

What Are You Thinking?

Philippians 4:4-9

A. Our Thoughts Reveal Who We Are

1. We are not what we think we are.
2. What we think, we are.
3. Life is full of pressures—external stress and internal anxiety.
4. Paul wrote this letter from prison, yet it overflows with joy and peace.
5. How is that possible? Because Paul had discovered a deep spiritual secret:
6. Peace is not found in perfect circumstances, but in a person—Jesus Christ.
7. Paul said for thoughts centered in praise, rejecting negative, critical thinking.

B. Why Our Thought Patterns Are So Important to God

1. What we think determines what we say and do
2. A thought is the father of every word.
 - a. Every word that brings blessings to others, that inspires and encourages.
 - b. Every word that discourages and destroys, that cultivates hate and hurt.
3. A thought is the father of every act
4. Every act of kindness, love, crime, violence, every lustful & adulterous act.
5. No wonder God is interested in the topics about which we choose to think.
6. No wonder the psalmist asked the Lord to know his thoughts (Ps. 139:23)
7. Joy is not based on changing circumstances—it is “in the Lord.”
8. Paul doubles down: “again I will say, rejoice.” Why repeat it?
9. Because joy is a choice and often needs to be reminded.
10. This is not shallow happiness, but a resilient joy anchored in Christ.
11. Joy doesn’t ignore sorrow—it overcomes it.
12. In hardship, we must ask: *What has not changed?*
13. Christ’s love, presence, and promises remain. That’s our joy.

C. How We Can Tell If Our Thought Patterns Are Pleasing to God

1. Paul summarizes the focus of our thoughts if they are to please God
 - a. He gives a picture of the Christian mind as it ought to be
 - b. This is what a spiritual MRI of the believer's mind should reveal
2. Be gentle and calm because God is near (v.5)
3. Paul calls for a steady, calm demeanour—evidence of spiritual maturity.
4. Why? Because “the Lord is at hand”—both near in presence and coming soon.
5. Do we believe God is close?
6. If so, we can respond to people & problems with grace, not panic.
7. Our thoughts should be of things that are true (truthful), honest (noble)
8. Our thoughts should be of things that are just (right, good), pure.
9. Not dwelling on the impurity of the times
10. Our thoughts should be of things that are lovely and of good report
11. Our thoughts should be of the best in others & focused on praising God.

D. How We Can Conform Our Thought Patterns to God's Will

1. Right thoughts come from hearts that are right with God.
2. We must confess our wrong thoughts to the Lord & be forgiven (1 John 1:9)
3. We must choose mental input that produces good thoughts
4. We can then replace anxiety with prayer (v.6)
5. The antidote to anxiety? Prayer with thanksgiving.
6. Prayer: general communication with God. Supplication: specific, urgent requests.
7. Thanksgiving is having faith that God hears & provides.
8. Turn every worry into a prayer.
9. Anxiety pulls us in different directions; prayer centres us on God.

E. God's Peace Will Guard You

1. *"And the peace of God will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*
2. Not *peace with God* (salvation) but *the peace of God* (daily calm).
3. It "surpasses all understanding"—beyond logic or external explanation.
4. It "guards" us—like soldiers standing watch over our emotions and thoughts.
5. God's peace stands guard at the gates of your heart, keeping fear at bay.
6. Paul gives a filter for our thoughts. Train your mind to think on what is good.
7. Our mental diet affects our emotional and spiritual health.
8. In a world full of noise and negativity, Christians are called to intentional, disciplined thinking.
9. Don't let your mind run wild. Feed it with truth, beauty, and grace.
10. Then put into practice what you've learned (v.9)
11. The Christian life is not just about knowledge—it's about practice.
12. Paul wasn't just a teacher of peace—he lived it, even in prison.
13. And the promise? "The God of peace will be with you."
14. Peace doesn't come by accident. It comes from:
 - a. Rejoicing in the Lord, remembering His nearness.
 - b. Replacing worry with prayer
 - c. Filling your mind with what is good
 - d. Putting God's Word into practice
15. Maybe today, you're anxious. Or overwhelmed. Or lacking joy.
16. God invites you to bring all your thoughts, worries & emotions to Him.
17. He promises in return a peace that surpasses all understanding.
18. We don't just get God's peace—we get God Himself.

F. If Christ Returns Today, What Will He Find on Your Mind?

1. What will you change to have thoughts pleasing to God?
2. Will you commit to developing thought patterns of praise?
3. WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?