



# World Christian Fellowship

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## Philippians 42 Godly Thinking

**Philippians 4:8**, *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.*

### **Spiritual stability:**

What it takes to be strong in the trying times?

How can we be spiritually strong?

How can we have that stability that looks death right in the eye?

How can we have that kind of calm in the midst of grave difficulty?

Every Christian hunger for that.

Stand firm in the Lord.

**V 1**, *Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.*

Apostle Paul wants the Philippians to be strong.

He wants them to be rooted and grounded.

He wants them to act like men, to be courageous and bold and strong as they stand for the Lord.

Last few weeks we saw the principles of spiritual stability.

### **1. Peace and harmony**

**V 2-3**, *I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.*<sup>3</sup> *And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.*

You are to be a peacemaker, cultivating peace in the fellowship of love.

### **What is the one great need of the church?**

Harmony in the church.

### **Why?**

Because loving, peaceful harmony is a stabilizer.

When you are in an environment of harmony and love, you are stabilized by that environment.

On the other hand, discord, disunity, chaos, division in the church will always produce great insecurity, and it will destabilize people.

For the sake of unity of the church, you are to do everything you can to be a peacemaker so that in the peace of the church and in the loving bond of the church, you find spiritual strength.

## **2. Joy**

**V 4, *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!***

This joy is based upon our relationship with the Lord, not our circumstances.

We are to rejoice in the Lord. Our joy is because of our privileged, permanent union with the Lord.

We must cultivate that deep-down joy that comes when we understand and live in the light of a privileged union with the living Lord Jesus Christ.

## **3. Humility**

**V 5, *Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.***

You expect nothing and demand nothing.

If you rightly assess your sinfulness and know you deserve nothing, then you don't mind when you get nothing.

But if you wrongly assess your worthiness and assume that you are worthy of much and deserve much, if you don't get much, you are very upset and unstable.

You can be spiritually stable in the most difficult time, if you understand that as an unworthy sinner you don't deserve anything anyway, and you should be grateful for the grace of God, which is yours, and not expect anything beyond that.

#### **4. Faith**

**V 6, *Be anxious for nothing,***

Spiritual stability demands resting on a confident faith in the Lord.

*"The Lord is near;"*

*"be anxious for nothing."*

That's sequential.

The Lord is near in terms of His presence and because the Lord is near, we are not anxious for anything. So spiritual stability, then, is predicated on a confident faith in the Lord. That's the bottom line.

- If you understand that God is sovereign,
- If you understand God is loving,
- If you understand that God is in control of everything in your life for His glory and your good,
- If you understand that nothing is beyond the purview of God's control,

- If you understand that God's orchestrating everything for eternal purpose and you can rest in that confident faith,

Then you are going to be stable in the most serious times.

## **5. Thankfulness/ Gratitude**

**V 6**, *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;*

Here is the antidote to worry!

Paul says that,

- if you know your God,
- you know your God is near,
- you confidently trust your God in the midst of any trial,
- knowing that it is affecting His purpose,
- then being thankful in the midst of that for the purpose of God even in the difficulty,
- you are granted the peace of God,

that peace will guard you and protect you from anxiety, difficulty, distress, dissatisfaction, discontent, doubt.

## 6. Godly Thinking

**V 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.*

This is the major point that Paul wants to make, the high point.

In order to be spiritually stable, to experience peace, joy, humility, faith, and gratitude, you must be focusing on godly virtues. You must be focusing on godly virtues.

You cannot experience godly virtues unless you focus on godly virtues.

The word “finally” indicates that he has reached a climax at this particular point, the great summation of everything,

*“meditate on these things”*

Spiritual stability is a result of how you think.

Modern psychology today, supposedly on helping people, says that if you want to be stable and get rid of your various neuroses and psychoses, if you want to be a calm, comfortable, one of the things you need to do is look into your past.

- You need to dive into the trash bin of your past,
- You need to find your old sins,
- Your old hurts,
- Your past abuses,
- Your past mistreatments,
- The garbage of your life,
- Deal with all of it.

They may even go to the extreme where if you happen to go to a psychiatrist who develops primal therapy techniques. He will stick you on the floor and stuff pillows around you. Put you in a foetal position and try to get you to feel the pain of your prebirth experience in the womb of your mother, and that is the start of the path to stability.

This, of course, has spilled over into Christianity as well.

However, apostle Paul here says is clearly this, that you are to focus your attention completely on things that are true, honourable, right, pure, lovely, and of good repute.

The focus of the Christian is away from those things of which it is a shame to speak for they are the things of the darkness, as Paul calls them in Ephesians chapter 5.

So, Paul wants to sum up and what his final and summing point is that you must, learn how to think on the right things.

*“meditate on these things”*

This is a call for right thinking.

The verb is ***logizesthe***.

It’s a command. It means not just to think in the simple one-dimensional sense.

It means to evaluate, to ascertain, to use your faculties to consider the validity and implications of these things.

In other words, to develop these kind of thinking habits.

You are a product of your thinking.

**Proverbs 23:7**, *For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. “Eat and drink!” he says to you,*

You are the product of your thoughts.

The computers, people say, G.I.G.O., garbage in, garbage out.

Whatever you program is exactly what you are going to get. You are the product of your thinking.

What is particularly frightening about that in our culture is that it seems to me that thinking is not really that important today. We are not so concerned about thinking as we are about two other things.

Let's call them emotion and pragmatism.

We are concerned about feeling and we are concerned about success. We are not so concerned about thinking.

**People don't ask this question:**

Is it true?

Is it right?

**They ask these questions:**

Does it work?

How will it make me feel?

That is what they want to know.

They don't want to know is it right, they don't really care if it's right. They don't particularly care if it's true, but will it work, and will it make me feel good?

That's a tragic thing to face, but that is in fact the nature of our society. The mind is depreciated in our culture because we are into a feeling kind of culture.

Even in theology, it is sad to say that the issue is not always is it right or is it true, but will it divide, or will it offend?

Those are new things for us to deal with.

The noble Bereans were noble because they searched the Scriptures not to see if these things felt good and not to see if

these things worked and not to see if these things would not offend, but to see if these things were so.

Now, we live in a culture that is fast learning not to think because it is fast learning not to read, which creates thinking.

Article titled "TV Can't Educate." By **Paul Robinson, Stanford university.**

"The only way to learn is by reading." It's the only way to learn because words on a page freeze a thought, you can analyse it, you can synthesize it, you can verify it, you can meditate on it. Pictures don't create thought, but they just grab emotions.

We have a society that doesn't think. We are not into is it true, is it right, we are into how it makes me feel and does it work.

The Christian must not be a victim of his feelings.

Humans are not simply what they call S-R animals.

**S-R means stimulus-response.**

A bunch of dogs whenever there is a certain situation to stimulate them, they start to salivate.

When the stimulus is there, we respond, and given the same stimulus, we have a predictable response.

Man is controlled from the inside. What a man desires are predetermined by what has influenced by his thinking.

You can give one man the same kind of stimulus several times through his life, and you might get several different responses.

You can take 15 people, give them all the same stimulus and get 15 different responses because man responds not by the outside stimulus but by what he wants and what he desires.

This shows that man is programmed by what has influenced his thinking. His response is not mechanical, but thoughtful.

The mind then becomes the command centre which determines his conduct based upon how he thinks, based upon how he's been influenced to think.

So how one thinks is the critical issue.

You are not just a fancy dog.

You are going to react according to how you think.

The mind, then, has the power to shape you and to shape your action and consequently is the most powerful element of human life.

From the biblical perspective, it becomes very clear how important thinking is, and that is precisely what Paul is calling for in this verse.

Paul is saying you have got to learn how to think on the right things.

### **What the Bible says about thinking?**

**Isaiah 1:18**, *“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.*

God didn't say, “Come, let us experience this together.”  
God said, “Come, let's reason. Let's think this through.”

Matthew 16, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees came to Jesus.

**Matthew 16:1-4**, *Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. <sup>2</sup>He answered and said to them, “When it is evening you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red’; <sup>3</sup>and in the morning, ‘It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. <sup>4</sup>A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.” And He left them and departed.*

Always, the Bible calls on men to think, to reason.  
This is the reason the Bible is a book.

When God gave us His revelation, He did not give us a movie.  
He did not give us a series of music videos.

He didn't even have built-in organ background when you read the Bible. Nobody is humming.

There is nothing to touch your emotions except the contemplation of truth. No stimulus other than truth, which requires thought.

So, Scriptures assume that the priority is to think because it's a book.

In Charismatic movement where everyone is running around, not looking for truth but looking for Experience.

The Bible is, by its very nature, calling men to think.

**Psalm 32:8-9**, *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. <sup>9</sup>Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you.*

Think. Don't be like a horse or a mule.  
Think and you will have access to My truth.

**Psalm 73:22**, *I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You.*

Don't be like that.

Think.

Careful thinking is the distinctive of our revealed faith.

Any religion in the world that exalts the office of teaching and, therefore, the idea of thinking, it is the Christian religion because it is propositional, it is written.

- It is not a ritual.
- It is not an experience.
- It is a revelation of truth.

The Bible has a lot to say about thinking.

### **What about your mind before you were saved?**

#### **1. Depraved,**

**Romans 1:28**, *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;*

It's depraved, debased, debauched, wicked, evil, that's what that means.

## **2. Blind**

**2 Corinthians 4:4**, *whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*

## **3. Futile**

it is futile, vain, worthless, useless.

**Ephesians 4:17**, *This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,*

## **4. Ignorant**

**Ephesians 4:18**, *having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;*

## **5. Foolish,**

**1 Corinthians 2:14**, *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

So depraved it does not choose what is good, so blind it does not know what is good, so useless it does not perform what is good, so ignorant it doesn't even know it's doing all of this, and

you are left with the only alternative: everything is foolish. That's the mind of man, fallen man.

### **What about the mind at salvation?**

**1 Peter 3:15**, *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;*

Peter says you must be able to give to every man who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you. You must be able to show him a reason for this.

### **Why do you believe this?**

**Matthew 13:19**, *When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.*

It demands reason and it demands understanding.

An element of salvation is occurring within the mind as a person is coming to a proper comprehension of truth.

- ✓ Truth about himself,
- ✓ Truth about his sin,
- ✓ Truth about God,
- ✓ Truth about Christ,

- ✓ Truth about the work of Christ,
- ✓ Truth about the future.

That all comes into the mind.

**Romans 10:17**, *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

In the new birth Holy Spirit is to clear away the mists from his eyes and enable him to attend to the evidence.

We know this because men are saved to be worshipers.

**John 4:23-24**, *But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. <sup>24</sup> God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

A true worshiper worships in spirit and in truth. So, if we are saved to worship in truth, then truth is crucial. Salvation is God's work on the mind.

It is unacceptable to worship God apart from the truth about God. That's why Paul was so upset when he got to Mars Hill in Acts 17 and he found a bunch of Greek philosophers who built an altar to the unknown god.

God is not the unknown God; God will be worshiped only according to the truth of who He is!

**Luke 10:27**, *So he answered and said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind," and "your neighbour as yourself."*

Salvation is an intelligent response to God's self-revelation in Scripture prompted by the Holy Spirit.

True faith is not some mysterious and unspeakable encounter. True faith is a reasonable trust in the revealed truth about the true God.

It is a process of thinking.

Salvation is impossible without thinking.

When Jesus was talking to His disciples in Matthew 6, He wanted to get them to think.

**Matthew 6**, they were bemoaning the fact that they might not have food and clothing. He came to them and He said, the birds of the air, they are taken care of. See how the lilies of the field are and the grass of the field and all of that. Seek the kingdom and God will take care of you.

Christian faith is essentially thinking.

Look at the birds. Think about them and draw your deductions. Look at the grass. Look at the lilies of the field, consider them.

Faith can be defined like this: It is a man insisting upon thinking when everything seems determined to beat and knock him down.

The trouble with the person of little faith is that instead of controlling his own thought, his thought is being controlled by something else.

If you worry, it's because you are not thinking but you are being bogged down by your circumstances. If you rise above them and think about your God and think about His purposes and think about His promises and think about His plans, you won't worry.

- Faith is not optimism.
- Faith is not psychological self-hypnosis.
- Faith is not wishful thinking.
- Faith is a reasoned response to revealed truth.

Now, we talked about what your mind was like before salvation. We talked about how God moves your mind at salvation.

### **What about after salvation?**

Your mind's been transformed!

You have got a new mind.

You don't have a new brain, but you have a new mind.

You have been infused with a new divine capacity to reason.  
The Spirit of God has invaded your thought processes.

You don't just think as a human brain anymore. You think as a human brain mingled with the Spirit of the living God who lives within you.

You have all new thought patterns.

To show you this, look at Romans chapter 8.

**Romans 8:5**, *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.*

Unsaved people have an unsaved mindset.

Fleshly people have a fleshly mindset. They think about fleshly things.

You have a new mind.

**Romans 8:6**, *For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

You have a whole new mind.

It is not set on the flesh.

It is set on the Spirit.

Suddenly, your thought patterns which are physical, and human are injected with thought patterns which are divine and supernatural.

The Spirit of God moves into your thinking, and now that mind, which was once depraved, blind, futile, ignorant, and foolish is totally different. It no longer thinks on the fleshly level, it thinks on the spiritual level.

When we think about what Christ gives us in salvation, what He brings to us, what He provides for us, what He grants us, it's absolutely thrilling.

**1 Corinthians 1:30**, *But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption*

Now we have the wisdom of God.

**Psalm 92:5**, *O Lord, how great are Your works! Your thoughts are very deep.*

We can plunge the deep thoughts of eternal God. We think in ways we never thought before. We think God's thoughts.

**1 Corinthians 2:11-14**, *For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is*

*from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. <sup>13</sup> These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. <sup>14</sup> But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

Unbelievable. The only one who knows a man is the spirit of that man. The only one who knows God is the Spirit of God, and we have received the Spirit of God Therefore, we have the knowledge of God.

So, we have the wisdom of Christ, we have the knowledge of God granted us by the Holy Spirit.

**1 Corinthians 2:15-16**, *But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. <sup>16</sup> For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

We are not like the natural man in verse 14 who doesn't know anything about God, it's all foolishness to him.

We know the mind of Christ,  
We now understand the wisdom of God,  
The Spirit of God brings us knowledge about God.

Remember this Corinthians wasn't really that great. They had a lot of major problems. They still had the mind of Christ, they still had the wisdom of God, they still had the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

**Colossians 3:10**, *and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,*

We have been given a new mind!

**2 Corinthians 10:4-5**, *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,<sup>5</sup> casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,*

We can go through the world and literally take every human thought captive to the truth in Christ.

We can force it to submit to what we know is true about Christ, true about God, true about Scripture.

We have a new mind.

**You ever strained anything through a strainer?**

We have the ability to strain all the data in the world and purify it. We have the mind of Christ, the mind of God.

So, the Christian life becomes characterized by a new mind.

**Have you noticed that sometimes your mind gets dirty?  
Have you noticed it needs a periodic cleaning?**

**Romans 12:1-2**, *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.* <sup>2</sup>*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

We are continually in need of renewing our minds!

**Ephesians 4:23**, *and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,*

**1 Thessalonians 5:21**, *Test all things; hold fast what is good.*

Your mind gets dirty in the world.

**1 Peter 1:13**, *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

Got to take care of your mind.

You must take care of your mind. We are, therefore, called to mental discipline.

**Colossians 3:2**, *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

Paul often says in his epistles, “I would not have you to be ignorant.”

Ten times in the letter to 1 Corinthians.

“Do you not know?” in his letter to Romans.

We must be committed to thinking and thinking on the right things.

### **1. Think about true**

*“Finally, brethren, whatever is true.”*

If you want to know what is true, where are you going to go?

To the Word of God.

**John 17:17**, *Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.*

**Psalm 19:9**, *The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.*

**Psalm 119:151**, *You are near, O Lord, And all Your commandments are truth.*

The truth is in Christ!

**Ephesians 4:21**, *if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:*

The truth is in God.

**2 Timothy 2:25**, *in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,*

So, if you want to know the truth, you go to the Word of God. It's the focus and the locus of all truth.

## **2. Whatever is honourable**

Means worthy of respect.

Whatever is noble, whatever is dignified, whatever is reverent, whatever is lofty, not trashy, mundane, common.

The word really comes from a term meaning to worship.

Whatever is worthy of awe, whatever is held in high regard, whatever is greatly respected, whatever is worthy of adoration.

## **3. Whatever is right**

*"Whatever is right."*

The word is righteous here.

Whatever is in perfect harmony with the eternal, unchanging, divine standard of a holy God revealed in Scripture.

I am going to think on what is true.

I am going to think on what is worthy of worship.

I am going to think on what is consistent with the holiness of God.

#### **4. Whatever is pure**

*“Whatever is pure,”*

**Hagnos**, meaning morally clean, undefiled.

Whatever is morally pure and morally clean.

#### **5. Whatever is Lovely**

Means pleasing, attractive, amiable.

It’s one of those words that we only find here in the New Testament.

It means whatever is sweet or gracious or generous or patient.

#### **6. Whatever is repute**

*“Whatever is of good repute,”*

Means well thought of. Whatever is highly regarded.

“If there’s any excellence and anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.”

Since there is excellence and worthy of praise, please focus on them.

Please. Your mind is the greatest treasure you have in terms of those gifts of human life, and now as a believer, your mind works in concert with the Spirit of God.

You must protect that mind, and the way you protect it is how you think, and you must protect its influences.

You must avoid those things which negatively influence your thinking.

There is no quick fix to this.

Spiritual stability is a product of

- ✓ cultivating peace in the fellowship,
- ✓ maintaining a spirit of joy,
- ✓ learning to accept less than you are due,
- ✓ resting on a confident trust or faith in the Lord,
- ✓ reacting to problems with thankful prayer and all that flows out of focusing on godly virtues that begin to dominate your thinking patterns,

These characters are the one produces the peace, the joy, the humility, the faith, the gratitude that make your life stabilized.