Meditate On These

Paul wrote to the church at Philippi sharing reciprocal joy with them regarding the relationship they shared through Jesus. Paul was encouraged by them and they by him. As he ends his letter, he encourages them to continue abounding in that joy. He tells them, "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

Humans are the only creatures of God's creation that He gave the ability to reason. Isaiah writes, "Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord" (Isaiah 1:18). The abilities of the human mind have long been studied and are yet to be fully understood, and will never be fully understood by the very humans seeking to understand it.

God created mankind and gave us the abilities to reason and think our way through an almost endless number of difficulties, challenges, and situations. The human mind has the ability to see the silver cloud even behind the darkest of linings. Conversely, our minds can also be focused on that which is the most negative, despite the silver lining of the cloud. Such is why Paul encourages Christians to meditate on that which is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy. Paul's point is simple. Meditating our minds on the attributes he listed will drive our attitude, emotions, and actions to conform to those godly standards. As a result, we will be better able to express the joy that should mark who we are by God through Jesus (Philippians 4:4).

Thinking on things outside the domain of aspects Paul recommends provides opportunity for the devil to step in and tempt. James writes, "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is fulfilled, brings forth death" (James 1:14-15).

Solomon states, "For as he thinks in his heart, so he is" (Proverbs 23:7). Solomon's wisdom, given by God, in this statement is worth our strong consideration today. When times, situations, and circumstances are the worst, as it perhaps was for the Christians in Philippi, that is when we need to remember what we have from God through Jesus the most.

Let us each purpose the take the admonition given by Paul to Christians to find and live in the joy God made possible for us through His Son. We can do it by "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). Let us focus our minds toward submitting to God's will by "forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead... toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).