

Three Steps To A Healthy Mind

Tim Dubberly, January 2, 2005

Text: Philippians 4:4-8

Introduction:

The devil realizes that if he can keep your mind disturbed, confused, irritated, mad, angry, jealous, or uneasy, he can keep you from a healthy mindset, which in turn will keep you from a healthy relationship with God.

Prior to these verses, Paul writes, to the church at Philippi, for the church to stand fast and help these women who had helped him in his ministry. Then he turns his attention to the steadfastness of their mind, and he gives them some concrete steps to defeat the devil and maintain a healthy mind.

As Christians, we are to be Christlike; displaying all the attributes of Christ in this world. Our lives should reflect the love, grace, and mercy of God to this dark and dying world.

■ Several centuries before Christ, Alexander the Great came out of Macedonia and Greece to conquer the Mediterranean world. He didn't know it, but God was using him to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah--for it was as a result of Alexander's conquests that Greek was established as the common language of the Grecian and later even Roman Empire. On one of his campaigns, Alexander received a message that one of his soldiers had been continually, and seriously, misbehaving and thereby shedding a bad light on the character of all the Greek troops. And what made it even worse was that this soldier's name was also Alexander. When the commander learned this, he sent word that he wanted to talk to the errant soldier in person. When the young man arrived at the tent of Alexander the Great, the commander asked him, "What is your name?" The reply came back, "Alexander, sir." The commander looked him straight in the eye and said forcefully, "Soldier, either change your behavior or change your name." This story has a lesson for each of us. When we call ourselves Christians, we are identifying with Jesus Christ. When we wear a cross, or ICHTHUS, or put Christian stickers on our cars, we are being a witness for Him. We are being identified with the name of Christ. Is your behavior compatible with that name and with the symbol that shows that you are a Christian?

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) p. 299-300.

Here at these three life changing “steps” to a healthy mind.

- I. First we need to anchor our lives through prayer (4-6).
 - A. An intimate prayer life will bring a joyful spirit.
 - Paul said “Rejoice in the Lord”.
 - B. A good prayer life will produce a gentle spirit.
 - Paul said, “let your gentleness be known to all men.”
 - C. Prayer is the key to changing things.
 - It removes the anxiety and produces a carefree mindset.
 - A good relationship with God keeps things fresh, interesting, and exciting.
 - Our prayers should be laced with supplication, requests that reach out to God for others.

■ It is no use to ask God with factitious earnestness for A when our whole mind is in reality filled with B. We must lay before him what is in us, not what ought to be in us.

C. S. Lewis, Letters to Malcolm, Chiefly on Prayer

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988), p. 422.

- II. Then we need to yield our mind to the peace of God (7).
 - A. Jesus left us a peace that passes all understanding.
 - He did not want our minds to be troubled.
 - B. This peace will guard your heart from the attacks of the enemy.
 - We are in His hand and nothing can penetrate His protection.
 - C. And this peace will stabilize your mind.

■ A true story: A retired couple was alarmed by the threat of nuclear war so they undertook a serious study of all the inhabited places on the globe. Their goal was to determine where in the world would be the place to be least likely affected by a nuclear war. A place of ultimate security. They studied and traveled, traveled and studied. Finally they found the place. And on Christmas they sent their pastor a card from their new home--in the Falkland Islands. However, their "paradise" was soon turned into a war zone by Great Britain and Argentina.

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988), p. 402.

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III. Finally, walk in the presence of the Lord (8).

A. Think through the mind of Christ.

- Think about His truth.
- Think noble thoughts- show integrity, humility, and honesty.
- Think justly- innocent and holy, also being fair& righteous, think about being a blessing and not to receive a blessing.
- Think pure thoughts- clean, innocent, modest, sinless, mind of Christ.
- Think lovely thoughts- paint a picture for your mind which promotes friendliness towards others.
- Think about good reports- revolve in your mind the things that are good, uplifting, encouraging, faith building.
- Avoid negative thoughts, accepting bad news, destructive feelings that produce anger or bitterness, and worry that dominates the mind time.

B. We need to be virtuous in our thoughts.

- Think thoughts of valor for God- winning battles and freeing souls.
- Think thoughts of godliness.
- Be sympathetic and empathetic.

C. Think praiseworthy thoughts that glorify God.

- Recall in your mind all the things God has done.
- Meditate on who He is and how much love He has shown the world.
- Think about how important He is to you.

■ Archbishop Secker used to say, "God has three sorts of servants in the world: some are slaves, and serve Him from fear; others are hirelings, and serve for wages; and the last are sons, who serve because they love."

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988), p. 452.

Conclusion:

Paul wanted the church at Philippi to have a victorious walk with God and demonstrate the life of an over comer. He knew it would take a good prayer life, a yielded peaceful spirit, and a continual walk in God's presence.

We also will win our battles by taking these steps toward God that produce victory.

■ The person who rows the boat usually doesn't have time to rock it.

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) p. 11.

My challenge:

- Ask God to help you to develop a strong prayer life full of intimacy and power.
- Ask Him to help you to yield your mind to His peace that it may rule in your mind.
- Ask Him to help you to walk before you having your mind centered around the thoughts of God.