

The Practice of Setting the Mind

I. REVIEW: COMPLAINT AND GRATITUDE

A. THE PROBLEM: PHIL 2:14

¹⁴Do all things without complaining and disputing... (Phil 2:14)

1. Complaining is a mindset that focuses on the short-term negative pressures in our life more than on the long-term positive blessings in our life. Complaining damages relationships—marriage, family, and friendships. Complaining is not a personality type, but a way of processing information. It is a mindset that anyone can change.
2. Complaining is based on a feeling that we deserve to be treated better by God or people. It is based on idealism about how good our circumstances or relationships should be.

B. THE PROMISED FRUIT: PHIL 2:15

¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a...perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world... (Phil 2:14-15)

1. Complaint is a mindset. It's a way of thinking and processing family, friends, and circumstances in our lives. Since complaint begins in the mind we must set out to have our minds changed and renewed into the mind of Christ. If we change our mind, change the way we think, it's much easier to change our complaining tongue.
2. What if we were a people that didn't complain, not because we were mostly good at biting our tongue, but rather because we actually think and feel as though we have nothing to complain about.

C. THE PREMIER EXAMPLE: PHIL 2:1-11

⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation ⁸... and became obedient to the point of death... ⁹ Therefore God also...exalted Him... (Phil 2:1-10)

1. The language of this text is filled with phrases addressing the issue of the mind... the thought life. ("Like minded... being of one mind.. in lowliness of mind..." etc.)
2. In verse 5 we see the phrase "Let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus..." We are exhorted to think the way Christ Jesus thinks. It's here in the passage we see the premier example of what to do with the mind. Jesus has a way of thinking. Jesus shows us what it looks like to walk out the exhortation in verse 1-4.

D. THE PRAYER: PHIL 1:9-11

9 and this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere without offense till the day of Christ, 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Phil 1:9-11)

1. In the prayer there are two areas for love to abound. The first area mentioned is, *love to abound in knowledge*. The second area prayed for is *love to abound in discernment*.
 - a. **Knowledge**: *The way in which we think.*
 - b. **Discernment**: *The way in which we see and evaluate.*

E. THE PRACTICE: ALWAYS REJOICING AND SETTING OF THE MIND (PHIL 4:8-9)

1. Paul promised peace to any who will cultivate a spirit of gratitude in their life.
2. Much like complaint being a mindset, gratitude is also a mindset. Gratitude is a mindset based on seeing that Jesus has given us much more than what we deserve.

II. THE PROMISE OF PEACE: 3 COMMANDS AND 2 PROMISES (PHIL 4:4-7,9)

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.... 9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you. (Phil 4:4-9)

- A. The promise of peace is given. This peace is given to those who intentionally respond to the 3 instructions given within the passage. Paul lays forth 3 things we are to do to position our hearts to receive the promise of peace from the Lord who is “at hand”.
- B. (Command #1) ***Rejoice in the Lord always*** (4:4)—to call to mind or focus on seeing what God sees when He looks at our life. Rejoicing in the Lord, gratitude, and giving thanks to God exhibit the same mindset. Gratitude is foundational to Christian living. It is at the heart of worship.
- C. Paul repeats himself deliberately and pastorally. The repetition is not filler. It is intentional and brings an emphasis to the command of rejoicing. Paul knows rejoicing will be challenged by suffering so he repeats the command to anchor believers in truth rather than circumstances.

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials... (James 1:2)

- D. *(Command #2) Let your gentleness be known to all men* (4:5)—we are called to express the same graciousness to others that we have received freely from the Lord. Our greatness is wrapped up in having a revelation of just how gentle and merciful He has been with us, and in turn, extending that same gentleness to others.

35 ... Your gentleness has made me great. (Psalm 18:35)

1 A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. (Pr 15:1)

25 The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself. (Pr 11:25)

- E. *(Promise #1) The Lord is at hand* (4:5):

1. First, this speaks of the imminent return of the Lord. Paul often lived and taught with a strong expectation of Christ's return. "The Lord is at hand" carries the idea of nearness, that Christ's return draws near.

You... be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. (Jm 5:8)

2. Second, the Lord's eyes are on us and He intervenes in our life according to His way and timing. Gratitude releases *the Lord's presence in our life*. When we live with the understanding the Lord is truly at hand we simply talk to Him more.

18 The Lord is near to all who call upon Him...(Ps 145:18)

8 I have set the Lord always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. (Ps 16:8)

- F. *(Command #3) Be anxious for nothing.. with thanksgiving, let your request be made know to God* (4:6)—we war against anxiety with gratitude. Satan, the accuser, cannot work effectively in the presence of gratitude. Those who cultivate a mindset of gratitude will pray with greater faith, consistency, and joy.
- G. *(Promise #2) The peace of God will guard your hearts and minds* (4:7)—there is a strong link between a mindset of gratitude and peace in our emotions. Paul promised peace to any who will cultivate a spirit of gratitude in their life.
- H. The peace given is the guardian of our hearts and minds. When we have peace it's like a shield against the plans of the devil.

III. THE SETTING OF THE MIND

- A. The setting of *the mind* to cultivate gratitude and war against complaint.

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever, things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things. 9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

- B. **True:** That which is in accordance with reality as God defines. Not deceptive, false, or misleading. The things that align with God's word and His character.
- C. **Noble:** That which is dignified, honorable, and worthy of respect. Not frivolous or crude but rather befitting a life lived before God.
- D. **Just:** That which is right, righteous, and fair according to God's standard. Involves integrity, fairness, and uprightness being in agreement with what is morally right in God's sight.
- E. **Pure:** That which is clean, undefiled, and morally chaste. Free from moral corruption regarding thoughts, motives, and desires.
- F. **Lovely:** The pleasing and gracious things. Encourages peace, kindness, and agreement. Not sentimental, but genuinely beautiful in character.
- G. **Good report:** That which is spoken of well and is reputable, commendable, and reflects well on Christ and the gospel.
- H. **Virtue:** That which shows moral virtue excellence. Moral courage and goodness A life of visible spiritual quality. What displays moral strength and virtue.
- I. **Anything praiseworthy:** That which deserves approval, especially from God. Not what the world applauds but rather what receives the smile of God. The things that God would commend.
- J. We set our minds on things that are true in content, noble in tone, righteous in standard, pure in motive, beautiful in character, respectable in witness, excellent in virtue and praiseworthy before God.

- K. **The Practice:** _____

