

“Thinking on ‘Good’ Things,” Philippians 4:8

School has started for most of you, or soon will. For those of you in public school especially, each day you'll leave your home- where God is revered and “good” and “right” prevails, and enter a world that exposes you to all sorts of “evil.” You'll *hear* bad words, *see* bad things, and generally be subjected to all sorts of bad emotions and bad actions in and from people who have no regard for God or “good.” So, how do you keep **your** head in “right” and “good” places? Let's see if we can help.

Read our text verse again. What's the first word of the sentence? What does that mean or imply? “*Finally*” means/implies that what is about to be said is based on or concludes what has already stated. So, let's back this up to “see” what all else is *involved in* training or retraining our minds to “*dwell*” on things that are *true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, good, excellent, and praise-worthy!*

We also need to:

v.6, Get rid of *anxious everything*. I know it's hard for some of you, but stop *worrying* about: 1) things you *didn't cause*, 2Cor.5:10 (more on this tonight, but take *responsibility only* for your mistakes- *confess to God* and *whomever you've hurt* and *ask for their and His forgiveness*, cf. Matt.21-26; 1John 1:8-10); and, 2) things you *can't control* or *influence*, Matt.6:25. Instead, *give these things to God* and *let them go*- think on “good” things!

v.5, Practice *forbearance inside and out*. This means to be *gentle, patient, mild,* and *moderate* and treat others this way, for *the Lord is near- vengeance is His, not yours*, cf. Rom.12:17-21. Think on “good” things!

v.4, Rejoice (be joyful) in the Lord always. You are so *blessed in Christ*- your sins have been forgiven and the Lord is always *on your side* when you think on and do “good” things, cf. Rom.8:31-39!

vv.2-3, Help (and encourage) others who are trying to think and do “good” things. It's so easy to get discouraged, and others may not have the love, support, and encouragement at home (and from *brethren!*) that you do, so *share yours* with them, cf. 2:1-4.

v.1, Stand firm. Remember the Lord's admonition to Joshua after Moses died (and the song we often sing), “*Be strong and very courageous, to be careful to do according all the Law... for the Lord God is with you wherever you go,*” Josh.1:5-9. So, “*be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord,*” 1Cor.15:58. Others may not always *help* or *encourage* you, and thinking on and doing the “good” and “right” things won't always be easy- but do it anyway! Yes, you can!

3:20-21, Always remember where “home” is. As long as you're *in the world*, there will be many times when you just don't “fit in”- that's OK, you're not supposed to “fit in” with the world because you *belong to* and are *like your Father* who is in heaven, 1Pet.2:9-10. Just keep thinking and doing “good things” and you'll feel *right at home* in heaven with Him for eternity!

3:17-19, Pay attention to and follow “good” examples; they’re the ones thinking on and doing “good” things and going to heaven- follow them, Eph.5:1-2; Col.3:1-4.

3:14-15, Press on. Never give up and never quit- you *can* do it! I know when we’re young (I was *once*, a *very long* time ago!), it’s hard to be patient. We want everything *now*. We want to be good at everything now. But Christianity can be hard, and growth and progress slow. If you *fall* or *falter*, get up and do better next time. Don’t beat yourself up over mistakes- *acknowledge* and *own* them, then just keep thinking and doing better, Gen.4:7.

3:13, Forget the past and reach forward. You can’t change the *past* as much as you may want to, but you can change *your* future.

3:1-12, Try to understand and concentrate on *what’s important* rather than *what isn’t*.

Conclusion: See? Getting your mind to *dwell* on “good” things is much more than just “thinking happy thoughts”- you have to work *hard* at it. But you *can* do it! And God, your family, and your *spiritual* family will help you.