

## STRENGTH THROUGH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

*“Nothing paralyzes our lives like the attitude that things can never change. We need to remind ourselves that God can change things. Outlook determines outcome. If we see only the problems, we will be defeated; but if we see the possibilities in the problems, we can have victory.”* — Warren W. Wiersbe

*“It is almost as presumptuous to think you can do nothing as to think you can do everything.”* — Phillips Brooks

*“A happy person is not a person in a certain set of circumstances, but rather a person with a certain set of attitudes.”* — Scottish Proverb

*“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things”* (Phil. 4:8).

One of the greatest blessings in life is the ability to choose your thoughts. This verse instructs us to limit our thoughts to particular categories. You must qualify the thoughts you allow into your thinking process. Worthy thoughts are those that are true, honorable, equitable, chaste, peaceable, commendable, excellent, and praiseworthy. Your heart will be incredibly strengthened by restricting unfit and impure thoughts. By dwelling on positive thoughts, you will lessen internal stress. Healthy emotions cannot endure a steady diet of destructive thoughts. The world is full of discouraging and depressing facts and opinions. Your mind will be renewed day by day as you deliberately select the things you meditate and obsess about.

Some time back I decided to force myself to write down thoughts each day that passed this test of Philippians 4:8. This exercise lasted for about six weeks. At first, it took quite a while for me to write a list of things that matched these categories. When you are in a pit, your outlook is terribly skewed with negativity. Your vision can be so congested with unpleasant experiences that it is hard work to identify anything that is positive. I would sit and search my mind for things in my life that met these constructive criteria. This was a time-consuming process. In the beginning, the only positive things I could inventory in my life were Jesus and Heaven. For the life of me, I could not identify many encouraging things. But over

the process of time, I discovered a host of things, people, and circumstances that were positive, beneficial, and constructive. It was as if my mind was opening up to a world of blessings that I had forgotten and overlooked. Biblical thinking may take effort, but it is invigorating and animating.

If you need a boost, begin by changing your thought patterns. Negativity is an energy robber, and chronic burdens can become very heavy. If you want to feel better, you must start thinking better. Your heart and your mind need lifting, and you must take responsibility for what you ponder. Your thoughts are your choice, and there is no magic wand that will drive out the thought-patterns you have permitted. But you do have powerful weapons at your disposal. “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:4–5). You have spiritual weapons that can demolish strongholds — those satanic fortresses of wrong thinking. These resources will destroy the arrogant reasoning that assaults your understanding of God and His character. Rebuilding the mind is a process which requires both effort and time.

If you find yourself in a pit, realize it is not your permanent residence. Your mind is powerful. Your mind is reprogrammable. Your mind can be transformed (Rom. 12:2). Your pattern of thinking can be changed. Your outlook can improve. Get yourself a notebook and chart out thoughts worthy of your consideration according to Philippians 4:8. I know that when you are down you lack motivation, but you can force yourself to compile a list of positive thoughts each day. Should you find it difficult to cite examples in your life, use the Scripture for subject matter in each category. Persist in this exercise. As you reprogram your mind, you will be strengthened by His might.

### **Thought Questions:**

- Are you limiting your thoughts to the categories outlined in Philippians?
- Are you writing down your daily thoughts that pass the test of Philippians 4:8?
- Are you actively letting God’s Word reprogram your mind?

Taken from *Extraordinary Strength In Adversity* by Harold Vaughan.