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Permit #361

Following the upward call through Philipians ...

Contemplating Some Positives

The Holy Spirit, through His servant the apostle Paul, has elucidated certain positive principles. These principles, if implemented so as to form the Christian's mental and spiritual environment, enable him to be victorious in the midst of what others would call defeat, to be winners where it really counts — in the spiritual realm. "We are afflicted in every way," stated Paul, describing his and the other apostles' experiences, "but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8-

10). How could the apostles and other first century Christians go through such trials and seeming defeats, but yet maintain such positive and true perspectives? The answer is that they created and kept the proper mental environment.

▲ **Whatever is true** — Satan is a liar, and according to Jesus, the father of lies. The saint of God, to maintain his proper and victorious attitude, must recognize the lies, but always focus on the things that are true. The great and eternal truths are centered about Jesus in glory and the wonders of the spiritual universe to come. "Set your mind on the things above," was Paul's exhortation to the Colossian brethren, "not on the things that are on earth" (Colossians 3:2). The things of earth are temporary, laden with lies, and often discouraging; the truths of the upward call of God never are.

▲ **Whatever is honorable** — "Honor your father and mother," the apostle Paul quoted from the commandments written on stone, "which," said he, "is the first commandment with a promise" (Ephesians 6:2). It is a positive and uplifting mental exercise to honor the positions rightfully given to those who reared their children, especially in the Lord. "Honor all men," was the encouragement from Peter, "love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king" (1 Peter 2:17). All men are made in the image of God, and it is positive pick-me-up to grant each one honor as befitting those who are spirit beings. Likewise, the position of *king* or whatever governing authority is to be honored as well, as it ultimately points to the eternal governance of the Great King!

▲ **Whatever is right** — So many things are wrong in a world that has been cursed since Adam ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But there are principles and precepts that are *right*. The whole concept of *righteousness* is based on what is right, and it is fruitful to focus on the blessings that come from living righteously and holy in this present age. The concept of *justice* is comes from what is right, and it is especially uplifting when tempered with the proper amount of mercy applied at the appropriate time. The Christian whose life is focused on what is right will be upbeat and reaching for the positive.

▲ **Whatever is pure** — Certainly the world itself, filled with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life, is laced with impurity. The follower of Christ is called to lift his sights upward, to the realm where angels and the redeemed continually praise God, where nothing pulls on the saints' thoughts with a downward sucking sound. No place here for double *entendres*, or bawdy behavior. Here only the sublime, the wonderful, and the spiritual play. "Everyone," commented the apostle John, in reference to Jesus' second coming, "who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself just as He is pure" (1 John 3:3). Pure thoughts are powerful positives!

"Whatever ..." is often a "downer" comment. But when it is coupled with the true, the honorable, the right, and the pure, it is a powerful means of focusing thoughts and attitudes upward. The saint who can live in this mental environment will always have an upbeat day, praising God and encouraging others — like Paul, writing this letter of encouragement from jail to those outside prison!

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