

# Philippians 4:8-13

6-16-10

## “Leash Your Mind, Unleash Your Maturity!”

### I. **INTRO:**

A. Pray for Ukraine Team: (Leave Sunday)

B. **Quick Thinking:** A man working in the produce department was asked by a lady if she could buy 1/2 a head of lettuce. He replied, “1/2 a head? Are you serious? God grows these in whole heads and that’s how we sell them!” “You mean,” she persisted, “that after all the years I’ve shopped here, you won’t sell me half-a-head of lettuce?” “Look,” he said, “If you like I’ll ask the manager.” She indicated that would be appreciated, so the young man marched to the front of the store. “You won’t believe this, but there’s a lame-brained idiot of a lady back there who wants to know if she can buy 1/2-a-head of lettuce.” He noticed the manager gesturing, and turned around to see the lady standing behind him, obviously having followed him to the front of the store. “And this nice lady was wondering if she could buy the other 1/2,” he concluded.

**Later in the day** the manager cornered the young man and said, “That was the finest example of thinking on your feet I’ve ever seen! Where did you learn that?” “I grew up in Grand Rapids, and if you know anything about Grand Rapids, you know that it’s known for its **great hockey teams & its ugly women.**” The manager’s face flushed, & he interrupted, “My wife is from Grand Rapids!” “And which **hockey team** did she play for?”

C. Paul now gives 2 lists: Things to **Meditate on** & things to **Put into practice!**

1. First, your **thought life**; **then** your **model** of effective Christian living.

a) **Aging** is a matter of fact (we’re all getting older); **Maturity** is a matter of choice!

### II. **Leash Your Mind, Unleash Your Maturity!**

A. **LEASH YOUR MIND!** (8)

B. (8) Paul now gives *the standard* for our **thought life!**

1. Deliberately keep your mind on *Positive, Pure, Praiseworthy Points!*

C. Note the *importance* of the **mind** & its *right use*.

1. Note what God can do for our minds - Is.26:3 **You will keep him in perfect peace** (Shalom Shalom) **Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.**

2. “If **this list** is suppose to be the *meat & potatoes* of our **thoughts**; **then worry** is the **Junk food** for our **soul!**”

D. **True** (truthfulness); **Noble** (that which is majestic & awe inspiring); **Just** (right);

**Pure** (morally pure, clean thoughts); **Lovely** (acceptable); **Good Report** (admirable, attractive);

**Virtue** (the most comprehensive Gk. term for moral excellence); **Praiseworthy** (worthy of Praise).

E. **Meditate** - consider, reckon, take into account, to think on.

1. *Pres tense* calls for a “continual or habitual action”.
2. We are responsible for our thoughts & can hold them to **High & Holy** ideals!
  - a) **At times** I hold myself to these **Holy 8!**
  - b) **Other times** I let em run anywhere they want to run, as fast as they want to run there.
3. **Example: Different leashes to walk your dogs (eg: leash; lead(dog shows); choke chain; prong choke chain; retractable???) Allows dog to roam anywhere)**
  - a) **Why do most of our cities have leash laws?** (on a leash & under control)
    - (1) To protect other citizens from dog attacks when off of your property.
  - b) You’ve heard, “*Leash your dog!*”... Paul’s saying, “*leash your mind!*”
    - (1) Isn’t that one of the 10 commandments, “**don’t wander onto your neighbors yard & start coveting his house, wife, servants, animals, or anything that is his.**” Ex.20:17
    - (2) **Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.** 2 Cor.10:5b
      - (a) Sometimes that takes the “*pronged*” choke chain!
      - (3) **Your mind** needs different leashes at different times!

F. **Homework** – Come up with a few examples of each of the 8.

1. **What’s opposite?** When your mind is thinking on things that are **false; low morals; unjust; impure; unlovely; bad reports.**
  - a) (i.e.) *Whatever things are true* (don’t believe their lies, what does Scripture say on it?)  
Shift your *impure* thoughts to *pure* thoughts!
  - b) Then store em up in your mind. Let them become like an I.V. Drip; dripping these thoughts deep into your soul, when needed!
2. **Your mind has to be thinking about something!** (to stop thinking about **red**, you don’t try to stop thinking about **red**; **but** start thinking about **green!**)

G. **UNLEASH YOUR MATURITY!** (9)

H. (9) **These do!** - these practice. *Continuity & repetition of practice.* (LKGNT)

1. So, practice as a habit & continue to do them.
2. They **learned** from Paul’s example. They **received** a wealth of knowledge. They **Heard** his great teachings. They **Saw** a super example in him.
  - a) **Q:** Do you have someone who is a **positive model** to you?
  - b) **No?** Grab an inspiring biography (missionary, preacher, man/women of faith)

- I. **The God of Peace** - The only one who can bring a *Higher Peace* than the worlds peace, is the One who Transcends the world around us.
1. When you're trying to get to sleep at night & you can't because of **anxiety**, listen to God's whisper, "*Go ahead & sleep now, I'll sit up!*"
  2. "There is nothing too great for **God's Power**; & nothing too small for His **Fatherly Care!**" (Barclay)
  3. **Worry only**: Postpones **Prayer**; Pillages the **Peace of God**; Pinches off **Positive Thoughts**; Pounds **Positive Models**; & Puts off the **Potentate of Peace!**
- J. **CONTENTMENT & CHRIST!** (10-13)
- K. (11b) Don't picture Paul writing at a **desk** in an office, **but** from a *dark prison cell*.
- L. (12) Verse 13 is connected to vs.12!
1. Be Content to live in Plenty **or** Poverty!
    - a) We must be able to **mount up w/wings like eagles**, **but** we must also know how to **come down!** (eagles don't only ride the high winds. In Alaska they sit on the beaches!)
    - b) **Q**: Are we able to live in **life's Valley's**?
    - c) Being able to "**do all things**" was referring to mostly things of **abasement, hunger, & when we suffer needs!**
    - d) (Message) I'm just as happy with **little** as with **much**, with **much** as with **little**. I've found the recipe for being happy whether **full or hungry, hands full or hands empty**.
- M. Let's **mount back up** with the Eagles.
1. Some have learned to be **abased**, **but not** how to **abound!**
  2. Sometimes I believe it's easier being a **Beagle** rather than an **Eagle!**
  3. **Q**: Have you ever felt dizzy when you reached a mnt. peak? (so do some Christians!)
  4. **Q**: On a Roller Coaster which is scarier: Dip at the bottom **or** Pinnacle at top?
  5. **Q**: Is it easier to carry a cup that is  $\frac{1}{2}$  **full or** one that **is full**?
    - a) More Christians seem to bring more disgrace to the name of Christ in **Prosperity** **than in Adversity!**
    - b) We need to learn how to sail w/a **faint breeze or** in a **powerful gale!**
  6. **Our Prayer**: "Lord, Teach us how to be **full**. Let not the gifts Your love gives, **estrangle our hearts from You!**"
- N. (13) **Where do you put the emphasis on this verse?** On, *I can or* on *through Christ*?
- O. The secret of the "*I can*" life lies in the **2 words...through Christ!**
1. **That is the secret of spiritual victory...through Christ!**

- P. I believe too many have read this verse **like** the man who in reading through his bible for the 1st time, ran to the bottom of the page which read, “I can do all things.”
1. He thought, “now Paul you’ve taken it too far!” **Then he turned the page... “through Christ who strengthens me.”**
  2. I think so many that use this verse, only hear the first part!
    - a) There’s nothing more pathetic than *wishful thinking!*
    - b) It’s not *Positive Thinking*: someone defined as *self-improvement by self-deception!*
    - c) The true Christian position is to **accept** that which God **appoints**, & to say, “I can do all things **through Christ!**”
  3. **Story**: *John Henry Jowett* told about a small village where an elderly woman died. She died “penniless, uneducated, unsophisticated”, **but** during her lifetime her selfless service had made a tremendous impact for Christ. On her tombstone they chiseled the words, “*She did what she couldn't.*”
- Q. Paul never said: (Swindoll)
- I can do all things through **Education!**  
 I can do all things through **Money!**  
 I can do all things through **Power!**  
 I can do all things through **Positive Thinking!**  
 I can do all things through **Confidence in myself!**
- R. **Who strengthens me** - So, how can I live the *can do* life? Well, this is how...  
 I can do all things through Christ, **when** I allow **Him** to do all things **through me!**
1. I can **heal this marriage** *through Christ*, when I allow Him to do all things **through me!**
  2. I can **battle this addiction** *through Christ*, when I allow Him to do all things **through me!**
  3. I can **say no to** \_\_\_\_\_ *through Christ*, when I allow Him to do all things **through me!**
  4. I can **find my career** *through Christ*, when I allow Him to do all things **through me!**
- S. So, we learned last week, **when anxiety** appears, the cure is **Prayer!**  
 This week Paul adds, **When life is disorderly**, the cure is **mental & practical discipline.**
- T. **He** who made the **little slave-baby** the **strong champion** of the Exodus; & the **shepherd-lad** the **slayer** of Goliath; & the **captive Daniel** **prime minister** of mighty Babylon; **He** who transformed **Simon** to **Cephas**, **Saul** into **Paul**, & has made 1000’s of his humble followers **spiritual giants**, can enable **you & me** to “do all things” if we live in the secret of that little phrase, “*through Christ!*”