

In 1 Sam 2:30 a prophet came to the high priest Eli and told him what God expected of him and the rewards for obeying God, and then he said ... **for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.** This is a principle that continues even until today. Those who honor God, whether individuals, congregations, or nations can expect to be honored by God. We can honor God with our time, talents, and/or treasure. We can do it with our mouth, mind, or ministry.

We are going to be talking about **honoring God with our Minds.** We can't overstate the importance of the mind. Surveys show that the majority of the cases treated by Primary Care Physicians are psychosomatic – illness in the body that begins in the mind. One doctor stated that only about 16% of the illnesses that he treated could be traced back to a physical organic cause. The mind is so important to our physical wellbeing. Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, *"The mind is an enclosure into which nothing harmful can enter without your permission."*

As critical as the mind is to our physical wellbeing, it is just as important to our spiritual wellbeing. The mind is really the "mission control center" for our lives. It controls our values, thoughts and beliefs because it controls the way we think. The mind determines our attitudes, our moods, and our emotions. As a Christian formulates his thoughts and values and the things that determines his outlook on life, he is to think the thoughts of Christ. This is why we are told in **(Phil 2:5) Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.** Your mind is so important. **(Rom 12:2) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.** The essence, for the Christian it is the way that we think. Instead of thinking like the world thinks, we learn to think like the Lord thinks. In Phil 4, Paul gives 3 things to do about the mind renewal process

First he tells us that some thoughts MUST BE PURGED FROM OUR MINDS. What you feed your mind determines what kind of mind you will have. There use to be an electronic device called a FIFO – first in-first out. From that concept, someone came up with the expression for the mind – garbage in garbage out. What you put in your mind determines your behavior. That's why we need to be careful about the thoughts that become implanted into our minds. There are some thoughts that enter the mind of a

Christian that are unwholesome and need to be purged. For instance, condemning thoughts ought to be purged from our minds. There are some who live under a cloud of guilt. They seem to spend most of their time hiding from shame or running from remorse.

Now the right kind of guilt because of sin is a godly emotion and a good quality. Ron Stough from Duncan Ok said, *“Godly guilt from sin is God’s alarm clock for the soul because it wakes us up to the fact that something is wrong in our lives that needs to be dealt with.”* A person has a serious problem when he can do wrong without feeling remorse.

But the kind of guilt I am talking about is **“NEEDLESS GUILT.”** We’re talking about that lingering showing of guilt that weights heavy on a person’s heart even after he has dealt with his sin and repented of that sin and has received God’s forgiveness.

There was a man on one occasion that was overburdened and almost paralyzed with guilt. It was almost more than he could bear and he could not function normally any more. It was taking a toll on his family, his business and all his associates and close fiends. He even started to drink and it was all because of the guilt he felt about something that he had done in the past. Now he had done all that the Lord expected him to do in order to receive forgiveness; but he couldn’t forgive himself. We need to learn that when God forgives us, we need to forgive ourselves and when God forgets, we ought to put it behind us and move on in our lives. This is the message Paul leaves for us. In *(1 Tim 1:13-14) Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. {14} And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.* Paul did a lot of bad things. In fact, in v 15 he says that he was the chiefest of sinners. Yet he was able to move beyond that to become a faithful servant of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us not be controlled by the past. While we may learn and benefit from the past, we don’t have to be enslaved to it.

So we need to purge condemning thoughts from our mind. In addition to **condemning thoughts**, there are some **confusing thoughts** that ought to be removed from our minds. It’s possible for a person to be confused and become all mixed up with their thinking. It’s possible for a person to convince themselves that something is true when

it's not true at all. We have a way of rationalizing things and sometimes people convince themselves that wrong is right, that error is true, and that fiction is fact. It's like those Paul described in *(Rom 1:25) Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.* This attitude of putting good for evil and evil for good is prevalent in our society today. As Christians, we must learn to think clearly and correctly and remove these confusing thoughts from our minds.

Then there are **deceiving thoughts** that need to be removed from our minds. Paul mentioned one of those deceiving thought in *(Gal 6:3) For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.* In that verse he is talking about the person who is overconfident in his spiritual wellbeing. In context, this passage is talking about a person who has sinned and those who are spiritually strong should reach out to that brother and help him bear his burden. As you do, don't think of yourself too highly. Don't think of yourself too righteous, less you deceive yourself. You are not immune to sin and if you play with fire, YOU WILL BE BURNED. ■ *(1 Cor 10:12) Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.* No one is so strong spiritually that they can afford to put themselves in a situation where they will be tempted and lead astray. You watch where you go and what you do. If you think that you are above temptations, then you are deceiving yourself.

There are **divided thoughts**. *(James 1:8) A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.* Jesus said in the sermon on the mount, *(Matt 6:24) No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.* You can not hold onto the world and God at the same time. You have to choose one or the other. There are some people who are in a spiritual tug of war between heaven/earth – right/wrong. They are confused in their thinking and their loyalties are divided. What is needed is for people to have some convictions and stand for what is right and not be doubled minded

No. 2. There are some thoughts that ought to be PRACTICED BY OUR MINDS.
There was a lady in the kitchen who one day was cutting up some fresh vegetables for a salad when her college age daughter came through and told her mother of her plans to

go to a movie. The girl told her mother that she knew it had a bad rating but all of her friends were going and she wanted to go. When the mother heard that, she didn't say anything but asked the girl to hand her the trash. She then pulled out some trash and mixed in into the salad. The daughter gasped and couldn't believe what she had seen. She said, "Mother what are you doing putting that garbage in the salad?" The mother replied, "I noticed that you didn't mind putting some garbage in your mind, so I figured you wouldn't mind putting a little into your salad.

Let me stress that we need to be careful about what we put into our minds. In Phil 4, Paul tells us what should fill our minds. ***Phil 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*** In contrast to filling your mind with garbage, the Christian should fill his mind with the peace of God. Such peace, when it dominates your thought and thinking, "shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

The question becomes, how do you get the peace of God and then how do you keep it? First notice Paul begins v 6 by saying, ***Be careful for nothing.*** That expression means not to be anxious or worried. Worry is a problem that most of us struggle with from time to time. For some it is an ongoing problem, and for those people, life is miserable. The word for "worry" comes from a German word which literally means "*to choke,*" and there is nothing that will choke the joy out of life any more than worry. Someone has described worry as "*interest paid on tomorrow's trouble.*" Worry pulls a person back and forth between faith and doubt. Now we all realize that worry really accomplished nothing – it is wasted energy.

Worry is not only wasted time; it is also a wicked thing. Let's make a distinction between worry and legitimate concerned; but when that concern becomes an obsession and takes control of your life, then it becomes wrong. Worry becomes a sin because it is an insult to God. When a person worries, he is in essence saying to God, "*I don't think you can handle my problem, so I need to deal with it myself.*" Worry is really a lack of faith and confidence in God. The antidote to worry is prayer. ***Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your***

requests be made known unto God. What Paul is saying is to take that problem to God and leave it with Him. Peter has the same message ***(1 Pet 5:7) Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*** The result of casting those burdens to God is a “peace of God that passes all understanding.” So, by prayer and supplication you take that problem and lay it at the feet of God.

We see this illustrated by Jesus our Lord. In the garden of Gethsemane prior to his arrest, Jesus told his disciples ***(Mat 26:38) My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.*** While this agonizing prayer to his Father in Heaven, it says sweat as great drops of blood fell from his brow. The burden of the cross was weighing heavy upon him, but as he emerged from that prayer, there was never again the agony, and sweat, and concern. Instead his demeanor was one of perfect peace and calm as he stood before his accusers. It was this way because he laid that burden at the feet of God.

While the peace of God is captured by faith, it is continued by focus. The text tells us to pray with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is a focus on how God has helped us in the past, what he is doing at present, or will do in the future. When problems come, you can focus on what God has already done for you and what He will do for you. It makes no difference how difficult the problems are they are not too big for God. God can work all things to the good for those that love Him and this assurance gives the child of God peace. This peace of God passes human comprehension and understanding.

This peace will ***shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*** This word “keep” comes from a military term meaning “guard.” It refers to a garrison of soldiers given the responsibility of protecting a city. If you follow the instructions outlined here, then God’s peace will guard or protect your mind and thoughts.

No. 3. There are some thoughts that need to be PRIORITIZED IN OUR MINDS.
(Phil 4:8) Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. If there be any virtue and praise, think (ponder) on these things. This word “think” described a workman who made very careful and precise

measurements before he started his work. It's kinda the idea "*measure twice, cut once.*" So there is wisdom when the Christian calculates what kind of thoughts with which he fills his heart. Let us fill our thoughts that reflect Christ person. Christ was indeed honest, just, pure, etc. The items listed describe the nature of Christ; so it's good to focus on such thoughts. Such thoughts will embrace thoughts that are lovely and admirable. Such thoughts will draw you closer to the God and such behavior will draw others closer to you. Before we allow a thought to enter our mind, let us consider if it is consistence with the thoughts of Jesus and reflect the kind of person that he was.

Secondly, let us think thoughts that will result in Christ praise. If people could read your mind and know what you are thinking, how would they feel about you? What if we could reflect your thoughts on the big screen for all to see; would it bother you? Would it cause others to think less of you? Jesus knows the hearts of men. While others may not know what's on you mind, Jesus does. Will Jesus praise or criticize your thoughts? ***(Psa 19:14) Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.*** What a marvelous thought and what a marvelous prayer for us to pray each and every day.

Invitation