

Philippians 4:8-9

Introduction

What do you really want? What is your goal? Purpose?

Biblical answer:

- 1 Peter 2:9: chosen people for God's own possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
- Ephesians 2:10: For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
- 1 Corinthians 3:16: You are God's temple and God's Spirit dwells in you
- Philippians 1:9-11: That you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ

Your fundamental goal in life determines your approach to many other issues

The Passage

I. Overview of 4:4-9

A. Series of commands (rejoice, anxious, pray, think) that have to do with the battle for our minds, the posture of our inner lives

Romans 12:2: Be transformed by the renewal of your minds

Here: practical, concrete suggestions on how to renew our minds daily

B. Structure

4-7: three commands and a promise (the peace of God will guard you)

8-9: two commands and a promise (the God of peace will be with you)

I. Verse 8

A. Overview

1. 6 representative qualities (true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable)
 - a. Paul is drawing on the common language of the moral philosophy of his day. Any Roman citizen would understand what he was talking about. He is appealing to what any human knows to be true.
2. 2 summary statements (any excellence, anything worthy of praise)
3. The command: think about these things
 - = concentrated, focused effort
 - "let your mind continually dwell on these"

B. What we spend our time focusing on has a big impact on the rest of our lives

1. Matthew 6:22-23: "The eye is the lamp of the body . . ."

If you focus on the wrong things, your life will be full of darkness

2. Proverbs 4:23: "Guard your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life"

If you don't guard your thoughts and feelings, that spring will become polluted and muddied

3. Analogy of food: when we fill our body with junk food, our bodies respond by feeling like junk

C. Intentionally avoid those things that are the opposite of Paul's list

1. t.v., internet, certain magazines, certain conversations

2. T.V.

The average American watches 4 hours/day

T.V. is harmful

a. because it promotes laziness, low attention span, disengaged relationships

b. because of the actual content

Psalm 101:3: "I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless"

So much that is on t.v. can be summed up as "worthless"

3. The effects of t.v. on our souls

a. We become jaded, cynical, and calloused

b. T.V. chokes out any real spiritual life, numbs us to spiritual reality

We shouldn't be surprised that we don't see more spiritual fruit in our lives

D. Intentionally pursue those things that fit Paul's list

1. Scripture: Colossians 3:16: let the word of Christ dwell in you richly

2. Good books (Christian biography, good classics)

3. Nature

4. Good friends/conversation: people who spur us on towards what is good

II. Verse 9

Paul as the great example

Acts 16:22-25: Paul is beaten and thrown in jail, yet in jail he is praying and singing hymns

Philippians 1:12-18: Paul is in jail again, and people are trying to frustrate him, but he is rejoicing because Christ is being preached.

He had made a habit of thinking on all that was uplifting and worthy of praise, and his life was marked by rejoicing and God's Shalom even in the midst of hardship

Conclusion

1. Have a conversation with God (and your spouse) about your tv viewing
2. Set limits on the amount of time you spend watching t.v.
 - Have a "no-t.v. night" once a week (make it a game night, etc)
 - identify an acceptable amount of time per night (1 hour, 2 hours?)
 - Commit to doing other things: read bible, good books, conversation, exercise
 - t.v. location: remove your t.v.s from your bedrooms
 - limit kids' time: it's a battle worth fighting for!
3. Set limits on content of what you watch
 - Have a standard for what movies you will watch

This can feel brutal and legalistic, but the question remains: "what is your goal?"

Discussion Questions

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. What is the biggest factor that keeps you from watching less television?
3. What strategies have you attempted in the past to limit the amount of television you watch? What stories have you heard from people who have tried to limit their television viewing and what has been the fruit of those attempts?
4. What standards do you have in terms of limiting the content of what you watch? For instance, do you have any objective standards for determining what movies to see and what movies not to see? What stories have you hear from friends in this regard?
5. When you think of Paul's command in 4:8, where do you find yourself struggling with that command apart from t.v. (e.g. general negative or cynical thinking, inappropriate conversations with friends, internet, magazines, radio, etc)?
6. What have been the most helpful practices that have helped you follow Paul's call to think about things that are pure, true, honorable, etc?