracts, movies etc.
 2. Ro 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
 3. But they had not only heard Paul personally but had also heard from others sent from Paul as well as from his letters.
- B. But they had not only heard Paul teach, they had heard about the trial that he had encountered and the imprisonment that he had endured.
- IV. The things which you saw in me
- A. Paul's greatest witness was the life that he lived coupled with the things that he taught.
- B. They had seen Paul live out his faith.
1. When Paul was at Corinth, he had made tents, not because the church could not afford to support him, but so that he could be an example to them how people ought to work.
 2. They could see the way Paul had suffered in Paul's body from all the scars that Paul had endured for Christ Jesus.
 - a. Ga 6:17 From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.
 3. It would have been so easy for Paul to escape suffering by cancelling his missionary journeys and just staying out of the limelight.
 4. But no, Paul suffered, and gladly endured all for Jesus.
- C. Paul was not asking them to do what he had not done himself.
1. His very life was a constant challenge to others, to live up to.
 2. If Paul could live for Jesus with all the obstacles that he encountered then for you and me it should be a walk in the park.
- V. These do
- A. It is great to study the Christian faith.
1. To sit around and study the Bible, to talk about heaven, and the rest of all that is very fulfilling.
 2. But when we walk out those doors we need to shift from learning, hearing and seeing to doing.
 3. Many churches put together a wonderful worship service, but what does the congregation look like when they are at home, or at work?

4. What do we look like?
5. We can talk about loving your neighbor, forgiving your enemies, supporting those that hate you, but how does that work out in our lives each day.

B. Notice the words of Jesus.

1. Matthew 28:20 (NKJV) 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.
2. Matthew 28:20 (NIV) 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

C. Christians have changed to world for the better.

1. Orphanages
2. Hospitals
3. Operation Christmas child has delivered 100 million shoeboxes and you right here have been able to contribute to that.
4. We have converted the pagans, and still continue today.
5. Each year Christians do hundreds of millions of dollars of work throughout the world.

VI. And the God of peace will be with you.

Deuteronomy 5:1 (NKJV) 5 And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them.

1Th 1:6 ¶ And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,

1Th 2:13 ¶ For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

Heb 13:7 Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.

Jas 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Gal 1:3-5 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,⁴ who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,⁵ to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. NKJV

Titus 2:13-14 our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. NKJV

Ezra 7:10 (NKJV) 10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Luke 11:28 (NKJV) 28 But He said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

James 1:22 (NKJV) 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Isaiah 48:18 (NKJV) 18 Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, And your righteousness like the waves of the sea.

When all is said and done, spiritual stability comes down to living a disciplined life of obedience to God's standards. People in whom the Word of God richly dwells (Col. 3:16), and who therefore live obediently, stand firm when the winds of difficulty, temptation, and compromise blow around them. MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The - MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Philippians.

Holy living can take place only when right attitudes and right thoughts police the flesh. That is why Paul confronted the priority of thoughts (4:2-8) before exhorting the church to righteous behavior (4:9). Understanding and embracing God's law comes first, followed by the conduct habitually controlled by that devotion to the truth. MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The - MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Philippians.

It is well when both teaching and life go together. “These things do.” Calvin properly remarks,

“Meditation precedes, practice follows.” Once we have carefully thought of our conduct in the light of the great categories, there is the carrying our thought into practice. *Pulpit Commentary*

What is said is to be *done*, not merely approved, criticised, thought on, or sighed about, but done. The practice of this knowledge of Christ ENSURES THE SUBLIMEST GOOD. “The God of peace shall be with you.” In ver. 7 we read of having the “peace of God,” here of having the “God of peace.” To have his peace is something glorious; but to have *himself* is something transcendently greater. *Pulpit Commentary*

You cannot separate outward action and inward attitude. Sin always results in unrest (unless the conscience is seared), and purity ought to result in peace. “And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and peace” (Isa. 32:17). “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable” (James 3:17). Right living is a necessary condition for experiencing the peace of God.

Paul balances four activities: “learned and received” and “heard and seen.” It is one thing to learn a truth, but quite another to receive it inwardly and make it a part of our inner man (see 1 Thes. 2:13). Facts in the head are not enough; we must also have truths in the heart. In Paul’s ministry, he not only taught the Word but also lived it so that his listeners could see the truth in his life. Paul’s experience ought to be our experience. We must learn the Word, receive it, hear it, and do it. “But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22).

“The peace of God” is one test of whether or not we are in the will of God. “Let the peace that Christ can give keep on acting as umpire in your hearts” (Col. 3:15, WMS). If we are walking with the Lord, then the peace of God and the God of peace exercise their influence over our hearts. Whenever we disobey, we lose that peace and we know we have done something wrong. God’s peace is the “umpire” that calls us “out”!

Right praying, right thinking, and right living: these are the conditions for having the secure mind and victory over worry. As Philippians 4 is the “peace chapter” of the New Testament, James 4 is the “war chapter.” It begins with a question: “From whence come wars and fightings among you?” James explains the causes of war: wrong praying (“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss,” James 4:3), wrong thinking (“purify your hearts, ye double-minded,” James 4:8), and wrong living (“know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” James 4:4). There is no middle ground. Either we yield heart and mind to the Spirit of God and practice right praying, thinking, and living; or we yield to the flesh and find ourselves torn apart by worry.

There is no need to worry! And, worry is a sin! (Have you read Matt. 6:24–34 lately?) With the peace of God to guard us and the God of peace to guide us—why worry?

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 96). Wheaton, IL: Victor

Books.

HOW EASY, HOW HARD

It's not enough to hear or read the Word of God, or even to know it well. We must also put it into practice. It is easy to listen to a sermon and forget what the preacher said. It is easy to read the Bible and not think about how to live differently. It is easy to debate what a passage means and not live out that meaning. Exposure to God's Word is not enough. It must lead to obedience.

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – Philippians, Colossians, & Philemon.