



Following the upward call through Philippians ...

## Contemplating Some More Positives

Many saints want positive attitudes and upbeat actions to emanate from them without creating the inward base for such attitudes and actions. Not going to happen! God has so constructed the physical shell of the Christian that the mind has to be changed by reprogramming. "Do not be conformed to this world," Paul enjoined the brethren in Rome, "but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). Unless the thought patterns of the mind are altered by systematic and intense redirection, the attitudes and the actions of the saint are going to be predictably very similar

to those of the past. Since God is very interested in helping His children really change, His Holy Spirit has offered some very specific concepts upon which the saint is to focus His mind.

- **Whatever is lovely** — Adding to the list containing the *true*, the *honorable*, the *right*, and the *pure*, the apostle Paul puts forth the concept of "whatever is lovely." The Christian who will make his mind live in such a way as to see the beauty of God's creation, to marvel at the sunlight after the storm, to notice the good in people and congratulate their progress, and to understand the value of one precious soul is well on his way to having a good day every day.
- **Whatever is of good repute** — There are plenty of scam artists, crooks, and evil plotters in the world. Some of them wear suits; some do not. While the Christian needs to be aware of their existence, and be wary of their plots, he is not to let his mind dwell down there with these types of low life. Rather, he is to concentrate on the things which make for a good reputation. Honesty, hard work, doing it right the first time every time, good customer service, and follow through ... these are all qualities which will give the saint a good reputation in the work place and in the midst of the people — saints and others — with whom he must interact.
- **If there is any excellence** — In this world there is a lot of poor performance and poor workmanship. But the saint of God is to train his eye to see that which is excellent. Often the difference between what is average or acceptable and that which is excellent is in the details. It takes effort to look one step deeper and note the excellency of the workmanship, or to pay attention to the little extras that separate the top level performer from those faces in the crowd. Of course, all that God has done is of superb excellence, and the child of God needs to be able to see His excellent workmanship in the things He has provided in the spiritual realm.
- **Anything worthy of praise** — There are plenty of things to criticize on earth, and there are many very critical, negative people. The disciple of Christ, however, has been called to a more elevated level of thinking. He is always looking for something to praise rather than something to criticize. When the follower of Jesus makes a habit of finding something genuinely praiseworthy in each person or in each situation, he is a very upbeat individual and others are attracted to him. When he gives the appropriate adoration to Him who is "enthroned upon the praises of Israel" (Psalm 22:3), he is joyful and full of hope, for his trust is not in himself but very consciously in Him who raises the dead.

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attractive person.**

The apostle Paul was such a positive, attractive person. For those interested in eternal life, he and those like him were "a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved" (2 Corinthians 2:15). "The things," says Paul, referring to his list of the true to the praiseworthy, "you have learned and received and heard and seen in me; practice these things, and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:9).

JAY WILSON