**THINK ON THESE THINGS (#2)**

***Things True & Noble***

Japanese organizing consultant Marie Kondo writes best-selling books and has a Netflix and YouTube video series on decluttering your home. She says take every item you own and give it the “Spark of Joy” test as you hold it before you. If it brings you joy, keep it. If it does not, give it away or toss it. If you do the KonMari Method of organizing by decluttering you will soon have a tidy, beautiful home you will greatly enjoy. Hmmmm.

The apostle Paul wrote the epistle of Philippians to address the subject of JOY in Christ. Thirteen times in eleven verses he used the words *joy* and *rejoice* to tell the world what a wonderful life Christians can have if they will leave the world and follow Jesus (1:3, 18, 25; 2:2, 17, 18, 28, 29; 3:1; 4:1, 4). No matter your outward circumstances (Paul was in prison) you can “*rejoice in the Lord*.” The “spark of joy” can be found in your inward thoughts as you “*meditate*” on things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, good, virtuous and praiseworthy (Phil. 4:8). Keep those eight thoughts while throwing everything else out and you’ll find joy. The clutter of thinking like the world only brings anxiety and worry (Phil. 4:6). Today, let’s do some cleaning by decluttering the mind.

“Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny.”

Moral: Your thoughts reap a destiny. You become what you think. Tire ruts can be good or bad, depending on where they lead. Once in the rut it is very difficult to escape, so make sure your mind is focused on “*things above*” – for they will then lead you there (Col. 3:1-3). Jesus told us we are to love the Lord God with “*all your heart… soul…* ***mind****… and strength*” (Mk. 12:30; Lk. 10:27). To accomplish that I must *LOGIZOMAI*. That is Paul’s Greek word for our translation “***think***” on these things. This word in Greek is present tense, meaning “keep on thinking, meditating, dwelling, considering, focusing deeply” on things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, good, virtuous and praiseworthy. Doing so will declutter the mind and bring joy and a “*peace that surpasses understanding*” (Phil. 4:4-9).

***Things That Are True.***

We can think of *true* things without practicing this commandment. It’s true that my shoes are black and feel comfortable. But that doesn’t bring God’s joy and peace. Paul is talking about TRUTH, that is, God’s holy word. “*Sanctify them through truth, Thy word is truth*” (Jn. 17:17). Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life*” (Jn. 14:6). “*God is true*” (Jn. 3:3). The Holy Spirit is “*the Spirit of truth*” (Jn. 14:17).

The word *True* is the Greek ALETHES. The word Truth is ALETHEIA. It literally means “not being hidden.” In carries the idea of factual, or real. Paul is telling Christians that in order to overcome anxiety and find joy and peace you must continuously dwell on the Word of God. That means you must filter out all the non-stop “information overload” that we now experience in our high-tech world. The steady stream of news from the internet, television, radio, magazines, newspapers and other media is enough to drive anyone crazy. But how do you filter all of this 24/7/365 bombardment of information? Treat it as contraband! What?

When I go through the airport I, and my bags, must pass through TSA X-ray machines. In 2018, before Covid struck, TSA agents discovered 4,239 firearms in carry-on bags, with 86% of them loaded. That’s called contraband (i.e. it’s illegal… duh). When I hear information pouring into my brain at approximately 10,000 thoughts per day (according to some geek research scientist who studies these things) I need to pass it through my saturated Bible-based brain to see if it is contraband. It might be true, but is it truth!

If someone gave me $1,440 this morning and said I must spend it all by midnight, I would be very careful to “think” how best to use it to bless my family and others. I should be even more careful to “think” how to spend the 1,440 minutes God gives me each day in order to bless my soul, and the souls of others. If it is true that “*Truth shall make you free*” (Jn. 8:32), then may I *make* time (not “find” time) to continually think on truth throughout the day, decluttering from my mind all trivial things of this world, such as political news, mindless shows, worldly entertainment, etc. etc. Go ahead, try it. See how much you are addicted to it. Fasting from it you will surely find joy and peace.

***Things That Are Noble.***

When thoughts flow through our minds, we should not only ask, “Is it God’s truth that will bring the spark of joy to my life?” – but we should also ask, “Is it noble and honorable so that it brings the spark of joy to my spirit?”

The Greek word *SEMNOS* is defined as “august, noble, venerable, reverend.” It carries the idea of lofty, high or holy. When you think of nobility you think of someone in an elite position. Someone who conducts themselves like royalty.

If you were to be invited to Buckingham Palace to dine with Queen Elizabeth you would be very careful to learn all the traditions and customs of proper etiquette. You would take every precaution to dress for the occasion and follow all the rules of decorum worthy of where you were and who you were with. You would never wear ragged jeans and a tee shirt that says, “I’m with stupid.” Far more important than a dinner guest with the queen is an audience with the King of kings. Remember, our King “*knows the thoughts and intents of our heart*” (Heb. 4:13). What does He see there?

When thoughts flood my mind it is so important that I allow only noble and honorable things to pass through my spiritual filter. That is why “True” is the first on the list, because it can then distinguish between noble and mundane things. All of us have too easily let thoughts slip through our filters that drag us like gravity back to earth. Instead, we are reminded to *“seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.”* This is followed by the command to *“set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth”* (Col. 3:1-2). Think noble thoughts, not flippant, superficial things that cause us to never rise above the world. Brethren, we are “*sons of God*.” Think like it. Then you will act like it. Truly, “This is our Father’s world.”

Think on these things.

Peace and Joy. – Rick