

CLOSING EXHORTATIONS, PT. 5; PHIL. 4:8-9 (Ed O'Leary)

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE'LL LOOK AT THE LAST TWO ~ OF PAUL'S SIX CLOSING EXHORTATIONS ~ in Philippians, ~ chapter 4, ~ verses 4-9. ⇨⇨ Bulk of time on the fifth exhortation.

THE FIFTH EXHORTATION. ~~ VERSE 8.

▶▶ "whatever is true, ~~~ whatever is honorable, ~~~ whatever is just, ~~~ whatever is pure, ~~~ whatever is lovely, ~~~ whatever is commendable, ~ 77

▷▷ if there is any excellence, ~~~ if there is anything worthy of praise, ~~~ think ~ about these things."

THE BASIC COMMAND HERE IS: ~~ "THINK ABOUT THESE THINGS."

SIMPLY PUT, ~ THE PHRASE ~ "THESE THINGS" ~ REFERS ~ TO WHATEVER ~ is morally excellent and praiseworthy.

▶▶ So, ~ we can expand on the basic command: ~~ 77

▷▷ "Think about ~ whatever ~ is morally excellent and praiseworthy."

▶▶ Now, ~ it's important to understand ~ Paul is looking at these things ~ from a biblical perspective.

▷▷ I.e., ~ how Scripture ~ defines these terms, ~~ not ~ how the world defines them.

▷▷ The world ~ has a very warped sense ~ of what is morally excellent and praiseworthy.

↪↪ And we, ~ believers, ~ must never ~ align ourselves ~ with the world's definitions ~ of these things.

→→ Rather, ~ we, ~ believers, ~ are to line up ~ with the Bible's definition ~ of these things. 77 1/13

▷▷ So, ~ we could expand again on the basic command ~ and say, ⇔⇔ Think about ~ whatever ~ is morally excellent and praiseworthy according to the Lord."

WE COULD ASK, ~ "WHY DOES PAUL WANT US TO THINK ABOUT THESE THINGS?"

▶▶ Well, ~ for at least ~ two, ~ most likely obvious, ~ reasons.

▷▷ 1st, ~ he wants us ~ to renew our minds ~ and here he tells us how.

↳↳ In Rom. ~ 12, ~ vs. 2, ~ Paul writes, ~ ¶¶

→→ "Do not ~ be conformed to this world, ~ but be transformed ~ by the renewal of your mind."

↳↳ I.e., ~ instead ~ of being conformed to this world any longer, ~ as we were when we were unsaved, ~ ¶¶

→→ we are to renew our minds ~ by changing ~ the way we think.

↳↳ And part of how we do that, ~ is by thinking about things ~ ¶¶

→→ that are morally excellent and praiseworthy from God's perspective.

▷▷ 2nd, ~ Paul wants us to think about whatever is morally excellent & praiseworthy, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ because ~ he wants our minds ~ centered on the right things.

→→ And ~ the things ~ that are morally excellent and praiseworthy according to God standards ~ are ~ the right things.

"THINK ABOUT ~ WHATEVER ~ IS MORALLY EXCELLENT AND PRAISEWORTHY according to God's standards," ~ Paul says.

▶▶ The tense of the Greek verb ~ for "think about" ~ points to continuing activity.

▷▷ So we can expand the basic command again ~ and read it as, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "continually think about ~ whatever is morally excellent and praiseworthy." ⇔⇔
Don't ever stop doing this, ~ Paul says. ¶¶ 2/13

▶▶ The idea here, ~ when Paul says, ~ "continually think about" ~ seems to be ~ that Paul is calling us ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to continually fill our minds with, ~ focus on, ~ and give serious thought to ~ ¶¶

→→ whatever ~ is morally excellent and praiseworthy according to God's standards.

↪↪ Not just give them a passing thought.

↪↪ Occupy our minds with these things. ~ Dwell on them.

OK, ~ THE EXPANDED BASIC COMMAND.

▶▶ "Continually fill your minds with, ~ focus on, ~ and give serious thought to ~ whatever ~ is morally excellent and praiseworthy according to God's standards."

▶▶ Now, ~ we should understand ~ that this exercise ~ is not ~ geared for us to critically evaluate the culture around us ~ ¶¶

▷▷ with its warped standards of morality and of what's praiseworthy.

▶▶ We don't do this ~ in order to show them ~ just how depraved they are.

▶▶ This exercise ~ is geared to bring about ~ thinking and behavior in us ~ that is glorifying and pleasing to God.

▶▶ And of course, ~ as we discussed before, ~ upon seeing our godly behavior, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ some unbelievers will become open to the gospel ~ and be saved.

NOW, ~ PRIOR TO THE BASIC COMMAND, ~ ¶¶

PAUL GIVES US A LIST ~ OF ~ SIX ~ SPECIFIC THINGS ~ THAT FALL UNDER THE category of morally excellent and praiseworthy. ¶¶ 3/13

▶▶ "Continually ~ fill your minds with, ~ focus on, ~ and give serious thought to ~ whatever is true, ~ ~ 77

▷▷ whatever is honorable, ~ whatever is just, ~ whatever is pure, ~ whatever is lovely, ~ ~ whatever is commendable."

▶▶ Now, ~ we're not going to look at all of these, ~ 77

▷▷ in order ~ to focus on the bigger picture, ~ not only of this exhortation ~ 77

↳↳ but ~ of the sixth exhortation as well.

▷▷ I will, ~ however, ~ highlight, ~ two of them ~ to give us a sampling, ~ 77

↳↳ "whatever things are true," ~ ~ "whatever things are right."

→→ And you can research the other four ~ in your personal study.

"CONTINUALLY ~ FILL YOUR MINDS WITH, ~ FOCUS ON, ~ AND GIVE SERIOUS thought to ~ whatever is true."

▶▶ This covers anything that is true.

▶▶ But first and foremost, ~ it refers ~ to God's word.

▷▷ And this ~ is where I would like us ~ to put our focus.

▷▷ Ps. 19, ~ verse 9b ~ LEB.

↳↳ "The ordinances of Yahweh ~ are true; ~ ~ ~ they ~ are righteous altogether."

▶▶ So, ~ first ~ and foremost, ~ 77

▷▷ we need to continually ~ fill our minds with, ~ focus on, ~ and give serious thought to ~ God's word.

↳↳ As I said before, ~ a seldom ~ or never opened, ~ dust-covered ~ Bible ~ benefits no one ~ but Satan. 77 4/13

▶▶ When it comes to God's word, ~ which is absolute truth, ~ continually ~ filling our minds with it, ~ focusing on it, ~ and giving serious thought to it ~ 77

▷▷ is essential ~ in counteracting ~ the lies of Satan, ~ the world, ~ and our sin nature.

▶▶ 1st, ~ it essential in counteracting the lies of Satan.

▷▷ In Jn. ~ 8, ~ verse 44b, ~ Jesus said that Satan ~ "does not stand in the truth, ~ because ~ there is no truth in him. ~ 77

▷▷ When he lies, ~ he speaks out of his own character ~ 77

↳↳ [i.e., ~ When he tells a lie ~ he is only doing what is natural to him], ~ 77

▷▷ for he is a liar ~ and the father of lies ~ 77

↳↳ [I.e., ~ all the falsehood in the world ~ owes its existence to Satan]."

▶▶ 2nd, ~ continually ~ filling our minds with, ~ focusing on, ~ and giving serious thought to ~ God's word, ~ is essential ~ in counteracting the lies ~ of the world.

▷▷ We live in a world, ~ to paraphrase Isaiah, ~ that increasingly says ~ evil is good ~ and good is evil, ~ 77

↳↳ that dark is light ~ and light is dark, ~ that bitter is sweet ~ and sweet is bitter.

▶▶ 3rd, ~ continually filling our minds with, ~ focusing on, ~ and giving serious thought to ~ God's word, ~ is essential ~ in counteracting the lies ~ of our own making.

▷▷ My . . . , ~ even though we are saved and have a new nature, ~ we still have ~ our sin nature.

↳↳ And ~ we ~ are more than capable ~ of deceiving ourselves.

▷▷ Speaking of our fallen nature, ~ Jeremiah says in ~ Jer. ~ 17, ~ verse 9, ~ "The heart is deceitful ~ above all things, ~ and desperately sick; ~ who can understand it?"

▷▷ And over in Romans, ~ Paul says that ~ nothing good ~ dwells in our sin nature.

▶▶Continually ~ filling our minds with, ~ focusing on, ~ and giving serious thought to ~ God's word ~ which is absolute truth, ~ is essential ~ 77

▷▷in counteracting ~ the lies of our own making, ~ the lies of the world, ~ 77

↳↳and ~ the lies of Satan.

NEXT, ~ "CONTINUALLY ~ FILL YOUR MINDS WITH, ~ FOCUS ON, ~ AND GIVE SERIOUS thought to ~ whatever is just."

▶▶"just" ~ here ~ refers ~ to what is upright or just, ~ conformable to God's standards ~ and thus worthy ~ of his approval.

▷▷IOW, ~ we are to continually think about things ~ that ~ are in perfect harmony ~ 77

↳↳with the eternal, ~ unchanging, ~ divine standard ~ of a holy God ~ revealed in Scripture.

▶▶To put it very briefly, ~ we are ~ to continually ~ fix our minds ~ on things ~ that are right in God's eyes.

▶▶Notice, ~ not ~ things that are right in our eyes, ~ not ~ things that are right in others' eyes, ~ 77

▷▷and not ~ things that are right in the world's eyes.

↳↳The world ~ has a very warped view ~ of what is right.

▶▶We're ~ to continually fix our minds ~ on things that are right ~ in God's eyes. 77 6/13

NOW, ~ IF YOU'LL NOTICE IN VERSE 8, ~ RIGHT AFTER LISTING THE SIX specific things to think about, ~ Paul moves ~ from the specific ~ to the general.

"CONTINUALLY ~ FILL YOUR MINDS WITH, ~ FOCUS ON, ~ AND GIVE SERIOUS thought to ~ these specific things: ~ 77 77 6/13

▶▶ whatever is true, ~ whatever is honorable, ~ whatever is just, ~ whatever is pure, ~ whatever is lovely, ~ whatever is commendable."

▷▷ Then he moves to the general: ~ "if there is any excellence, ~ if there is anything worthy of praise."

▶▶ IOW, ~ he gives us a list of some specific things to think about ~ that are morally excellent and praiseworthy.

▶▶ Then ~ at the end of the list, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ he gives us ~ a comprehensive statement ~ to include ~ anything and everything ~ that is morally excellent and praiseworthy.

▶▶ IOW, ~ we are not restricted to the list of six specific things.

▷▷ It is a representative list.

▶▶ Paul now includes ~ everything ~ that happens to be morally excellent and praiseworthy according to God's standards.

AND THAT BRINGS US BACK TO THE EXPANDED BASIC COMMAND.

"CONTINUALLY ~ FILL YOUR MINDS WITH, ~ FOCUS ON, ~ AND GIVE SERIOUS thought to ~ whatever ~ is morally excellent and praiseworthy according to God's standards."

▶▶ Our thoughts ~ should not ~ center ~ on that which is ~ false, ~ frivolous, ~ trivial, ~ trashy, ~ vulgar, ~ dishonorable, ~ shameful, ~ or ~ immoral.

▷▷ When our minds ~ are focused on these types of things, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ we will come to find ~ that these types of things ~ ¶¶

→→ will consequently dominate ~ our thinking, ~ our attitudes, ~ and ~ our behavior. ¶¶ 7/13

▶▶ Rather, ~ our minds should concentrate ~ on whatever ~ is morally excellent and praiseworthy from God's perspective.

▷▷ And then ~ we will find ~ that our thinking, ~ attitudes, ~ and behavior ~ will tend to be ~ morally excellent and commendable.

▶▶ Are you familiar with the term ~ GIGO? ~~~ Not Geico! ~~~ GIGO.

▷▷ It was coined in the early days of computers.

▷▷ If the data entered into a computer ~ is bad, ~ the computer ~ can't do anything good with it.

↳↳ What you put into a computer ~ determines ~ what comes out.

▷▷ If you put the right data in, ~ the right answers come out.

▷▷ The reverse ~ is also true. ⇔⇔ GIGO ~ was coined to express that truth.

↳↳ It describes ~ both ~ the cause ~ and the consequence ~ of entering the wrong data into a computer.

→→ It stands ~ for ~ "Garbage In, ~ Garbage Out."

▷▷ Loved ones, ~ if we put garbage into our minds, ~~ guess what's going to come out?

▷▷ But, ~ if we continually put into our minds ~ whatever ~ 77

↳↳ is morally excellent and praiseworthy, ~ according to God's standards, ~ 77

→→ the resulting output ~~ in our thinking, ~~ in our attitudes, ~ and ~~ in our behavior, ~ 77

↳↳ will be that which is glorifying and pleasing to God.

▶▶ To come at it from a different angle: ~~ 77

▷▷ It's said, ~ "Sow a thought, ~ reap an action. ⇔⇔ Sow an action, ~ reap a habit. ~~ 77

↳↳ Sow a habit, ~ reap a character. ⇔⇔ Sow a character, ~ reap a destiny. 77 8/13

NOW LET'S TURN TO PAUL'S ~ SIXTH AND FINAL ~ CLOSING EXHORTATION. ~~
verse 9a

"WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED ~ AND RECEIVED ~ AND HEARD ~ AND SEEN IN ME ~~
practice these things."

WE'LL SPLIT THIS INTO TWO PARTS.

▶▶1st, ~ we'll look at "What you ~ have learned and received and heard and seen in me."

▶▶2nd, ~ we'll look at "practice these things."

1st, ~ "WHAT YOU ~ HAVE LEARNED AND RECEIVED AND HEARD AND SEEN IN ME, ~ I.E.,
Paul."

▶▶Remember, ~ this was originally written to the believers in Philippi ~ who knew Paul.

▷▷For us, ~ it refers ~ to all of what we've learned from studying this letter, ~ ¶¶

↳↳which gives us some information about Paul.

→→E.g., ~ his very positive attitude in suffering.

▶▶So, ~ the application for us, ~ believers here at NHCC, ~ is this: ~~ ¶¶

▷▷Paul says, ~ "What you have learned from studying this letter."

▷▷And we've learned a lot.

▷▷Eliminating the breaks from the letter, ~ we've spent ~ about a year in it.

↳↳So far. ~~~ We're not done studying it yet.

▷▷So, ~ we've learned much so far. ~~ Consequently, ~ ¶¶

↳↳our brains ~ should be packed full ~ of knowledge from this letter. ¶¶ 9/13

OK, ~ NOW WE'LL LOOK AT THE PHRASE: ~~ "PRACTICE THESE THINGS."

▶▶ I.e., ~ "take what you've learned from studying this letter, ~ Paul says, ~ and ~ put it ~ into practice."

▶▶ The tense of the verb for ~ "practice" ~ indicates ~ repeated action.

▷▷ IOW, ~ we are to make ~ practicing what we've learned ~ a habit ~ in our daily lives.

THIS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND.

IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, ~ WE ARE TO NEVER STOP ~ AT SIMPLY GAINING knowledge from Scripture.

▶▶ God's goal for us ~ is not ~ for us to just simply "know," ~~ but to "know ~ and ~ do."

▷▷ I.e., ~ to put ~ what we learn ~ into practice ~ on a daily basis.

PAUL MAKES THIS CLEAR IN EPHESIANS.

▶▶ In chapters 1-3, ⇔⇔ Paul ~ explains ~ our great salvation ~ and its accompanying blessings that God has freely given us.

▶▶ In chapter 4, ~ verse 1, ~ through chapter 6, ~ verse 9, ⇔⇔ Paul gives a detailed description ~ of how we, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ who have been given this great salvation and its accompanying blessings, ~ are to live as a result.

▶▶ So, ~~ Ephesians, ~ chapters 1-3, ~ deal with ~ knowing.

▶▶ And, ~~ Eph., ~ 4, ~ vs. 1, ~ through chap. 6, ~ Vs. 9, ~ deal with ~ doing. ¶¶ 10/13

WE SEE THIS IN ROMANS AS WELL.

▶▶ For the first eleven chapters, ~ Paul discussed theology, ~~ the wonderful fact ~ of our salvation by grace through faith.

▶▶ Then in [Rom. 12](#), ~ he switches the subject to behavior.

▷▷ How should we act? ~~ How should we behave?

↪↪ The word "[therefore](#)" ~ in [12:1](#) ~ connects who we are with what we should do.

▶▶ Our behavior described in [Romans 12](#) and following ~ ¶¶

▷▷ should be a direct consequence ~ of God's grace in our lives, ~ discussed in [chapters 1-11](#).

▶▶ So, ~ again, ~ God's goal for us, ~ believers, ~ is not ~ for us to just simply "know," ~~ ¶¶

▷▷ but to "know ~ and ~ do."

EZRA ~ IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, ~ STANDS AS AN EXAMPLE ~ FOR PREACHERS AND teachers of God's word ~ in what he had devoted himself to do.

▶▶ But, ~ he also stands as an example ~ for all believers ~ in the first two categories ~ that he had dedicated himself to do.

▶▶ Ezra ~ 7, ~ verse 10.

▷▷ "For Ezra ~ had set his heart ~ to study the Law of the Lord, ~~ and to do it ~~ and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel."

▶▶ Let's break this down.

▷▷ 1st, ~ Ezra ~ "had set his heart." ¶¶ 11/13

↳↳He determined within his heart ~ that he would ~ faithfully and resolutely ~ commit himself ~ ¶¶

→→to the habits ~ detailed in the rest of the verse.

▷▷2nd, ~ Ezra ~ determined within his heart ~ to study ~ the law of the Lord.

↳↳He dedicated his life ~ to the reading and detailed examination ~ of God's Word.

▷▷3rd, ~ Ezra ~ determined within his heart ~ to obey ~ the word of the Lord.

↳↳His examination of the Scriptures ~ was not simply ~ a growth of knowledge.

→→He applied that knowledge ~ to his life.

↳↳I.e., ~ he put ~ what he learned ~ into practice in his daily life.

▷▷And 4th, ~ Ezra ~ determined within his heart ~ to teach ~ God's word ~ throughout Israel.

↳↳He did not ~ keep the things he learned ~ to himself. ~ He taught them ~ to others.

▶▶For preachers and teachers of God's word, ~ ¶¶

▷▷he stands ~ as an example to follow ~ in all three categories, ~ study, ~ do, ~ and ~ teach.

▶▶But all believers ~ should follow Ezra's dedication ~ to study ~ and ~ to do ~ God's word.

▷▷All of us ~ should dedicate ourselves ~ ¶¶

↳↳to the reading and detailed examination of God's word, ~ ~ ¶¶

→→and ~ ¶¶

↳↳to putting what we learn ~ into practice ~ in our daily lives.

& THAT BRINGS US TO THE END OF PAUL'S 6 CLOSING EXHORTATIONS. ¶¶ 12/13

CONCLUSION.

TO WRAP THINGS UP TODAY, ~ NOTICE ~ THAT PAUL ENDS HIS SERIES OF CLOSING exhortations ~ with an encouraging reminder.

▶▶ Verse 9b, ~ "and the God of peace will be with you."

▶▶ Paul here reinforces the promise ~ of God's presence with us.

▶▶ This statement, ~ unlike his earlier statement, ~ "The Lord is near," ~ is much easier to pinpoint as to where it fits.

▷▷ There's a little more to it, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ but given that it comes at the conclusion of the six exhortations, ~ most likely it applies to all of them.

▶▶ Since we have recently spent a great deal of time on this promise, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ I will just say this, ~ and then we'll be done.

▶▶ Point Paul's making here in [verse 9b](#) ~ is that ~ as we live out these six exhortations, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Yahweh, ~ the sovereign creator of the universe ~ and our God, ~ will be with us ~ and ~ will help us carry them out.

▶▶ To God ~ be the glory forever and ever.

LET'S PRAY 13/13