

*Two Ministry Leaders
at Every State Capitol*

Philippians 4:8

William Samuel Johnson..... 5

John Jay..... 6

John Witherspoon 7

Elias Boudinot..... 8

Noah Webster..... 10



How to Discipline Your Attitude in a Tumultuous World



UCLA basketball coach John Wooden drilling players during practice in Los Angeles, Calif., 1973. PHOTO: Larry Sharkey, Los Angeles Times. Copyright: UCLA Library Special Collections, <https://digital.library.ucla.edu/catalog/ark:/21198/zz0002p9jr>

Toward the end of his 10 national championships in 12 years, Coach Wooden was asked what he thought was the pivotal element to the success of his teams. His answer was simple.

After many seasons of coaching, it had become clear to him that the key to his players' consistent, excellent performance was to work hard to rid them of the tremendous highs and lows associated with victory and defeat.

Continued next page

CURRENT AND
FORMER GOVERNORS

- Phil Bryant* MS
- Mike Dunleavy* AK
- Greg Gianforte* MT
- Sarah Huckabee Sanders* AR
- Sonny Perdue* GA
- Rick Perry* TX
- Jim Pillen* NE
- Tate Reeves* MS
- Kim Reynolds* IA
- Kevin Stitt* OK
- Scott Walker* WI
- Glenn Youngkin* VA

SENATORS

- Marsha Blackburn* TN
- Mike Braun* IN
- Katie Britt* AL
- Ted Budd* NC
- Bill Cassidy* LA
- Kevin Cramer* ND
- Steven Daines* MT
- Joni Ernst* IA
- William Hagerty* TN
- Cindy Hyde-Smith* MS
- James Lankford* OK
- Markwayne Mullin* OK
- Mike Rounds* SD
- Tim Scott* SC
- John Thune* SD

REPRESENTATIVES

- Mark Alford* MO
- Robert Aderholt* AL
- Rick Allen* GA
- Brian Babin* TX
- Don Bacon* NE
- Michael Bost* IL
- Josh Brecheen* OK
- Michael Conaway* TX
- Rick Crawford* AR
- Jake Ellzey* TX
- Ron Estes* KS
- Glenn Grothman* WI
- Kevin Hern* OK
- Richard Hudson* NC
- Bill Huizenga* MI
- Dusty Johnson* SD
- Jim Jordan* OH
- Doug Lamborn* CO
- Nathaniel Moran* TX
- Gary Palmer* AL
- August Pfluger* TX
- Bill Posey* FL
- David Rouzer* NC
- John Rutherford* FL
- Glenn Thompson* PA
- Tim Walberg* MI
- Randy Weber* TX
- Daniel Webster* FL
- Bruce Westerman* AR
- Brandon Williams* NY
- Roger Williams* TX
- Joe Wilson* SC
- Rob Wittman* VA
- Steve Womack* AR
- Rudy Yakym* IN
- Ted Yoho* FL

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

- Governors:** Fridays 9am (EST), Zoom
- Former Cabinet Members / White House Senior Staff:** Fridays 9am (EST), Zoom
- Senate Members:** Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served
- House Members:** Thursdays 8am, AG Hearing Rm., Longworth 1302, hot breakfast served

The views expressed in each Bible Study are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible Study sponsor.



MINISTRY UPDATE

Two Ministry Leaders at Every State Capitol



Following Jesus’ biblical example, CapMin is working to send ministry leaders two-by-two to teach weekly Bible studies to legislators inside U.S. state Capitols. “We will be doing as Jesus did with the apostles and we’ll be working to send ministry leaders two-by-two,” said Pastor Matt Goodsell, CapMin North America global director. “This biblical mission methodology has several benefits.” The team approach provides continuity of CapMin Bible studies in the event a ministry leader needs to be away or retires. Ministry leaders can support and encourage each other, two Bible teachers would be available to disciple members, and each man will bring different gifts that will benefit the ministry.

Matt Goodsell is also ministry leader in the Missouri state Capitol and teaches five separate

Continued on page 4

He had learned the significant value of coaching the attitudes of his players. (I was one of them during his last three years.)

Accordingly, we were taught to control our thinking and emotions: win or lose, as young men we were not allowed to be overly emotional one way or another. In fact spiking the ball in the end zone (which they do in a silly, inferior sport) was strictly forbidden. We were taught to maintain a consistent attitude and control our emotions *at all times*. Our trainer, Ducky Drake, was like an attitude Nazi—if your chin was ever down, he would physically adjust it as well as use stern words of admonition. The result? Wooden’s teams routinely achieved the highest pinnacles of success, in part, I believe, because of our attitudinal consistency.

May I suggest that learning to control your thinking—and the emotions that stem from your thinking—will greatly benefit you too. Read on, my friend!

Ralph Drollinger

I. INTRODUCTION

The organ inside our skulls is an absolutely incredible asset given to us by our Maker; it stands to reason that we should be good stewards of it. The mind that God has given us is a fascinating thing for sure, and as the muscles of our bodies need physical training, our minds need training, nutrition, and rest in order to keep developing and function properly over a lifetime.

Also installed by the Manufacturer in that physical membrane is a precious chip known as our conscience. It too, needs the utmost care and protection to function at its highest level.

How we ought to mentally train our minds is the essence of Philippians 4:8, the passage we’ll unfold this week. In times of difficulty, this verse should be one of your closest friends. It must be a staple in the diet of every believer intent on personal growth. It is a salve in a tumultuous world. Philippians 4:8 is targeted therapy for an otherwise unruly mind and the volatile emotions it produces—emotions that can sabotage your greatest goals and your fondest dreams! As stated in 2 Corinthians 10:5, we need to take *every thought captive to the obedience of Christ*; Philippians 4:8 is a good condensation as to what that means.

I have been truly blessed by memorizing and meditating on Philippians 4:8.



You will too! Here are God's guidelines—His blueprint—as to how to arrest and control our minds. How do godly people think? What should we demand that our minds dwell on? What habits should we be forming in order to best maintain our brains?

Philippians 4:8 appears near the end of the Apostle Paul's epistle to the Church at Philippi, which is the first church he planted in Europe, more specifically, Macedonia (now northern Greece). Danielle and I visited Philippi as we traced Paul's missionary journeys on our honeymoon decades ago.

Overall, the Philippian Epistle is a letter characterized by joy. Herein is a love letter of praise and thanksgiving to one of Paul's favorite churches. Repeatedly throughout my walk with my Lord and Savior, I find myself returning to this small four-chapter book and find it consoling, refreshing, and encouraging. My prayer is that this verse will benefit you as well. In one of the concluding passages, we find Paul instructing believers to take control of their attitudes and emotions. Philippians 4:8 is his prescription for achieving this objective. As we study this important passage and analyze it, let us carefully examine how a believer should be consistently thinking on the inside in order to achieve *consistency and the highest levels of excellent productivity* on the outside! What follows is my best attempt to break down the eight elements of this passage, vital elements necessary for grooving a great attitude in a tumultuous world. Our passage reads,

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is

right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

Underscoring the pertinency of this Bible study, contextually this passage follows Paul's prior command to *be anxious for nothing*. Notice 4:6:

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

In this and the earlier passages in chapter four, listed are a litany of spiritual benefits that inure to the believer: such as *joy* (v. 1), *forbearance* (v. 5, RSV), and *peace* (v. 7). These are set in contrast to the robber of them in verse 6: a villain named *anxiety* (*merimnao*). It's a culprit best defined by what the Greek word means: the biblical idea of "unconscious blasphemy." Think about that! *Anxiety* shouts, "God, you are not capable of handling this matter; therefore, it must be taken into my individual hands." *Anxiety* then, is the wholesale, personal rejection of God's omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence in the believer's life! Said in yet another way,

Anxiety is the wholesale rejection of the biblical command to cast all your cares on Him.

Indeed, in 1 Peter 5:7 you, believer, are commanded to [cast] *all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you*. Be careful to note this juxtaposition in Paul's passage prior to the verse under study this week. Herein is the Pauline,

VERSE OF THE WEEK



Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.



That organ inside your skull is an incredible asset given to us by our Maker; it stands to reason that we should be good stewards of it!





Continued from page 2

Bible studies to legislators and legislative aides. He said employing the two-by-two concept ministry-wide occurred to him as he was having a conversation with Pastor Brian Solomon who co-leads the Ohio Bible legislative Bible study with Pastor Brian Hanson. For many years, Pastor Hanson led weekly Bible studies to Ohio legislators and legislative aides by himself before he was named CapMin Director of international ministries. In that role, he is charged with growing the ministry around the world which requires a fair amount of travel.

To ensure the legislative studies were taught when he was away, Pastor Hanson invited his long-time friend Pastor Solomon to co-lead the study. With a growing appreciation for the ministry model, Pastor Goodsell discussed the two-by-two method with Ralph Drollinger, president and founder of CapMin, who very much liked the idea. “In terms of launching the ministry 25 years ago, it was difficult to find just one ministry leader for a state Capitol—given the newness of the idea,” Drollinger said. “Now it seems the idea has grown to the point that it is easier to find an additional teammate—or two teammates relative to launching a new ministry.” Pastor Goodsell said the ultimate objective is to install two Bible teachers at every state Capitol.

authorial intent (as the late commentator J. Vernon McGee puts it) to *contrast* oil with water—two substances that in no way mix!

Utilize prayer, and dwell on the following extinguishing agents to the fires of anxiety that repeatedly occur in the soul of fallen man.

What is contained in 4:8 are the elemental aspects of godly thinking. These are the determining factors that lead to a proper attitude in a fallen world. By way of application, the consistent practice of the wisdom of 4:8 will largely determine your mental maturity, health, and stamina, now and in the future. Too many elected leaders in D.C. are not as mentally mature as they need to be in order to handle such huge, nationally determinant leadership responsibilities.

For you to possess an ongoing, consistent, strong mental and spiritual condition, one that is characterized by *joy*, *forbearance*, and *peace*,

These eight disciplines must continually permeate your mind, and discipline and guide your thinking patterns.

The prerequisite to the successful practice of such thinking patterns is accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and being richly filled with the Holy Spirit. It is only through His empowering that you can possibly achieve such training and victorious disciplin-

ing of your mind. Otherwise, you are most assuredly *dead in your trespasses and sins* (Ephesians 2:1). Unless you become a Christ follower first, consistent victorious thinking is impossible—Scripture says Satan controls your thinking and your attitudes; your attitudes are *held captive by him to do his will* (2 Timothy 2:26). Make no mistake here, you must have the indwelling Holy Spirit to develop mental maturity that is Christlike and reflecting God’s attributes. It follows, repentance and coming to faith in Christ is a prerequisite to in any way achieve godly thinking patterns in your life.

II. THE SPIRITUAL ATTACK ON THE MIND

Before we examine the passage, a better and deeper understanding of what is stated in the previous paragraph is in order. Every believer is engaged in spiritual warfare, and it is critical to realize this: Satan is battling for control of your mind! He wants us to think incorrectly about everything! In the narrative passage of Mark 8:33, Jesus makes this point. Satan’s battle for the mind is illustrated in the remedy that Jesus states relative to Peter’s misguided thinking:

But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind Me, Satan; for you [Peter] are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.”

Peter here serves to illustrate the essence of ungodly thinking patterns—patterns that Satan implants and exploits. In a personal contrast, notice what the more spiritually mature, now



battle-hardened Peter states in his first epistle (1 Peter 5:8), written years later to other believers.

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Appropriately translated from the Greek text, the word *spirit* is not capitalized, Peter is referring to our personal, chosen, inner thinking patterns. Likened to his earlier self, he's testifying to the fact that Satan desires to *devour* people who don't think straight! When you witness fellow office holders making public statements that defy logic, or that defy the otherwise known and established facts regarding a matter, you should recognize it for what it is: Satan's influence over their minds in his attempt to *devour* not only the individual—but our nation through them! (To illustrate the reality of this, as I write this, I witnessed the majority party in our nation's most esteemed lawmaking body, unanimously pass a vote that defied the clear instructions of its governing charter, the U.S. Constitution!) Your ability to see the satanic battle for the mind, to understand what is really going on, is a sign of mature, biblically informed, spiritual discernment! Buoying this battle for the mind, Ephesians 6:12 states,

Our struggle is not against flesh and blood ... but against the spiritual forces of wickedness.

Herein then is a summation of the daily mental struggle every believer is faced with. It follows, if this is where the battlefield exists that,

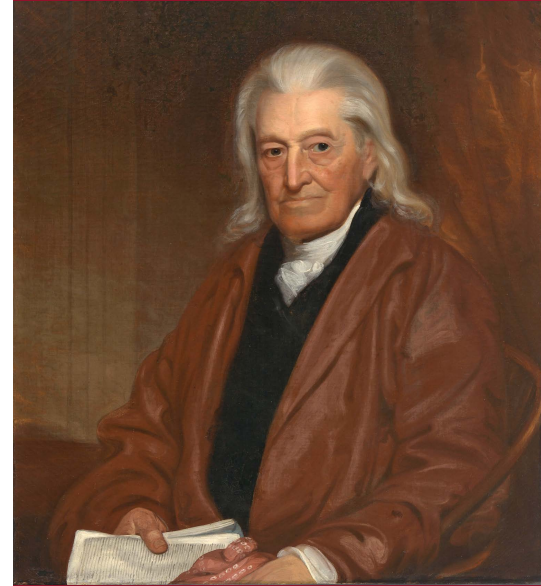
The victorious Christian must possess and maintain a mind and a reflective attitude that are Holy Spirit controlled and highly self disciplined.

In an expansive sense of this analytical insight, America's systemic problem is first and foremost a spiritual one; it is a spiritual battle that is being waged in terms of mental, ideological beliefs. When we talk about polarization in our government, it is first this! Simply stated, the real battle isn't so much along party lines but rather this: will ideas that are biblically based win out over ideas that are not biblically based? Which set of ideals, which worldview will control the majority thinking in our republic? Biblical ideas used to govern our nation, but not so much anymore. This is the essential explanation as to why our nation is in a free fall, across the board, in rapid decline! What follows in Philippians 4:8 are eight mental disciplines that God commands all believers to *dwell on*. Each must guide our thinking patterns lest Satan devour us individually and as a country.

III. THE SPIRITUAL ACTION OF THE MIND

The main verb in the verse (an imperative verb meaning this is a command from God) does not appear until near the end of the passage. The action required by God of the believer is to *dwell* (*logizomai*), meaning, "to reckon, consider, take into account, calculate" in an ongoing sense the eight virtues (which in this case precede the command) which I will expound

William Samuel Johnson



In an address to graduates:

"Your first great duties, you are sensible, are those you owe to Heaven, to your Creator and Redeemer. Let these be ever present to your minds, and exemplified in your lives and conduct. Imprint deep upon your minds the principles of piety towards God, and a reverence and fear of His holy name. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom and its [practice] is everlasting [happiness]."

— William Samuel Johnson, signer of the U.S. Constitution, member of the Continental Congress, judge, framer of the Bill of Rights, president of Columbia College, U.S. senator.

E. Edwards Beardsley, *Life and Times of William Samuel Johnson* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1886), 141–145.



John Jay



“The evidence of the truth of Christianity requires only to be carefully examined to produce conviction in candid minds. ... They who undertake that task will derive advantages.”

— John Jay, president of Congress, diplomat, author of *The Federalist Papers*, original chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, governor of New York.

William Jay, *The Life of John Jay* (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1833), Vol. II, 266, to the Rev. Uzal Ogden on February 14, 1796.

upon individually (in section V). But note and underscore first the spiritual action required of us in the stewardship of our minds: it is to *let your mind dwell*. Are you continually reckoning, considering, calculating, on what follows?

IV. THE SPIRITUAL ARCHETYPE FOR THE MIND

One last necessity before examining each of the characteristics in detail is what succeeds Philippians 4:8 in verse 4:9:

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

To help achieve all of 4:8, Paul immediately pleads for the Philippian believers to imitate him. He offers himself as an example of someone who *practices these things*. In other words these eight characteristics of godly thinking are certainly doable—if Paul can do it, so can you! This sentence structure also serves to make the point that what is taught in 4:8 is perhaps more caught than taught! Who in your circles of friends best emulates these eight virtues? May I suggest that their personal examples provide a powerful impetus to your spiritual maturity and add to the benefits of memorizing and meditating on the virtues. Make sure you befriend others who emulate these mental disciplines so that you can become more like them!

Whereas Scripture didactically explicates, another’s godly life personally illustrates!

A godly example is often more powerful in terms of bringing about change than what is read. Therefore be selective, hang around others who discipline their minds! Hanging around the other sort will work in the opposite direction, as Paul decisively points out in 1 Corinthians 15:33:

Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.”

Choose today to surround yourself with those characterized by godly thinking; their virtues will rub off! Proverbs 27:17 adds in this regard:

Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

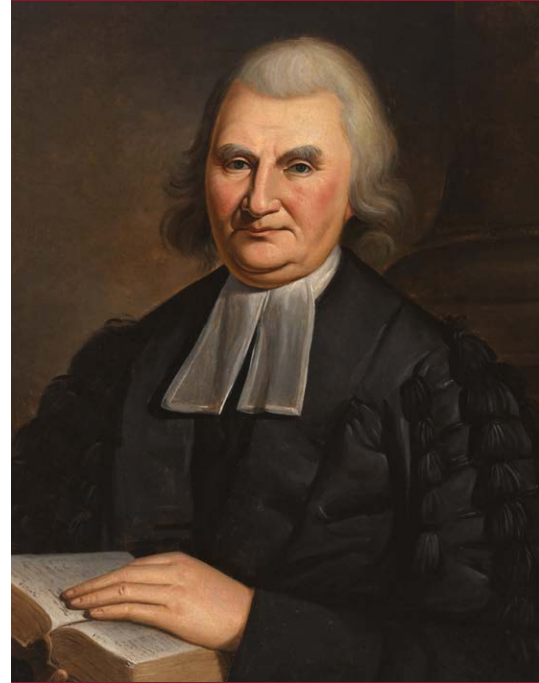
Providing an opportunity for you to establish good friendships is one reason the Members Bible Study exists; take advantage of it in this regard! There are a lot of very godly people around the table whom you could choose to be your best friends for life!

V. THE SPIRITUAL AMMUNITION OF THE MIND

J.B. Lightfoot in his commentary on Philippians provides insights into the order and relationship of this seemingly random shopping list of eight mental focal points listed hereinafter. Again the eight things to *dwell on* are *whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise*. He states (at the risk of this being confusing rather than helpful) the following regarding the overall divine ordering of the shopping list aspects of the passage:



John Witherspoon



Speaking roughly, the words may be said to be arranged in a descending scale. The first four describe the character of the actions themselves, the two former being absolute, the two latter relative; the fifth and sixth point to the moral approbation which they conciliate; while the seventh and eighth in which the form of expression is changed are thrown in as an afterthought, that no motive may be omitted.¹

I suggest you take time to digest what Lightfoot is saying and relate these comments to each of the eight commands to gain a deeper understanding of their ordering and placement.

A. WHATEVER IS TRUE

Paul's definition of *truth* is limited to those things God has revealed in Holy Writ (cf. Romans 1:18). Scripture is Paul's authoritative, final, arbiter for *truth*, and it should be for the public servant as well. A poll or consensus might give an indication of public opinion. Science or psychological data may be instructive on certain matters, but apart from Scripture, all other sources of "truth" should be taken with less certitude. For example, "settled science" once included "facts" that the world was flat and the sun revolved around the earth. Psychologists once routinely administered shock treatments. Pollsters were certain Dewey would be elected president.

The Bible is different and superior to all other sources of *truth*. The validity of God's Word doesn't depend on votes or people's opinions, the Bible is immutable and *true* because it is

breathed by God Himself (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16–17). All other sources of *truth* contain varying and lesser degrees of certitude. Believers are to *dwell* only on things that are scripturally *true*. We should ask ourselves the question, "Is what I am thinking supported by Scripture or not?" Do not allow your mind to *dwell on things* that are not inherently *truthful*, or waste time speculating, i.e., becoming *anxious* about things that might not happen in the future. Don't burn precious emotional energy speculating about what bad things might happen to you! That is foolish!

Wise is the one who dwells on Scripture— who possesses a lifelong hunger—for it is a mighty fortress of always reliable, always certain truth.

One of those immutable *truths* is that God will always take care of you (cf. Matthew 6:28–30)! The prophet Jeremiah heralds this certainty in his book.

Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts (15:16).

Jesus states in John 17:17 an apt summary of this mental orientation, this absolute presupposition and discipline relative to intellectual and ensuing emotional well-being.

Sanctify them in truth; Your word is truth.

"I shall now conclude my discourse by preaching this Savior to all who hear me, and entreating you in the most earnest manner to believe in Jesus Christ; for 'there is no salvation in any other' [Acts 4:12]."

— John Witherspoon, signer of the Declaration of Independence, ratifier of the U.S. Constitution, member of the Continental Congress, president of Princeton, reverend.

John Witherspoon, *The Works of John Witherspoon* (Edinburgh: J. Ogle, 1815), Vol. V, 276, Sermon 15, "The Absolute Necessity of Salvation Through Christ" January 2, 1758.



Elias Boudinot



A letter to his daughter:

“You have been instructed from your childhood in the knowledge of your lost state by nature—the absolute necessity of a change of heart and an entire renovation of soul to the image of Jesus Christ—of salvation through His meritorious righteousness only—and the indispensable necessity of personal holiness without which no man shall see the Lord [Hebrews 12:14]. You are well acquainted that the most perfect and consummate doctrinal knowledge is of no avail without it operates on and sincerely affects the heart, changes the practice, and totally influences the will—and that without the almighty power of the Spirit of God enlightening your mind, subduing your will, and

Continued next page

In the wisdom of Proverbs, a book set in a largely verbal culture, *truth* had to do with *true* speech as opposed to speaking lies or deception (cf. Proverbs 22:21). This insight makes for a practical application point: go to great lengths to discipline your speech in terms of *truthfulness*. Do not exaggerate, speculate, speak in generalities, provide false impressions, or mislead. Do not be opportunistic. Do not talk too much (cf. James 1:19; 3:5). Ephesians 6:14 states in these regards, *having girded your loins with truth*. The degree to which you discipline your mind to *dwell* only on things that are actually, verifiably *true* is the degree to which you will have a more consistent attitude and emotional maturity.

B. WHATEVER IS HONORABLE

This Greek word here for *honorable* is *semnos* and is found elsewhere only in the Pastoral Epistles where it is a descriptor essential to spiritual leaders. The idea of this virtue is for us to possess mental “seriousness, sublimity, and dignity.” It is the sister idea of worthiness. In contrast, we cannot allow our minds to *dwell on* things that are unworthy of our time and attention, nor the baser things beneath them. Avoid the profane and *dwell on* the sacred. Choose only high-protein items from the menu of a carb-loaded, fallen world; consume dignified content, not empty calories such as gossip, pornography, “non-music,” romance novels, video games or their likes. Those things serve to depreciate, versus “content in” that builds the mind. Per the Lightfoot quote, these first two virtues are absolutes, non-negotiable aspects of our mentality. In that God (in 2 Timothy 1:7, KJV) promis-

es to give believers a *sound mind*, *truth* and *honor* are two mental focal points we must *dwell on* to keep our brains shipshape! Choose this moment to upload into your cranial computer only *truthful* and *honorable* content. Remember, “garbage in, garbage out.”

C. WHATEVER IS RIGHT

What is the *right* or just thought that we should choose to *dwell on* ? *Dikaios* carries the idea of thinking only on what is just and proper. Is your mind disciplined to think about and determine to do the right thing when there is no one else watching? This is a remarkable character quality of the former chairman (now treasurer) of the board of the ministry I serve; I have known him for almost 50 years (since my college days), and he consistently thinks and determines to do what is right relative to biblical principles. And what a lifelong example that has been to me! If we lack personal discipline apart from accountability, then in private we will sin. Do you possess a strong discipline to *dwell on* and do what is scripturally *right* no matter the consequences? Such actions can come only from an inwardly disciplined, godly mind that has *determined beforehand* to do what is *right* relative to the presenting situation. God will bless that in huge ways over the course of your life!

D. WHATEVER IS PURE

Pure (*hagnos*) means “holy, chaste.” In the Book of Proverbs, the equivalent Greek word (per the LXX [Greek Septuagint]) is *tabor*. The word stands to contrast the thoughts of the wicked.



Notice Proverbs 15:26 in this light.

Evil plans are an abomination to the LORD, but pleasant words are pure.

Thus, the idea of *dwelling on whatever is pure* has the connotation of focusing our minds on things that are not besmirched or tainted or in some way evil. Cease all impure mind-wandering ventures, beloved Member friends! Don't go there; nip such thinking patterns in the bud! You have much better things to spend your energies on!

In the Philippian epistle, *pure* stands in contrast to those whose motives and plans were impure and caused distress to the Apostle Paul (1:17). This idea therefore encompasses not *dwelling on* or devising evil toward another. Disciplined godly minds *dwell on* their presenting circumstances with a determination to do what is *right* and *pure*.

Rather than think about the hurts done to you by people from the past, choose to instead dwell on ideas for the future and what could be!

Small minds think and speak about people who have harmed them in the past whereas great minds think and speak about ideas that could benefit people in the future. Paul gives us an additional HUGE insight into his pure thinking disciplines in Philippians 3:13.

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies be-

hind and reaching forward to what lies ahead.

During his house arrest, Paul was being pilloried—in this case not by unbelievers—but by fellow jealous believers (cf. Philippians 1:12–18). His response was not to *dwell on* the negative but *reach forward* in his mind *to what lies ahead!*

The disciplined, pure-seeking mind of an individual fortifies itself with big ideas about the future, not small, petty people in the past.

The past is finite, and the future is infinite! Such disciplined thinking leads to much success and accomplishment relative to the hands we have been dealt in a fallen, often disappointing world; for sure people will fail and betray you, but how you respond is everything! Remember too that God greatly uses people who have been deeply wounded—and have overcome their wounds in their positive thinking and manifest attitude! Keep your mind focused on *what is pure*.

E. WHATEVER IS LOVELY

Our *minds* should *dwell on* the things that are admirable by the world at large such as the works of Beethoven or Mother Teresa, a scientific invention, an architectural masterpiece, a medicinal breakthrough, an athletic achievement, or the grooming of the Master's golf course in Augusta, Georgia—be they authored or accomplished by believers or not: all are created in the image of God who accomplish

Elias Boudinot (continued)

continually drawing you to Himself, you can do nothing. ... And may the God of your parents (for many generations past) seal instruction to your soul and lead you to Himself through the blood of His too greatly despised Son, Who notwithstanding, is still reclaiming the world to God through that blood, not imputing to them their sins. To Him be glory forever!"

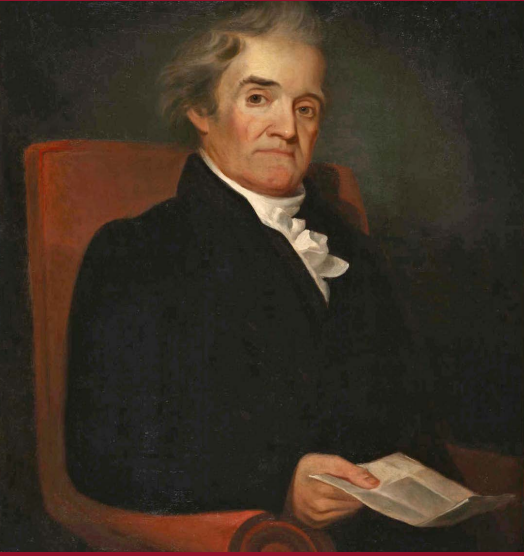
— Elias Boudinot, president of Congress, signed the Peace Treaty to end the American Revolution, first attorney admitted to the U.S. Supreme Court Bar, framer of the Bill of Rights, director of the U.S. Mint.

Elias Boudinot, *The Age of Revelation* (Philadelphia: Asbury Dickins, 1801), pp. xii–xiv, from the prefatory remarks to his daughter, Susan, on October 30, 1782; see also *Letters of the Delegates to Congress: 1774–1789*, Paul H. Smith, editor (Washington, D. C.: Library of Congress, 1992), Vol. XIX, 325, from a letter of Elias Boudinot to his daughter, Susan Boudinot, on October 30, 1782.





Noah Webster



“[T]he Christian religion ... is the basis, or rather the source, of all genuine freedom in government. ... I am persuaded that no civil government of a republican form can exist and be durable in which the principles of Christianity have not a controlling influence.”

— Noah Webster, war soldier, judge, legislator, educator, “Schoolmaster to America.”

K. Alan Snyder, *Defining Noah Webster: Mind and Morals in the Early Republic* (New York: University Press of America, 1990), 253, to James Madison on October 16, 1829.

them and, therefore, bespeak of God’s innate goodness and glory! All are *lovely* and admirable! *Let your mind dwell* also *on these things*! How many “Christians” do you know who are critical of everything, subtly postulating their moral superiority? As such they become cynical and condescending, offering little praise to or of others. (This is a barnacle of Fundamentalism, which in the past has so valiantly, necessarily and effectively warred against Theological Liberalism.) Whoever might possess such a mentality and negativity is living in contradiction to what this biblical clause teaches!

Believers should give praise and celebrate the virtuous image and greatness of God as manifest in and through mankind, both regenerate and not.

Enjoying *whatever is lovely* then, is a biblically conciliatory approbation, an apt illustration of the breadth of mental outlook said to be suitable by the apostle. Lest you think I am reading too much into one clause of one verse in the Bible, at least two other passages reinforce this idea: Romans 12:15 and Galatians 6:10. They state in general, respectively, *Rejoice with those who rejoice* and, *So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith*. Who or what have you praised as *lovely* today? Form this winsome habit and praise something that is lovely at least once a day—learn to be on the lookout for *whatever is lovely*!

F. WHATEVER IS OF GOOD REPUTE

Akin to the broadness of *whatever is lovely*, *whatever is of good repute* has an aim toward virtues generally respected in the broadness of God’s creation and amongst mankind in general. *Dwell on* things of *good repute* such as respect for others, manners, kindnesses, consideration, listening, use of language, dress, and decorum, etc. This relates “to the kind of conduct that is worth considering because it is well spoken of by people in general.”² Rise today to a higher standard! Be noble, seek for an uplifted culture by noticing, underscoring and praising things of *good repute*.

G. IF THERE IS ANY EXCELLENCE

Excellence (*arête*), “moral goodness,” is a seldom used word by Paul, one he has imported from secular moralizing Greek culture. As used by him, this is the basis for mental disciplines expressing themselves in noble actions. In his commentary on Philippians, O’Brien suggests that the better translation is therefore “moral excellence”³ which seems to fit more with the overall context of the passage. In mountaineering the word *arête* connotes a ridge on the face of a mountain—it is something that is *outstanding* to the eye of the climber. Again, this relates to our thinking in keeping with God’s overall goodness in our mind. If goodness is an attribute of God and a *fruit of the Spirit* (Galatians 5:22), then we are godly when we think “goodly” *dwelling on* things that are *outstanding*. Go out of your way today to verbally—outland-



ishly—underscore something that is morally *excellent* and outstanding!

H. AND IF THERE IS ANYTHING WORTHY OF PRAISE

These combined words are descriptive of the mental discipline of praising others in our minds and with our mouths. Such a mentality is becoming of God and others. Don't be negative. Believers are to *have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 2:5). Be quick to spot something praiseworthy in another, and be generous in sharing it. This too is something we all need to work to discipline our attitude and actions. Believers should be winsome and attractive in their thinking, speech, and overall demeanor.

VI. CONCLUSION

In both Ephesians 5:2 and Philippians 4:18, believers with the aforementioned virtues are termed *a fragrant aroma*. This is beautiful summary terminology of the passage we have studied this week. Unfortunately for the cause of Christ and the advance of the Kingdom, too many non-believers accurately refer to too many believers with phrases describing a different sort of aroma—accurately so. The virtues of a godly mind as described here are not only imbuing of the attributes of God but depicting of an overall proper attitude in the life of us who are chosen out of this world by God to represent Him—God's hand-chosen emissaries and ambassadors in and to a fallen world! What Paul describes here is not a critical, condescending, stuffy self-righteousness that proves to be such a turn-off to unbelievers. We

must always be informed in this regard that it is *the kindness of God* [that] *leads* [others] *to repentance* (Romans 2:4). Philippians 1:10 adds one last key ingredient relative to mental outlook:

So that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ.

By putting on and disciplining yourself by and with the aforementioned mental virtues, you will be *approving the things that are excellent*—which means you will come across as *sincere*. The Greek word for *sincere* (*eilikrines*) means “judged by sunlight, unalloyed, pure.” More literally it can be translated as “without wax.” The word was used of a potter whose pot cracks were not waxed over, i.e. others could see the blemishes because they were unfilled. Paul is stating that believers who are a *fragrant aroma* are unpretentious, having a presence that non-believers find genuine and attractive! They are those who are for sure not perfect, but at the same time are filled with praise for others who are not perfect! The disciplined, godly mind as defined in and by Philippians 4:8 depicts an attractive person who possesses a Christ-like spirit. I have memorized and often meditate on this passage.

**I visualize putting
Philippians 4:8 in my head
like I would my Gore-Tex
parka over my head
during a hailstorm high
up in the Sierra Nevada—
I remain shielded by**



NOW AVAILABLE

The book of Acts records how a small band of men—the apostles—in very short order *turned the world upside down* (Acts 17:6, KJV) during the first century in which they lived. This small team of uneducated, common men were not elite leaders, so how were they able to saturate the world with the gospel—changing lives, changing culture, and eventually changing the Roman Empire?

Scripture provides the answer: not only did they fulfill the Great Commission one soul at a time through a ministry of geometric evangelism and discipleship, but they succeeded *by concentrating on and impacting a particular element of society, specifically kings and all who are in authority* (1 Timothy 2:1–4).

All in Authority: Reigniting the Bible's Top-Down Missions Strategy provides the biblical exegesis for this missional strategy that is found in both the Old and New Testaments. The book provides a clarion call for the Church to make political public servants a priority mission field in our nation today. Request your complimentary copy at capmin.org.



rehearsing the words in my mind—warming my mind with them.

Ask God to help you discipline your thinking in ways that are pleasing to Him in the often midst of a tumultu-

ous storm pounding down on you. It is amazing what such a small practice can do to keep my head together and even keeled when bad weather strikes. I suggest you put your hoodie on as well here in D.C. May God strengthen you with the wonderful and powerful guiding truths of Philippians 4:8!



Making Disciples of Jesus Christ in the Political Arena Throughout the World



Capitol Ministries provides Bible studies, evangelism, and discipleship to political leaders. Founded in 1996, Capitol Ministries has started ongoing ministries in more than forty U.S. state Capitols and dozens of foreign federal Capitols.

Capitol Ministries
Mail Processing Center
Post Office 30994
Phoenix, AZ 85046
661.288.2622
capmin.org

© 2024 Capitol Ministries®
All rights reserved.



/capitolministries

1. J.B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (Hendrickson publishers: October 1999), 161.
2. Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 418.
3. Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians, A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Carlisle: Eerdmans, 1991), 506.

ESTABLISHED MINISTRIES: UNITED STATES

Albany NEW YORK • Annapolis MARYLAND • Atlanta GEORGIA • Augusta MAINE • Austin TEXAS • Bismarck NORTH DAKOTA • Boise IDAHO
Boston MASSACHUSETTS • Denver COLORADO • Dover DELAWARE • Carson City NEVADA • Charleston WEST VIRGINIA • Cheyenne WYOMING
Columbia SOUTH CAROLINA • Columbus OHIO • Concord NEW HAMPSHIRE • Des Moines IOWA • Hartford CONNECTICUT
Harrisburg PENNSYLVANIA • Helena MONTANA • Honolulu HAWAII • Jefferson City MISSOURI • Juneau ALASKA • Lansing MICHIGAN
Lincoln NEBRASKA • Little Rock ARKANSAS • Madison WISCONSIN • Montgomery ALABAMA • Montpelier VERMONT
Nashville TENNESSEE • Oklahoma City OKLAHOMA • Olympia WASHINGTON • Phoenix ARIZONA • Providence RHODE ISLAND
Raleigh NORTH CAROLINA • Richmond VIRGINIA • Sacramento CALIFORNIA • Saint Paul MINNESOTA • Salem OREGON
Santa Fe NEW MEXICO • Springfield ILLINOIS • Topeka KANSAS • Trenton NEW JERSEY

ESTABLISHED MINISTRIES: INTERNATIONAL

Brussels BELGIUM • Porto Novo BENIN • Brasilia BRAZIL • Ouagadougou BURKINA FASO • Gitega BURUNDI • Yaounde CAMEROON • Manitoba CANADA
Bangui CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC • San Jose COSTA RICA • Yamoussoukro COTE D'IVOIRE • Kinshasa DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
Quito ECUADOR • Malabo EQUATORIAL GUINEA • Mbabane ESWATINI • Addis Ababa ETHIOPIA • Brussels EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
Helsinki FINLAND • Suva FIJI • Libreville GABON • Strasbourg GERMANY • Accra GHANA • Conakry GUINEA • Port-au-Prince HAITI
Tegucigalpa HONDURAS • New Delhi INDIA • Rome ITALY • Nairobi KENYA • Riga LATVIA • Monrovia LIBERIA • Vilnius LITHUANIA
Antananarivo MADAGASCAR • Lilongwe MALAWI • Mexico City MEXICO • Chisinau MOLDOVA • Maputo MOZAMBIQUE • Nauru • Kathmandu NEPAL
Wellington NEW ZEALAND • Abuja NIGERIA • Skopje NORTH MACEDONIA • Oslo NORWAY • Ngerulmud PALAU • Port Moresby PAPUA NEW GUINEA
Warsaw POLAND • Brazzaville REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO • Bucharest ROMANIA • Apia SAMOA • Edinburgh SCOTLAND • Belgrade SERBIA
Freetown SIERRA LEONE • Bratislava SLOVAKIA • Honiara SOLOMON ISLANDS • Pretoria SOUTH AFRICA • Seoul SOUTH KOREA
Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte SRI LANKA • Bern SWITZERLAND • Papeete TAHITI • Dodoma TANZANIA • Nuku'alofa TONGA • Kyiv UKRAINE
London UNITED KINGDOM • Washington, D.C. USA • Montevideo URUGUAY • Port Vila VANUATU • Cardiff WALES • Lusaka ZAMBIA • Harare ZIMBABWE