

Thinking Well

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

Philippians 4:8 (NIV)

Sometimes when a friend tells me a sad story I will say in response, “You have the gift of discouragement.” It is a humorous response on my part, but still, the person has made me sad by telling me the story.

Any one of us can become depressed if we constantly think of discouraging things. I often wonder how people in certain occupations—like funeral directors—find the emotional perks to be cheerful when they deal with sorrow all day long. They are a very special class of individuals.

Our verses today encourage us to ponder things that are uplifting, excellent, and so on. We are to have our minds dwell on things that bring joy to our hearts if we wish to keep ourselves from depression.

One way of describing a depressed person is to say they see the hole and not the donut, or they see the cup is half empty instead of considering that it is half full.

Our Lord, of all people, had reason to be depressed as He faced the cross. But we are told that He kept the reward of His suffering in mind in order to endure the agonies and humiliation He was about to experience. He looked beyond the cross to see the eternal good that was to come from it for His people, and that way of thinking caused Him to be strong.

Hebrews 12:2-3 (NIV) says, “...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

Here is great wisdom for those who are weary and about to faint under the load of sorrow they bear. We need to work to control our thoughts. We need to think well, we need to think accurately on the wonderful things that are described in our

verses today.

I know of one person who suffered much from depression. This man made posters of Bible verses to place around his tiny apartment that spoke of the eternal glories that wait for Christians to claim in their eternal home. This is one way to think well.

Other ways to think well include looking at the beauties of creation which tell of the artistry, the engineering feats, and the music of God. Towering mountains, babbling brooks, and song birds all tell us of the matchless wonders of our great God. May you find a way today to bring all your thoughts captive to Christ as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:5 (NIV) “...we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

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