

THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS
“One Hundred Percent Fulfilled”
Philippians 4:8, 9

Consider

1. The problem of antinomianism (3:18, 19), the marvelous hope of the believer (3:20, 21), and the friction of the church (4:1-3) all combine to introduce some important injunctions.

2. Paul calls for a full commitment to himself with unfailing joy (4:1-3), unending moderation (4:5) and unruffled peace (4:6, 7).

3. Before concluding his call for total submission to the Lord, Paul adds his appeal for an unblemished life. In faithfulness to the context, this is another step toward the “peace of God” (v. 4:7). This seems clear from the word “finally” (v. 8). This is the same word as in 3:1. There is another side to the story. The two remaining considerations are these:

1. THOUGHT LIFE -- Unblemished v. 8

The only way to conquer evil thoughts is to fight them and cultivate God’s thoughts. This is clearly taught in Scripture (2 Cor. 10:5). The present active participle “bringing into captivity” is patent. Moreover, ones “thoughts” are to be brought “to the obedience of Christ.” Bible conception of intellectual liberty is freedom in Christ. This same critical idea is taught here in the text by the present middle imperative “think,” a verb found in Romans (6:11; 8:36). There is no question but that the believer is held responsible for his thoughts. He can hold them to the high and holy ideals as Scripture teaches. The old saying is true: “you can’t prevent a bird flying over your head, but you can prevent it making a nest in your hair.” Therefore, act as a policeman to resist anything contrary to your testimony.

Here are the positive thoughts which belong to a believer in Christ:

a. Whatever is True

Note that six times the term “whatever” is used. It adds much vigor and emphasis to the exhortation. The utter inexhaustibility of the moral ideal presented here is also clear.

The term “true” may well have reference to words, doctrine, and personal reality. One is to be true-blue in all aspects of his life (Eph. 6:14).

b. Whatever is Honest

Aside from here, this term is only found in the Pastorals (1 Tim. 3:8, 11; Titus 2:2) where it is rendered “grave.” It was used as an epithet of god’s in classical Greek. The concepts of dignity and majesty while yet inviting and attractive, but which effects reverence are latent. Here is noble seriousness.

c. Whatever is Just

Obviously this is not in a mere human sense, but righteousness in God’s sight. It goes beyond just and equal to just and right.

d. Whatever is Pure

This has been described as “stainless.” Anything which stains and difficult to erase is alien to this term. All sins of the flesh are excluded and therefore unchastity. The ground idea is purification because of dedication in sacrifice. Cf. 1 Tim. 5:22, 1 John 3:3.

e. Whatever is Lovely

Personal bearing toward others is surely included here. It is something which excites to love; loveable face to face. Something which is wholly admirable. Found only once in the Bible here.

f. Whatever is Good Report

Now this is a high-toned word. It speaks of being winsome, the quality of being well-reported. Only found here in the N.T., the word is literally “sounding well.”

NOTE: As if all the above are not enough to “think” about, two very generous other words are added. The construction “whatever” is changed to a first class condition (cf. 2:1), therefore assumed to be true.

g. If any Virtue

This term means whatever progress a pre-eminent estimation procures for a person. In the N.T. it is used of God (1 Pet. 2:9; 2 Pet. 1:3). But it is employed of general moral excellence in the estimation of God (2 Pet. 1:5; here). Anything intrinsically virtuous is included.

h. If any Praise

Surely this is in the estimation of God but righteous thinking men would also agree. It is imperative to make praise an index of the things on which you should spend thought.

2. PRACTICE LIFE -- Unblemished v. 9

Six powerful verbs are in this one small verse. Four refer to Paul’s ministry, one is a command to the Philippians, and one an expression to God’s provision. Look at them:

a. Ministry of Paul

This is summarized to the Philippians in four aorist verbs:

1) Learned Here is instruction and doctrine. Masses of doctrine were provided by Paul so believers “learned.” Check out the Pastoral’s emphasis on teaching (1 Tim. 1:3; 4:6, 13, 16; 2 Tim. 4:2, 3).

2) Received The old saying is helpful -- you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink. Not so with the Philippians -- they drank it!

3) Heard The sound of Paul’s voice was not strange, either when present or absent (cf. 2:12). His words were not empty sounds. They had the ring of reality.

4) Seen The prepositional phrase “in me” may well refer to all four verbs, but surely to the last two. It was not that Paul was egotistical, but very practical.

NOTE: The first two verbs cite Paul’s careful instruction and the last two Paul’s concrete example (cf. 1 Thess. 1:7).

b. Command to Philippians

The imperative verb “do” means practice. This is not a mere performance, but an intentional habitual performance. What a powerful injunction.

c. Provision of God

Already the text (v. 7) promises the “peace of God.” Now the Source of all spiritual blessings promises to favor the Philippians with His peace. It is a real promise -- “shall.” Blessed be God.

Consider

Having right thinking and consistent doing will warrant the experience of the very “God of peace with you.” Nothing could be greater. Be a 100% believer. The Lord is worthy.