

# **“The Biggest Lies People Hear in Church”**

(Phil. 4:8-9)

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## **I. Introduction**

### **A. What do you think about...**

1. When trying to fall asleep?
  - a. Thoughts regarding golf shots
  - b. Beating Justin while sick
2. When driving to work?
3. While I'm preaching?

### **B. When your mind wanders, where does it go?**

1. Some places are okay
  - a. Anywhere it's warm and sunny
  - b. Lofty and noble thoughts?
2. Other places....not so good
  - a. Lustful thoughts?
  - b. Greedy thoughts?
  - c. Bitterness?
  - d. Coveting neighbor's possessions...or his wife?
  - e. Worry and fear

### **C. You are what you think**

1. The true test of a person is what goes on inside their mind

2. Thoughts precede actions
3. You will become what you dwell upon

#### **D. Pornography is one example**

1. Arrest in Sparta
  - a. Tried to drag teenage girl into his truck
  - b. Six previous convictions
2. Child molesters

Police vice squads report that 77% of the child molesters of boys and 87% of the child molesters of girls admitted to trying out or imitating the sexual behavior they'd seen in pornography. In one group of rapists, 57% indicated they had tried out the sexual behavior they had seen in porno materials.

#### **E. Everything begins in the mind**

1. Whether for good...or for evil
2. Today, protecting what goes on in your head
3. The Christian and “meditation”

## **II. Text**

### **A. Philippians 4:8**

*(8) Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*

1. “Finally, brothers”
  - a. Closing out the book of Philippians
  - b. Final thoughts in his letter
  - c. The power of his closing argument
  - d. Surviving 2009...the toughest year of your life

2. ***“think about such things”***

- a. (NKJV) ***“meditate on these things”***
- b. ***“ponder”***

3. Meditation can conjure up some bad images

- a. Eastern mysticism
- b. Falling into a mindless trance
- c. Improper meditation can be dangerous

- 1. Allowing Satan a beach head in your mind

3. Yet Christians need to spend more time meditating on things of God

- a. That’s what this verse is saying ***“meditate on these things”***
- b Quiet time alone with God

- 1. No Christian has ever achieved all that God would have them to be without a life containing time for quiet reflection with God

- 2. It requires discipline and persistence

- 3. It includes your daily thought life

4. You become what you constantly think about

- a. ***“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he”*** – Prov. 23:7 (NKJV)
- b. “You can’t do the right things if you think the wrong things”
- c. You are what you think

5. Everything begins in the mind

- a. Every sin
- b. Every critical word
- c. Every good deed

- d. Every kind word
- 6. Therefore...must first get your mind under control
  - a. Must choose carefully what we think about
  - b. God gives us a list of appropriate subjects

## **B. Meditate of the following list in v. 8**

- 1. You can choose what you think about...
  - a. **True**
  - b. **Noble**
  - c. **Right** (Just)
  - d. **Pure**
  - e. **Lovely**
  - f. **Admirable** (Good report)
  - g. **Virtuous** (Excellent)
  - h. **Praiseworthy**
- 2. Elevate your thinking in 2009
- 3. Remember...
  - a. (Prov. 23:7)— *“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he”*

## **C. When you continually dwell on bad thoughts:**

### ***1. Discouragement***

- a. Meditate on failures
- b. Overlook the successes

### ***2. Disillusionment***

- a. Politicians who have disappointed

1. Can you say “Bagojavich?”
2. Three of the last four governors of Illinois in jail
  - b. “Are they all crooked?”
  - c. Dwelling on such can cause disillusionment
    1. Can make you cynical

### **3. *Disobedience***

- a. Philippians 4:8 is a command
- b. Regardless of your circumstances

### **4. *Diminished effectiveness***

- a. Others turned off by your spirit

### **5. *Distraction***

- a. You miss the blessing of seeing the good stuff
- b. Too busy searching for problems
- c. Failure to give God *praise*

--Your purpose for living!!!

## **D. Proper meditation will change:**

### **1. *How you think***

### **2. *How you feel***

- a. Proper meditation will change your emotions
- b. You’ll feel better

## **E. Proper meditation should be:**

### **1. Continual**

- a. Psalm 119:147-148

*(147) I rise before dawn and cry for help; I have put my hope in your word.  
 (148) My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises.*

- b. The benefit of a quiet time alone with God
    - 1. A one person “retreat”
    - 2. To refocus your life
    - 3. Sometimes it will involve prayer and fasting
      - a. Focused on God alone
  - c. A regularly set aside time of meditating on God and his word
    - 1. Lee’s testimony
  - d. Casual meditation
    - 1. While driving to work
    - 2. What do you listen to?
      - a. Doesn’t have to be “Christian”...
      - b. The value of praise music
2. What it shouldn’t be...
- a. Chanting Mantra
  - b. Vain repetitions
  - c. An out-of-body trance
3. It is a—
- 1. Quest to know God better
  - 2. Directed to His word
  - 3. Spirit controlled
  - 4. Just you and God....alone and quiet

## 4. Psalm 119:15-16

*“I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways. <sup>16</sup> I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.”*

**F. It begins by meditating on what is true**

1. Phil. 4:8 starts by telling us to meditate on whatsoever is “true”

1. The philosopher’s quest for TRUTH

a. It begins with Jesus

b. John 14:6—“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

2. Meanwhile—Satan is the father of liars

a. Eve in the Garden—Gen. 3:1-8

*<sup>1</sup> Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” <sup>2</sup> And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden <sup>3</sup> but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, or shall you touch it, lest you die.’” <sup>4</sup> And the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.” <sup>5</sup> For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*

3. Saturate yourself with the truth

a. No room for lies

b. Will recognize a counterfeit

4. Better able to recognize false religions

5. Spotting lies from the pulpit

**G. The Biggest Lies People Hear in Church**

*1. Salvation can be earned if you live a good enough life*

*2. Jesus was just “a great teacher”*

*\*USA Today, December 18, 2008 (Cathy Grossman)*

Christmas is being marginalized every day of the year, when pastors fail to preach who Christ really was,” say Michael Horton, who blasts these trends in his new book, *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church*.

Christmas without the specter of the cross, without awareness that this is a baby born to die for mankind’s sins, is a fancied-up fraud, say Horton, professor of theology and apologetics at Westminster Seminary California, and associate pastor at Christ United Reformed Church in Santee, California.

**3. *God is doesn’t care about what happens to you***

**4. *There are many ways and religions that lead to salvation***

*\*USA Today, December 18, 2008 (Cathy Grossman)*

Most American religious believers, including most Christians, say eternal life is not exclusively for those who accept Christ as their savior, finds a survey released today.

Of the 65% of people who held this open view of heaven’s gates, 80% named at least one non-Christian group—Jews, Muslims, Hindus, atheists—who may also be saved, says the survey by the Pew Forum of Religion and Public Life.

Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, called the findings “a theological crisis for American evangelicals. They represent at best a misunderstanding of the Gospel and at worst a repudiation of the Gospel.”

**5. *There is no literal Heaven or Hell***

**6. *People suffer because they are bad***

**7. *Joining a church can ensure your salvation***

**8. *Satan is no longer a threat in our modern world***

**H. Next week, “10 truths your kids need to know”**

1. But first...meditation

a. *“think about these things”*

b. *“meditate on these things”*

3. The life with quiet meditation

## IV. Summary

### A. The benefits of meditating...from the Psalms

#### 1. *You will be blessed and prosper*

(Psalm 1:1-3) *(1) Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. (2) But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. (3) He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. What ever he does prospers.*

#### 2. *You will be able to speak words of wisdom*

(Psalm 49:3) *My mouth will speak words of wisdom; the utterance from my heart will give understanding.*

#### 3. *You will discover peace in the darkest hour*

(Psalm 63:6-8) *(6) On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. (7) Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. (8) My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.*

#### 4. *You will please God*

(Psalm 104:34) *(34) May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the Lord.*

#### 5. *You will be given wise counsel*

(Psalm 119:23-24) *(23) Though rulers sit together and slander me, your servant will meditate on your decrees. (24) Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors*

#### 6. *You will be blameless in God's sight*

(Psalm 119:78-80) *(78) May the arrogant be put to shame for wronging me without cause; but I will meditate on your precepts. (79) May those who fear you turn to me, those who understand your statutes. (80) May my heart be blameless toward your decrees, that I may not be put to shame.*

a. A blameless heart

#### 7. *You will receive wisdom, insight and understanding*

(Psalm 119:97-100) *(97) Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. (98) Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. (99) I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. (100) I have more understanding than the elder, for I obey your precepts.*

## **B. My challenge to you in 2009**

1. Psalm 119:147-148 *(147) I rise before dawn and cry for help; I have put my hope in your word. (148) My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises.*