

THINK.

“Crises breed change.” – Allan Lichtman, historian at American University¹

Philippians 4:8-9

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.⁹ What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Context: 4:4-7 are “General purpose” instructions for when anxiety and fear attack. 4:8-9 helps us know how to build a mindset, shape our thinking patterns, and strengthen our emotions. This creates an internal environment where crippling fear is the exception rather than the norm.²

“God’s peace especially resides in those who have ordered their lives in accordance with God’s will. This includes proper and disciplined thoughts and good Christian living. Thus, the two sets of instructions on peace complement each other. When anxiety appears, the cure is prayer. When the life is disorderly, the cure is mental and practical discipline.”³

Action steps

- Proactively fill your mind with Christ’s words: *Think – 4:8 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.*

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

C. S. Lewis: “If you’re shown a hotel room you’ve been told is the Honeymoon Suite, your expectations will be high. If there’s no plush carpet, spa and champagne, you’ll be disappointed. On the other hand, if you’ve been told before the door opens that it’s a jail cell, you’ll be delighted to find even modest comforts.”

- *True*: 1 Timothy 4:7-8 *Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; ⁸ for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*
- *Honorable*: Raises you up rather than brings you down.
- *Just*: Virtuous.
- *Pure*: Does this _____ make me feel the need to take a bath?
- *Lovely*: “that which calls forth love.”
- *Commendable/Admirable*: The opposite of offensive.
- *if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

What does Christianity offer that secular ethics doesn't?

- 1) Foundation: Objective standard vs. Relativistic personal opinion.
 - 2) Motivation: For the glory of God vs. Fading horizontal goals.
 - 3) Resources: Christ in me vs. My own strength.
- Intentionally fill your time with Christ's actions: *Practice – 4:9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*
 - We can learn by being around committed Christians: *learned... received...heard...seen...practice these things...*
 - Your “New Normal” could be walking with Jesus Christ and experiencing His peace in your life: *and the God of peace will be with you.*

¹ Mark Z. Barabak, “News Analysis: The coronavirus crisis will change America in big ways. History says so,” *The Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 2020, <https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2020-04-06/coronavirus-crisis-historic-event-change-america>.

² “In actuality, the former seems to speak to occasions of outbreaks of anxiety. This speaks to ordering a personal environment to prohibit such outbreaks.” Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 151.

³ *Ibid.*, 151.