

Spiritual Stability – Part 4

Philippians 4:8-9

Series: Joy and Gratitude in Christ

1. Introduction

a. As we have been commanded to spiritual stability for the last three weeks, we now finish this imperative mini-series. So far, we have been told that Spiritual Stability is a result of:

i. Week 1

1. Unity by a cultivation of fellowship –

ii. Week 2

1. Maintaining a Spirit of Joy

2. Being Content

3. Resting on a confident faith

iii. Week 3 –

1. Not to be anxious

2. Prayer, Supplication, and Thanksgiving

3. God’s Peace is given unto us.

b. Such detailed instruction is essential because spiritual stability is the bedrock of Christian living and the foundation of the Church of Christ.

2. Verse 8 – Spiritual Stability is dependent on right thinking - Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

a. Think about these things –

i. Paul the Apostle understands that the emotion center within the human persona cannot be what regulates, decides, or controls the Christian. A Christian is only as spiritually stable as he thinks in regards to God.

ii. Finally...think about these things – makes proper thinking a command from God

iii. Paul’s call for biblical thinking is especially relevant in our culture. The focus today is on emotion and pragmatism, and the importance of serious thinking about biblical truth is downplayed. People no longer ask “Is it true?” but “Does it work?” and “How will it make me feel?” Truth has become whatever works for each individual.

- b. God commands us to think...
 - i. **Isaiah 1:18** "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.
 - ii. **Romans 12:2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
- c. John MacArthur states, "In sharp contrast to the contemporary definition of faith, biblical faith is not an irrational "leap in the dark." It is not a mystical encounter with the "wholly other." Nor is it optimism, psychological self-hypnosis, or wishful thinking. True faith is a reasoned response to revealed truth in the Bible, and salvation results from an intelligent response, prompted by the Holy Spirit, to that truth."
- d. Salvation involves a transformation of the mind
 - i. **Romans 8:5-8** For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. (6) For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. (7) For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. (8) Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
- e. Our complete devotion to God relies on us thinking correctly
 - i. **Matthew 22:37** And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.
- f. Therefore, we conclude that believers must discipline their spiritually sensitive minds to think about right spiritual realities.
- g. Whatever is...
 - i. True – The word of God is the only repository to what is true.
 - 1. **John 17:17** Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.
 - 2. Thinking of what is true means to read, analyze, and meditate on the Word of God. The remaining seven are contingent on this first one.
 - ii. Honorable – Noble, dignified, and worthy of respect. All that is true in God's words is honorable. We are not to think of the mundane, trivial, temporal, or common place.
 - iii. Just – whatever is in perfect harmony with God's eternal, unchanging standards, revealed in Scripture.

- h. Pure – this is what is holy. Believers are to purify themselves because Jesus Christ is pure.
 - i. Lovely – Sweet, gracious, generous, or patient. Believers must focus their thoughts on what the bible says is pleasing, attractive, and amiable before God.
 - j. Worthy of praise – Believers thoughts are elevated by Scripture to fix on the loftiest themes.
 - k. if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things – The key to godly livings is godly thinking
3. Verse 9 – Spiritual Stability is contingent not only on thinking but then living rightly - What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.
- a. The preceding seven attitudes must not be viewed as mere abstract principles; godly thinking cannot be divorced from behavior. When all is said and done, spiritual stability comes down to living a disciplined life of obedience to God’s standards.
 - i. Practice these things – becomes the second command found here.
 - 1. Holy living can take place only when right attitudes and right thoughts police the flesh.
 - ii. What you have...
 - 1. Learned – from Paul’s direct teaching.
 - 2. Received – They were to practice in their lives the truths from God’s Word.
 - 3. Heard – What they had heard about his character was not in contradiction to what they had heard him teach.
 - 4. Seen – The very example that they had witnessed when Paul was present
 - b. The God of peace will be with you – a promise of blessing.
4. Benediction –
- a. **2 Corinthians 13:11-12** Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. (12) Greet one another with a holy kiss.