
TO ENJOY GOD'S BLESSINGS

PHIL. 4:8-9

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INTRODUCTION:

Today we are considering the topic: "To Enjoy God's Blessings." The apostle Paul told the Philippian Christians what to do to enjoy God's Blessings. Our text is **Philippians 4:8-9**.

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.

In the previous verses Paul gives us the formula for having the peace of God. In this text today, Paul's emphasis is on how to have the God of peace. It is when one has the God of peace that he enjoys the blessings of God. The apostle Paul gives two ways by which God's people can enjoy the blessings of God.

First, let your mind dwell on positive things. In Philippians 4.8 Paul writes, *"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."*

In the days of Paul there were many bad things that would have occupied the minds of the people. There was political oppression. In **Luke 13.1ff** Jesus speaks of *"those Galileans whose blood Pilate mixed with their sacrifices."* It is possible for one to dwell on political oppression and see nothing good in life. There was slavery. Slavery was a normal practice in the first century. That one is under bondage and does not have freedom of choice or movement is one thing that can cause

depression. Many of the Christians in the first century were slaves who do not have freedom. The slave was considered a property. Further, under the Roman government, the masters could kill any slave if he so desired. This was enough problem for the Christians that were slaves. There was immorality. Ovid, the Roman writer who died in 17 A. D. wrote *“The Art of Love”* which is a manual on how to seduce the opposite sex. That there was high rate of immorality was enough problem for the Christians. Immorality affects the growth of the church. There were false teachers. That there were many false teachers that were disturbing the faith of the Christians was a big concern to Christianity. It was possible for the Christians thought to dwell on those things. Today we also have things that are problems to us. These things can trouble our souls. The thought of terrorism is a big problem to the Christian mind. Insecurity is a big problem to the Christian mind. Wars in the land is a big problem to the Christian mind. Wars between countries is a problem to the Christian mind.

Paul did not say the Christians are to act as if these things do not exist. He did not say ignore them. But he says the Christians are to meditate on positive things. It is important what we think about. It is important what we meditate on. As good food is necessary to good health, so good thoughts are necessary for mental and spiritual health. Solomon taught that as a man thinks in his heart so he is (Prov. 23.7). Paul lists six things that are necessary for the mental and spiritual health and urges the Philippians to meditate on such things. These are things that are:

- (a) **True** - Things that are true are those that are dependable as opposed to mere appearance.
- (b) **Noble** - Some versions translate this as honorable. This word is used a great deal in Titus and Timothy. Things that are noble or honorable are those that are worthy of respect. There are many things that are not respectable or honorable. Christians are not to think about those. But they are to think about those things that are worthy of respect. Christians are to allow honorable things to control their thoughts.
- (c) **Just** - Some versions have right or righteous. This has to do with things that are justly owed. Things that are required by a just standard of conduct recognized by God and most men. God is righteous and loves righteousness in his people (**Ps. 11.7**). The opposite of this is found in the wicked man who “even on his bed . . . plots evil in order to carry it into action when daylight comes (**Psa. 36.4; Amos 8.4-6**). Think on right things.
- (d) **Pure** - These may have reference to moral purity. We have observed that there high rate of immorality and the people were constantly attacked by temptation to sexual impurity (cf. **Eph.4.17-24; 5.8-12**). Things that are pure are those that spring from unselfish motives whether in one’s sexual life or his business

- dealings. Purity of thought and purpose always lead to purity in work and action. Christians are to meditate on those things that are pure.
- (e) **Lovely** – Lovely here means “beautiful or attractive.” Lovely things are those that commend themselves by their intrinsic attractiveness. They are things that give pleasure to all. Christians are to meditate on things that are lovely.
 - (f) **Good report.** Things that are of good report are those that are worth talking about. They are appealing. These are commendable, laudable things that are generally helpful to society. Christians are to meditate on things that are commendable. Things that are worth talking about. The believer is to major on high and noble thoughts, not the base thoughts of this corrupt world.
 - (g) **Whatever possesses virtue and praise.** If it has virtue, it will motivate us to do better; and if it has praise, it is worth commending to others.

The Christian is not to waste his "mind power" on thoughts that tear him down or that would tear others down. Any who dwell on evil or negative thoughts will be embitter. Negative thought destroys the person. But to be able to detect wrong thoughts, the Christian need to fill his heart and mind with God's word. Right thinking is the result of daily meditation on the Word of God. Though one may sometimes entertain negative thoughts, but he is to dedicate the majority of his time to dwelling on positive things. Positive thought builds positive character.

Second, practice the things you have heard and seen in me. In Philippians 4.9 Paul writes, “The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.” Paul is here giving the direction for Christian practice. He holds that the manner of action he was recommending for them is being demonstrated in him. What are the things the Christians were to practice? They are: first, apostolic precepts. The things the Christians have learned and received from the apostles are the things that must be practiced. In Acts 2 we are told that the early Christians gave themselves to the apostles' doctrine. We are not to practice anything than the doctrine handed down by the apostles. The apostles taught that to be saved, men must believe in Jesus, repent of their sins and be baptized. We are not to teach differently from that teaching. The apostle taught that there is one body and the body is the church and that Christ is the head of the church. We are not to teach differently from what they taught but to practice the same. The second thing they were to practice is apostolic examples. Paul writes: And the things which you “heard and seen in me.” What they heard and saw in Paul was apostolic example. Following apostolic example was a big thing to Paul. In **1 Corinthians 11:1** he says, “*Imitate me as I imitate Christ.*” In **Galatians 1.8** he writes, “*But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.*”

What the Christians have seen in Paul include his emphasis on the positive. They were to practice the same. He also try to provide all things honest in the sight of men (**2 Cor. 8.21**). They were to practice the same. The apostolic examples include partaking of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week when the disciples are gathered together (**Acts 20.7**). The Christians are to do the same. In **First Corinthians 11.23-27** he says:

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; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me. ²⁵ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. ²⁷ Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

The Christians are to practice the same. We must make sure we partake of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week and in a worthy manner. After partaking of the Lord's supper, what do you go to do next?

Apostolic example also include giving of our finance on the first day of the week as God has blessed us. In **1 Corinthians 16.1-2** Paul writes: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: ² On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper." This is not to be done grudgingly or of necessity. It is not to be done sparingly. It is to be done cheerfully and bountifully. In **2 Corinthians 9.6-7** he writes, "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver." The Christians are to practice this same thing as taught by the apostles. These things are noble and just. They are praiseworthy because they are the commandment of God. It is not enough for the Christians to think about these things but they are to practice them. Christianity is a religion of action, good action. Christians are to practice those things the apostle taught and did. That is when they will enjoy God's blessings.

Conclusion

God wants us to enjoy His blessings. But His blessings are conditional. We must think good thoughts and practice good things. Whenever we dwell on good thoughts and practice those things that are noble, the promise we have is: "And the God of peace will be with you." To have the God of peace is the greatest blessing anyone can have. When we have the God of peace, we will have the peace of God. To enjoy God's

blessings we need to have the thoughts of the apostles and have the deeds of the apostles. In essence we are to have the apostles as our model. The apostle Paul says: *“The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you” (Phil 4:9 NKJ)*. May God be with us as we live to enjoy His blessings in Jesus’ name. Amen. EaEman