

# ***Meditation that Builds You Up and Never Tears You Down***

Lots of distressing thoughts tried worming their way into the Apostle Paul's mind. No wonder! The government of the Roman Empire held Paul prisoner and intended to place him on trial. The emperor's decision would determine whether the apostle lived or died.

Additionally, news from the churches wasn't always pleasant and encouraging. Paul's love for the new Christian believers burdened him with concern for their welfare. Reports of their struggles, their failures and their difficulties filled his heart with pain. Tears trickled down his face as he called on the Lord Jesus to strengthen the churches he had started.

As Paul awaited trial before the emperor, he sent a letter to the Christians in Phillipia, Macedonia. These followers of Jesus needed to hear a word of assurance from the man who founded their church. As Paul wrote to these precious people he used the word *joy* six times in this very brief letter. "In all my prayers for all of you I always pray with joy." <sup>(1)</sup> On top of that he penned the word *rejoice* eight times. "Because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice." <sup>(2)</sup> "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice." <sup>(3)</sup> These are not the words of a depressed, despondent and apprehensive man. Joy bubbled up in Paul's spirit and a rejoicing mind filled his vocabulary with words of victory. Why? Paul practiced meditation that built him up and never tore him down!

As Paul reached the end of writing his letter to the Philippians, he wrote a description of meditation that always builds us up. "Finally...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—**think about such things.**" <sup>(4)</sup> Yes, we choose to entertain thoughts that either build us up or tear us down. We are in charge of the thoughts that fill our minds. No, it isn't always easy to think about things that are true, pure, noble, right, excellent or praiseworthy, but we can walk through this life selecting thoughts that are upbuilding while rejecting thoughts that are destructive.

## **Quiet Our Noisy Minds**

The human mind is a very noisy place. It never rests except during sleep. Ideas, reactions, dreams and words fill the mind even when we wish it would quiet down.

Even though life irresistably moved the apostle Paul toward his trial, he purposefully practiced Bible type meditation. Consequently, peace filled his mind and joy infused his emotions.

Meditation engages our thoughts with the object of our attention. The mind thinks about whatever the heart loves. Therefore, Paul's powerful love for Jesus glued his mind on him.

Satan, the godless world and our own adamic nature wish to clutter our minds with lots of noise. To counter this attack of fear, anxiety, godlessness and

false teaching we fill our minds with God's written Word. Then here is what happens to the Word filled mind.

"Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble," Psalm 119:165.

"If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river," Isaiah 48:18.

God's Word is more than a text book comprised of print on paper. "The Word of God is living and active."<sup>(5)</sup> Jesus confidently declared, "The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."<sup>(6)</sup> Scripture originated in the Holy Spirit and this same spirit makes God's written Word come alive in our human spirits. It truly is, "active and living!" Therefore, when fear or anxiety shouted words of doom in Paul's mind, he attacked these words by deliberately rehearsing God's promises. As a result the peace that comes from God beat down the clamor aroused by fearful thoughts and emotions. Psalm 119:95 certainly applies to Paul's situation: "The wicked are waiting to destroy me, but I will ponder your statutes."

Bible based meditation lifts our thoughts to the Lord, his goodness, his power and his love. We don't merely guess about our future or our current situations. We know what God is like because his Word describes his character, his innermost being, his essence. As we gaze on him by meditating in his Word his love quiets our troubled minds and calmness spreads throughout our entire person!

### **Dominate Your Mind by the Power of Your Human Spirit**

Jesus did not inherit Adam's sinful nature. He inherited his heavenly Father's sinless nature. Nevertheless, Satan felt confident in his ability to corrupt Jesus' purity and thereby disqualify him from becoming the Savior of the world.

How did Satan go about his effort to contaminate Jesus' devotion to heavenly Father? He injected impure thoughts into the Lord's mind!

"The devil said to him..." (Luke 4:3).

"The devil...said to him..." (Luke 4:5-6).

"The devil... 'if you are the Son of God,' he said..." (Luke 4:9).

Although forty days of fasting had torn Jesus down physically and emotionally his human spirit remained powerful. Consequently, he dominated his mind by the power of his spirit. He rejected and obliterated the deceitful thoughts Satan forced into his mind.

You are a child of God and the Spirit of the living Jesus dwells in you. Therefore, by the power of Jesus' Spirit you can subdue meditation that attempts to tear you down. Jesus' presence in our spirits does not shield our minds from all satanic suggestions. We, like Jesus, are susceptible to godless ideas. However, the presence of Jesus equips us with divine power to rule our minds and bring them into submission to God's ways and thoughts. "The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."<sup>(7)</sup>

You can choose to exercise control over your meditation because God restored to you all the rights Adam and Eve gave away. Jesus regained for us the right to govern our minds and master the thoughts that try debilitating us.

**Footnotes:**

1. Philippians 1:4
2. Philippians 1:18
3. Philippians 4:4

4. Philippians 4:8
5. Hebrews 4:12
6. John 6:63

7. 1 John 4:4

