

Philippians XXVI – Reckoning and Living the Good Life (*Phil 4:8-9*)

Introduction – These verses are proverbial and the implications and applications of them go far beyond the particular reason Paul is saying this to the Philippians here. We would do well, however, to first of all consider these verses in the context Paul is using them. Seeing how he uses these truths of God, we can then also learn how we can apply them in our time and situation.

The Good Life (v8) – The Christian life, and particularly life in community (*koinonia*), extends far beyond a set of propositions regarding the gospel. The Word teaches us to see the world through new eyes – eyes that are made new in Christ and under His Lordship. It is in living out this good life that we are bound together in a community filled with optimistic hope because Jesus Christ is Lord of all.

Things True – Truth is absolute and objective; it is something outside of us. God has something in mind when he tells us to think on the things that are true. And this will apply to the rest of the list as well. Our minds need to constantly be brought back to the foundation of truth in order to press on to more truth and more wisdom.

Things Noble – This describes things which are dignified, majestic, and grand; this life is full of things honorable, venerable, even holy and above reproach. This word strikes out against our culture of the trivial, the banal, the frivolous, and the vulgar. Wisdom teaches us what these things are (Prov 8:6).

Things Just – Psalm 11:7 says God is just (righteous) and loves righteousness. Our reflections upon the activities of other men and ourselves should be in light of God's character and commands. And so we do not make evil plans in our beds (Psalm 36:4).

Things Pure – Pagan, Roman culture was detestably impure, immodest, sensuously provocative, and free spirited in its sexual deviancy. To focus on pure things must mean to stay away from blemished, perverted, twisted and unchaste behaviors – and yes, this means especially towards women.

Things Lovely – Like a welcome fragrance, these are the things which are attractive, agreeable, pleasant, and beautiful. God teaches us what these things are in His creation and in His Word. There is a message in the medium, and if we are to recover and develop a Christian view of the arts we must give ourselves to learning what this means. Beauty is in the eye, objectively, of only One Beholder.

Things Virtuous and Praiseworthy – These words (along with being of “good report”) place an exclamation mark on this list of the good life. Truth, beauty and goodness – these commend us to study, know, and live in the arenas of apologetics, aesthetics, and ethics. This is Christendom spread out into all the corners of your communion and life.

Reckon The Good Life – Christians are called upon to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. Repentance literally means to change one's mind. Unbelief caused us to see everything around us in futility; Faith changes how we see everything. We are to consider carefully, to ponder and meditate upon these things as we now see them according to God's standard – His Word. We are to *reckon* ourselves dead to sin (Rom 6:11) – the same word is used here: we are to ‘reckon’ these things. And that kind of understanding leads to action – so Paul continues.

Live the Good Life (v9) – Translated “*do*,” this word means to practice, to be busy carrying on, to undertake and transact. Jesus detested those who did not meditate upon His teachings in such a way that it worked itself out in their lives (Matt 7:24-29). A fool is not someone who does not know the truth. A fool is someone who ignores the truth. Now Paul again charges the Philippians to remember what they heard and saw in his life – he was living the good life, a life that mattered, a life full of celebration and hope, purpose and commitment, purity and holiness. It came from faithful meditation upon the Word and the world in light of the Word.

The God of Peace – Purposely changing the order of the words (see 4:7), we are not only promised the peace of God, but the God of peace. Here is the gospel – God gives Himself to His people. The Father draws people unto Himself in covenant to be with Him and with His Son by His Spirit. God the Spirit, full of truth, nobility, justice, purity, beauty, virtue and praiseworthiness – indwells us. And the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...

Thinking and Living the Good Life – The God of peace has purchased you. You were at war with God; now you are at peace. You were ugly and he has made you beautiful. You were base, common and defiled and He has made you kings and priests – a holy priesthood. You had no hope or purpose and now you rejoice always in the Lord who has promised purpose in all of your life. You were worthy of a curse and He has rejoiced over you with singing. Now go and live – but think as you do.

The Word – When God created the world, He saw everything He had made and pronounced it good and He did so by His Word. The Word instructs us on what is good and lovely. Our preferences and tastes are not quite so consistent.

Worship – We are to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness (Psalm 29:2). Our worship is to be true and pure, noble and beautiful. We are to give unto the Lord the glory *due* His name. Some things are worthy for worship; some are not.

Community – The body is to rejoice in what is true and good and noble in its members. When we think of others in the body, what are we dwelling on?