

**Thursday, September 3, 2020**  
**Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...**

**"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."**  
*Philippians 4: 8*

Has a day gone by in the last two months where you totally forgot that we are in the middle of a pandemic? If you have had a day where you forgot about the pandemic, then good for you. I bet it felt good. But I doubt that has happened to very many of us, especially if we needed to leave the house. Wherever you would go, you would be reminded by all of the people wearing masks.

It's kind of weird to me how my thinking has changed since this whole thing started. At the beginning, I wondered how I would learn to work in this extra detail of mask-wearing. Would I remember to wear one? Where would I get a mask? Would they be available? My mindset has changed, however. I'm more prepared. I keep a mask in my desk drawer at church. I keep a mask in my car for whenever I might need it. Thinking in terms of living in the midst of a pandemic has become part of my mindset – as I'm sure it has for you as well. I'm not saying this is a good thing. I don't want to be "used to" living in the midst of a pandemic. But I have become ... "accustomed" to it. Again, I don't say this as if I am happy about it.

Our brains are pretty amazing. They are very programmable. They adapt to new situations and circumstances. If you think a certain way for long enough, your thoughts begin to become part of your everyday life, and before you know it, they begin to define you. Maybe this is why Paul says in the reading above: "Whatever is (good), THINK ABOUT these things." In other words, dwell on them. Our brains don't function in a vacuum. They are always busy – always processing stimuli. God wants your brain and mine to "dwell on" what is "true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, and worthy of praise." Why? Because our thoughts tend to define us. Our thoughts become our attitude about life.

No matter what is going on in our lives, we are always in control of what we fill our brains with. So, how do we know what is "true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and so on? It's found in the Bible. God's Word is filled with the good stuff that He wants us to think about. God's Word tells us that He loves us. It tells us that Jesus died and rose so that our sins would be forgiven. God's Word tells us that He is in charge. It tells us that "nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." It tells us that heaven is coming, and that it will be a WONDERFUL place to spend eternity.

What if you and I were to let God's Word fill our thoughts with all of these amazing things. Or, what if, at the very least, these thoughts had the more dominant place in our thinking. Our thoughts would soon become our attitude, and we would be filled with peace.

If you're unsure of this, would you at least just "think about it"?

God's Peace!  
Pastor Jim