

# Michael Apostol: Think on These Things (15/1/19)

## Introduction:

Today we will be thinking about thinking.

Our scripture reading today came from Philippians 4:8. It says "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, 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."

This message comes to us from the Apostle Paul in his prison cell in Rome. Yet, in spite of his adverse circumstances, it is one of the most upbeat letters that he wrote. In it he says things like 'rejoice,' and 'be glad.' He also concludes 'I have learned in whatever state I am to be content.'

## The Verse:

Philippians 4:8 - "Meditate" on such things

The word 'meditate' could also have been translated as 'ruminate.' It means to keep on thinking about something over and over again. To dwell on it, take it in, have it become a part of you.

What do you think of when you think your favourite thoughts? This is what Paul is talking about.

Philippians 4:8 - "Brethren"

Paul is writing to us. This message is for each one of us.

Philippians 4:8 - There are six adjectives that Paul says should make up the substance of our thinking.

The 6 Virtues:

1. True
2. Honourable
3. Right
4. Pure
5. Lovely
6. Of Good Repute

## Paul's Evaluative Criterion:

- Intellectual Criteria
  - True
  - Worthy of Respect
- Moral Criteria
  - Right
  - Pure
- Aesthetic Criteria
  - Lovely
  - Praiseworthy

Many Christians assume that it is more about what I 'do' than what I 'think,' But Jesus corrects our misconception by telling us that what we think informs our actions and is at the heart of our doing.

Philippians 4:8 is like a filter, through which we can then purify our thoughts, thus assuring pure actions.

Evaluate before you ruminate. This is the call of Paul in Philippians 4:8. Don't think about things without first evaluating the quality of our thoughts.

Illustration: Airport security

- In the post 9/11 world airport security is a normal part of our lives. If you wish to go through security and onto your flight you must pass through the scanners. Before it arrives at the inner sanctum of the airport, everything must pass through the filter. This is the kind of thing that the Apostle Paul envisages for you and I.

### **Why is Paul so concerned about our thinking?**

Proverbs 23:7a - "For as he thinks within himself, so he is."

- *"The thoughts and the feelings combined make up the moral character."* Ellen White, Mind Character & Personality pg 660

Before a thought is dwelt upon, to the point that it becomes a part of who we are, it must pass through the Philippians 4:8 filter.

Have you ever noticed that some people are like a breath of fresh air - because of the way that they think and act, whereas others are like they've been baptised in lemon juice - depressing!

- "Evaluate before you contemplate." Michael Apostol

### **Media:**

The majority of the content that we consume daily would not pass the Philippians 4:8 test. Satan is using the media to distract us and take us away from Christ.

We should put our media through the Philippians 4:8 test before consuming it.

*"We need a constant sense of the ennobling power of pure thoughts and the damaging influence of evil thoughts. Let us place our thoughts upon holy things. Let them be pure and true; for the only security for any soul is right thinking."* Ellen White, Reflecting Christ pg 308

*"Keep your Bible with you. As you have opportunity, read it; fix the texts in your memory. Even while you are walking the streets you may read a passage and meditate upon it, thus fixing it in the mind."* Steps to Christ pg 90

### **Challenge:**

In this New Year let our challenge be to evaluate our thinking by the Philippians 4:8 criteria.