

**Philippians 2:19-24 Part 7**  
**The Importance of the Occupation of the Attention of the Mind Part 7**  
also Philippians 4:8

We are in Philippians chapter 2. We have started the section in verses 19 through 30 focusing on verses 19 through 24, the section on Timothy. We have been in this for a couple of weeks because it gives us the opportunity to share with you some of the important words in dealing with the mind. We are not talking about psychology. We are not talking about the application of psychological principles to the mind. We are talking about the believer's relationship with Jesus Christ and the interaction that we have with His Spirit through His word in our minds.

Paul said the psyche is the arena in which all of the action is taking place, especially in a believer's life. So we have these opportunities every once in a while, to study the various words that are associated with the function of the mind, and how important it is for us to understand these things.

The book of Philippians, its theme is fellowship. In this particular section we are talking about the proof of character in fellowship. And certainly character, Christian character, spiritual character is revealed and developed in and amongst Christian fellowship together, it reveals a lot of things about us.

But Paul said in verse 19, he says, **Now I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you quickly, in order that I also might be cheered up (or encouraged) after having known about the things concerning you.** So Paul is concerned for them, and he is sending Timothy to find out about what is happening with them. In verse 20 we are studying Timothy's Character. He says, **For I have no one likeminded, who will genuinely care about the things concerning you.** And our focus is this word that we have translated *care*. Four letter word but it is a dynamite in meaning. And then verse 21, Timothy's character contrasted with the others, he says, **For everyone else is seeking things of themselves and not the things that are of Christ.** And so he is saying, "I am sending Timothy. He is the only one who is occupied with the things of the Lord and about your particular situation to where I can send him. Others are seeking the things of themselves and not the things of Christ." He is speaking of other believers, other Christians.

It is this word *care* in verse 20 that is among a vocabulary of words dealing with the function of the mind, especially in the life of the believer. This particular word in verse 20 has do with the occupation of the attention of the mind. Not the occupation of the mind, but the occupation of the attention of the mind. Here is why it is important and hopefully we can finish this out this morning and move on and in Philippians 2 next week.

The Bible says, Proverbs 23:6-7, that as a man thinks so is he. In Proverbs 23 it is a warning to believers, watch out for the people that you eat with. They put out their fancy food in front of you, and they try to be very nice in their sales presentation to you, but that is not really who they are. Because, as a person thinks so is he. In his mind he is thinking, "I am doing all of this to entrap you," then what you are seeing is not the truth. What they are thinking, that is who

they really are. And you might be getting a different version, the sales version of who a person really is. There is a basic principle in Scripture that we have to understand that as a person thinks so is he.

At any given point during the day whenever you see me, whatever my mind is focused on, whatever I have been thinking about, will show and be the expression of my life. I could be worried; I could be anxious about things; that can build up all throughout the day. I can show it with the strain on my face. It can take and affect my health. All by what I think about, and what I entertain in my mind, and what I focus on.

So because as a man thinks so is he, we understood, number one, about *capacity*. In Matthew 6:24 Jesus said that you cannot serve two masters. **You will either love the one and hate the other, despise the one or cling to the other; you cannot serve God and mammon.** *Mammon* is the word **μαμμωνα** (mammōna), Aramaic word for *the material world in which we live*. The word *cannot* in that verse means *capacity*. God has not created you with a capacity to be occupied with more than one thing at a time. You cannot serve two masters. Outwardly, you can put on the appearance of serving one while serving another, but in reality, as a man thinks so is he. Not so much what a man is doing, but what he thinks. So Jesus said, because you have been created with the capacity to only serve one master, He goes on to say - in Matthew 6:25 He says, **Take no thought for your life.** And that is our same word that we have here in our text in Philippians 2:20. *Take no thought*, do not allow your life to be occupied with the things of your life, not even the necessities: your food, your clothing, all of these things.

Jesus introduced for us (which the rest of the New Testament writers just took and used as a foundation for just about all of their teachings) that if I only have the capacity to be occupied and focused on one thing, it would only be reasonable to understand - that once I belong to Christ (once I have received Christ, and once I am saved) if I understand the spiritual growth process - that Satan wants to get me distracted with the mind. He wants to get me occupied with things, so that I cannot be occupied with the things of the Lord. And that is what spiritual growth is.

See, there are two phases to salvation. (1) Number one is when you are saved you are made a new creation. Jesus Christ comes in and His Spirit saves you. You are born of His Spirit. You become a new person, but your mind still is not transformed. That is very interesting. We do not understand that in the church today. We understand that once a person receives Christ then we put them to work, try to get them out and do church work and try to do God's work. But without the understanding that I can be saved, I can belong to Christ, so my soul is saved but the damage is still there from sin.

So the growth process is understanding from Romans 12:2, **Stop being conformed to this world but be being transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Renewing of my mind? The Bible presents that once Christ saves us His Spirit working from within, because that is where He dwells, by the hearing of His word. It is God's design that God's Spirit would transform my mind. That He would heal the effects of the experiences of sin and the abuse that has gone on in my life prior to Christ. That God's Spirit would take His word and heal that and replace it with His thoughts, and with His perspective, and with His way of life. It is a process.

So a person can receive Christ and become a new creation but still have brain damage from the effects of sin.

(2) So the second part of life the Christian life is just growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Not just head knowledge of the Bible but allowing His Spirit to take the truth of His word and transform the cortex of the brain. It is that intimate. It is not religious. It is not psychological. The thoughts are actually energy impulses. Only when they are produced by the Holy Spirit they have influence and affect in the mind and on the brain.

We studied the warning that were given in I Peter 5:7-8. Peter says that we are to cast all our care upon the Lord because He is concerned for you. And again the word *care* is the things that we are occupied [with] in this life. The things you are anxious about. The things that you are worried about. Cast them onto him because the Lord is concerned that you are carrying these things around. He says, **Be sober, be watchful, because your adversary the devil is as a roaring lion walking around seeking whom he may devour.**

As we have mentioned to you so many times before, Satan scouts God's people. We know that from Job chapters 1 and 2 and Revelation chapter 12. That Satan scouts people to see what it is in this earthly life, or what person it is, or what activity it is, that they are addicted to, or the area in which they are weak in; and exploit that in a person's life to where their mind is occupied, and worried, and wrestling with this all the time. And their mind has been taken away from the things of Christ. Their mind cannot be transformed, because their mind is just busy being occupied with the things of this earthly life. So in warning, Peter says, Be alert, be watchful, be sober. Satan is walking around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour mentally. So cast all your cares upon the Lord. Give them to Him. Trust Him with them so that your mind can be free to be occupied with the things of Christ.

But it is interesting in that I Peter 5:7-8 quote in verse 8 he says, **Be sober, be watchful.** That is the word for *sober minded*. Did you know that you can become mentally drunk on the things of the world? Especially the things that we are addicted to, the things that spiritually stimulate us. *Sober mindedness* in the Scriptures is used as an example of how just an influence from the world can come in and make our thinking as if we are a drunk person. It is not a chemical drunkenness, it is mental. An influence that comes in and takes us over. It is not demonic. It is coming from Satan, from the world, but it is not demonic holding our minds captive.

In Romans 12:3 Paul says, **For I say through the grace given to me to every person that is among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God has given each person the measure of faith.** Think soberly. Think according to reality. Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to. But again, he is using the term *sober minded* here because there is a tendency to allow various thoughts to control and influence our mind much like drunkenness influences people with alcohol.

In Philippians chapter 4 - this is your supplement. In Philippians chapter 4, last time together we saw that Paul - focusing now on the real problem in Philippi. In verse 2 he says, **I**

**appeal to Euodias, and I appeal to Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord.** Two women in the church that were having problems. The word *think*, this particular word has to do with the *frame of mind*, it has to do with the *attitude*. He is telling them the solution to the problem is for both of the sisters to want what the Lord wants. To think the same thing in the Lord. That your frame of mind might be, well, here is what you want, and here is what you want, or here is what you think ought to be done, or this person might think something else needs to be done; but what unites us and keeps us functioning in our unity together is in the end result we want with the Lord wants. Think the same thing in the Lord.

And he says, **I also appeal (request) for you, genuine yokefellow, help these women who have struggled along with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.** So he says, these are Christians. We do not always get along. We are human. We still have the sin nature. The ego and the pride still get in the way, and we want things done our way though we think we are handling the things of the Lord.

So he lays down four commandments:

(1) Verse 4, **Be satisfied in the Lord always: and again I will say, Be satisfied.** Most of you are used to hearing the word *rejoice* there. **Rejoice in the Lord always and again I will say rejoice.** It does not mean go out and make yourself happy together and enjoy life together and that is what is going to fix your problems. The word *joy* in Greek has to do with *satisfaction*. So he says the solution to the problem is **Be satisfied with the Lord**, and he says, **and I will say it again**, future tense, **Be satisfied with Him**. If you are satisfied with the Lord and what He wants then if you do not get your way it will not matter.

(2) Verse 5, **Let your moderation become known to all men. The Lord is near.** Be known for being a moderate person not a person who indulges themselves. If you are a moderate person then it will not matter whether you get your own way or not.

(3) Verse 6, **And do not be anxious concerning one thing.** There is our word *anxiety, care, occupation of the attention of the mind*. **Do not be anxious for one thing.** Nothing. **But in all prayer and petition, with thanksgiving -**

(4) Next command, **Let your requests become known to God.** Again casting upon Him. Pray through your prayer. Give it to Him. Put it on His shoulders, in His hands. And the promise, **And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus.**

So verse 8 is the summary statement. **In summary brothers**, and there are eight things that are listed here:

- (1) **As many things as are true,**
- (2) **as many things as are honorable,**
- (3) **as many things as are righteous,**
- (4) **as many things are as pure,**

- (5) **as many things are as pleasing,**
- (6) **as many things as are of good report;**
- (7) **if there is any virtue** (that is, *substance*),
- (8) **and if there is any praise,**

**be continually meditating on these things.** That is a command. Be continually meditating on the things that produce a healthy relationship with Christ and a healthy life as a person.

Now again, we are not talking about psychology. We are not talking about thinking positive thoughts. People that teach those things understand that whatever your mind is focused on that is who you are. But here, we are talking about a living, real relationship with Jesus Christ and receiving influence from a spiritual influence that produces mental and spiritual health, rather than mental and spiritual and physical destruction.

Here is what these words mean. First of all he says, **Things that are true.** I Corinthians 13 Paul says, **Love loves the truth.** "Oh, we just have to love the brother. No, he is teaching a false teaching, but we just have to love him." No. Love loves the truth. John says, **I love my children who walk in the truth.** Whatever is the truth it is going to produce a spiritual health in my life.

**As many things as are honorable:** that is, respectful to the Lord.

**Things that are righteous:** things that are right with Him.

**As many things as are pure.**

**As many things as are pleasing:** that is, pleasing to Him.

**And as many things as are of a good report.** Even listening to the negative reports about people. Now, I do not know about you, maybe I am just getting too old, but I am beginning to get affected more and more just by listening to the news. My mind is like, "Whoa, I just heard no good reports there." It is almost like at the end of every newscast somebody ought to get up and present the gospel because it is like, "All of this is bad news and by the way, oh yes, there is good news." Because all you hear is bad news.

Some people feed on telling stories about people, just telling about the bad news. Did you hear what he did? Did you see what she did? I do not care. I do not want to hear it. Because whatever the situation is, whether it is real or true or not, it just gets repeated, relived over and over again, in the minds and lives of people. We keep repeating the same stuff over and over again. And it is destructive.

**Anything of virtue:** anything that has substance in the things of the Lord.

**And things that are worthy of praise to Him, be continually meditating on these things.**

Paul, after people received Christ and were saved, his entire ministry was concerned about the mental welfare of God's people. In II Corinthians 10:4-5 Paul says that **The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.** And he explains what that is. So he says, **the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but is mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.** Here is what those strongholds are: **casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.** Bringing every thought into the obedience of Christ.

Paul was not concerned about believers losing their salvation. Once you have received Christ you are saved. You are filled with His Spirit. Your soul is sealed by His Spirit. But then after I am saved, and after a person is saved, there is a healing transformation process that goes on and it goes on from within; where God's Spirit at the hearing of His word and my fellowship with Him, my interaction with Him - His Spirit is ministering, and transforming and changing my mind, and healing and changing me to function with Him, and to see life the way He sees life. So once I am saved, Satan cannot take me away from Christ. So he tries for the remainder of my life here on the earth to scout me and find ways that he can occupy me with the things of this earthly life, so that I am too occupied with it, and I am seeking the things of myself and not seeking the things of the Lord.

It is like having an operation and then the doctor says, "Okay, you have a few months of therapy and here are your therapy appointments. Every Sunday morning from 10 to 12 is your therapy." What happens if you skip therapy? Well, you have had the operation. I do not know how you are going to function too well after the operation if you have not had the proper therapy.

These are our therapy times. These are the times when God's Spirit gives us understanding and enlightenment as to really what is going on in life, and where our life should be directed, and how we should be making decisions about what we do. Going to church or not does not faze our relationship with the Lord at all, except if where you go and what you do your mind is being changed and transformed. Your life is being changed.

I used the example a couple of weeks ago, let me close with this. Most of us do not have control over who comes and knocks on our front door. We do have control over who we let in. The same thing with thoughts. The things I am watching and listening to on TV, the movies that I am watching, the places that I go, the people that I am with. I am even shocked at myself because you know when you have kids and they are growing up and they are young and you do not want them to be around wrong influences, right? So they think you are legalistic. "My parents, they are trying to keep me from having fun." No, that person is not a good person to be around. That movie is not a good movie to watch. Those things are not good things to do. But then we turn around and we do whatever we want. Even when the kids see the adverse effects that it has on us.

I would never, the old saying goes, "Never say never," but if the Hells Angels motorcycle club drove up to the church, I would never let them in. "Sit down, have a cup of coffee, share with us what is going on guys." I would not want that influence in my house. It is not legalism; I am guarding my life. I am guarding my personal relationship with Christ. And I am guarding

this mental and spiritual health of my own life. See this is not religion, this is a relationship with Christ. And if you have received Christ the battle that is going on is not your soul, it is for the attention of your mind - so that Satan can rob a believer of the healing and transformation that God wants to perform and take place.

And then the underlying importance of this, is not just for here. Many individuals, many marriages, all kinds of relationships need healing. The individuals need a relationship with Christ and to be healed from those past experiences so that it does not interfere with and destroy other relationships. That is what it is all about.

But we have a cultural church today that says, "Come up and pray the sinner's prayer at the altar, and then join the church program and participate in the social programs and become a good church worker." And it is like, "And where is the healing?" It is not happening because we are trying to draw numbers, we are trying to build in the horizontal rather than realizing the church is a spiritual hospital. And if you are not getting fed here, and if you are not getting changed and transformed here, I would encourage you to pray where God wants you to be so that you get help because we all need help. That is why we are here.

But like I say, we do not have control over who knocks on that front door, but we do have control over what influences we let in; personally, and for the people of our household, for our church. There are a lot of things that go on during the week that you do not see because you are not out here. Different people stop by, want to come over for Sunday church. Do some singing or whatever. And there have been times when we have had to turn people away because there was a sense there that the influence would not be good. There has to be a freedom there for people to do whatever the Lord wants them to do, but there has to be a protection as well. I think one of the hardest things a pastor can hear is someone listening to someone teaching and preaching, or someone who is leading singing, because I recommended them and they say, "Well, this person is really coming off the wall, but you recommended them, so I have been listening to them all this time." I do not want to get into that habit. People have to be ministering healthy things, not psychology.

Even right now as we are sitting here together there are energy impulses going on in your brain. God's Spirit is speaking. Satan is also making noise. The flesh is also making noise. The world is also making noise. And it is up to us to reason things out and find out what influences we want over our lives and over the lives of the people around us and the people that we are responsible for.

Let's close with prayer.