So here we are in the final chapter of Philippians and I have been so excited about getting here with you because of the sheer content of Paul’s final words to his beloved Philippians. But before we go much further, I want to give you just a couple of helpful suggestions in how to work through this bible study.

First of all, if you print the pages of this study consider purchasing a small 3 ring binder, punch some holes along the side and place it in the binder. Here’s why ... as I wrote this little study, I prayed that for me and you, this will be just the beginning to our leaning in closer to the Lord in His Word together. The very thought of working through more bible studies together makes my heart so happy! I know this is probably an unusual place to start a collection of bible studies, (the last chapter of Philippians), but it’s because of what Paul had to say in his final thoughts that actually lays a solid foundation for us in moving forward in our own life of faith in Christ Jesus.

Second, please do not feel in any way the need to hurry through these pages. Take all the time you want to read, ponder, and read some more. Instead of focusing on ‘getting through it’ and completing all the written assignments, focus more on what you sense the Lord is revealing to you about Himself or about yourself. Really enjoy being with God in His Word and talk with Him about what you read and what comes to your mind as you slow down and give unrushed thought to each pause in Scripture the Spirit brings you to and to the study portions. There is so much for us in personal bible study and it’s my prayer that you will experience the love and abounding grace and peace of God as you simply open your Bible to be with Him.

*Begin by taking a moment to pray with the Lord. Be sure to be in a quiet place.*

Let’s first read Chapter 4 in its entirety, but resist breaking it down as you read. For now, simply read Chapter Four as you would read any chapter of a book. I personally use the Amplified Study Bible translation, but I also refer to the English Standard Version and the Christian Standard Version and the New International Version.

Jot down any thoughts you may have had as you read.

Paul loved the church of Philippi so much and wanted to encourage them in the faith and to encourage them in their relationships with each other. He also desperately wanted them to know of their new freedoms and abilities as believers.

How do we know Paul loved them? Read verse 1 and write down all clues to the feelings Paul has for the church of Philippi. Also, in that one verse, what does he encourage them to do?

Then in verse 2, Paul asks two women to do two things: What are they?

After Paul solicits the help of fellow believers, he redirects them all to take on a new focus as a church. He repeatedly admonishes them to rejoice in the Lord! To delight in Him. To take pleasure in Him, and to *express* joy in the Lord! Notice that in just a few brief sentences, Paul addresses a problem among the women that was having an impact on the church, tells them what is best for them, rallies kind support, and then moves quickly in letting them know – (and I paraphrase):

*“Here is how you should be thinking. Here is where the habits of your thoughts should be. They should be delighting in the Lord! Expressing joy to Him! Placing your thoughts on how much pleasure you have in Him. Your thoughts no longer need to be habitually on how the two of you are different, are seeing things differently, or on who is going to ultimately get their way. Instead, rejoice in the Lord and work together in harmony with one another and intentionally place your thoughts on pleasing the Lord and delighting in Him.”*

Let’s go into the reality of this moment - Paul was in a house that he was renting, yet was under house arrest. Emperor Nero was so anti-Paul and the message of Christ that he was proclaiming that he wanted to keep him locked up and silenced. While under house arrest, Paul was chained to one of the finest young men in the whole Roman empire; from the elite who constituted as Emperor Nero’s personal body guards, and every 6 hours a fresh guard was assigned to be chained to Paul. Day and night, Paul was penning his letter to the Philippians with one of Rome’s most prestigious soldiers chained to him.

Lean in see what God did! God literally sent a succession of Rome’s best and brightest in to be instructed by Paul in the things of Christ! And Scripture lets us know that during that time, many of them became believers and placed faith in Jesus Christ as the Way. And that is how this final chapter was penned – it was written to encourage the believers of Philippi in how to **think,** while Paul himself was facing a possible pending death and writing while witnessing to Rome’s most elite military.

So, let’s think on this ourselves…where was Paul’s mind, what had to been some of his thoughts, as he was chained to a Roman guard while writing to encourage the believers of Philippi? Write in the space below what kind of thoughts you believe Paul was having as he was in such dire circumstances, yet writing a letter of such selfless love and tender instruction:

Paul knew that the strife and discord that was brewing among the believers of Philippi, was not the will of God. So, he immediately encouraged them to … change how they are *thinking*!

* How a person *thinks* shows in what they *do.*

And it is for that very reason why Satan attacks our minds. If Satan can get you to believe a lie, then he can begin to work in your life to lead you into sin. This is why he attacks our “thought life” – our mind – and this is why we must protect our minds from the his attacks. How do we do this? Read Philippians 4:8.

“If it is not true,” Paul writes, “do not let it enter your mind.”

Let’s take just a second to understand a little more what kind of thoughts Satan implants (or tries to implant) into our minds.

Look up John 8:44 – What does he speak? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ And where does it come from? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ He is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the father of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Take just a moment to write down what you are thinking right now as you read John 8:44? What emotions are you having? Don’t feel you have to force anything, but only jot down what is coming to mind as you read it slowly, allowing time for the message of that one verse to work into your heart.

Now, let’s look up Revelation 12:9 – He deceives who? The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

So what Revelation 12:9 is telling you and me is this - No one, and I can’t type that any harder or with any more feeling, but NO ONE is exempt from the lies of satan. So that brings us to ask - How does he lie? Does the Bible tell us a warning of what to look for when we are being deceived by the enemy’s lies? Let’s look up and write out in the space below 2 Corinthians 11:3.

Paul warned the church of Corinth that their “minds” could be led astray through being deceived. How does he deceive? This quote from Watchman Nee sheds some light on this for us:

[“Often Satan injects pride into the believer's spirit, evoking in him an attitude of self-importance and of self-conceit. He causes him to esteem himself a very outstanding person, one who is indispensable in God's work. Such a spirit constitutes one of the major reasons for the fall of believers.”](https://www.inspiringquotes.us/quotes/zoGt_IKMUiSDq)   
-- [**Watchman Nee**](https://www.inspiringquotes.us/author/2511-watchman-nee)

What does Satan inject? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Once we begin to think pridefully, with thoughts of self-importance, self-conceit and self-interest and self-sufficiency, and esteem ourselves or esteem what we want more than what God wants for our life, then we are leaning in to listen to his deceiving whisper. Pride. It’s not of God.

Our mind, how we choose to think, affects our whole being and Satan know this. Yes, our ‘way of thinking’, our patterns of thought, where we place our meditations is all that powerful in how we will live life on this earth! God accomplishes His will on earth through truth; Satan accomplishes his purposes through lies.

Warren Wiersbe writes:

“*When the child of God believes God’s truth, then the Spirit of God can work in power; for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. (John 16:13) But when a person believes a lie, then Satan goes to work in that life.”*

But let’s never forget the inheritance we have as a child of God -- as a child of God we have been given two gifts from God in being able to guard against and discern the enemy’s lies. He has not left us in a losing battle. He has not left us to figure out satan’s tactics and strategies on our own. And he surely doesn’t expect us to defend ourselves. God is so loving and Sovereign that He has fully equipped us and empowered us to take our stand against the enemy and to experience spiritual victories! He has given us everything we need to “think with excellence” as we’ve been instructed in Philippians 4:8. He’s given us:

1. The indwelling person of the Holy Spirit – His name is also Counselor - (Read John 14:16, John 15:26)
2. The Living Word of God – (Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
3. The confidence to approach His throne of grace in prayer without ceasing – (Hebrews 4:16)

As we daily read, mediate on and dialogue with God about His Word, learn more about Him and His nature through the study of His Word and in applying His Word to our life, we begin to experience greater awareness to the things of God and to those things that are not of God. This doesn’t mean we will never be deceived, but with the filling of the Holy Spirit’s presence in our life, we will not be habitually deceived or live a life of deceit.

This brings to mind a particular situation when I literally saw the work of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life who was being deceived and I knew it was only going to end in a tsunami of heartache. I rallied my dearest friends who are devout women of prayer and asked to please pray fervently! And in a short time, our prayers were answered. This person had spent months being deceived (by the enemy) *through* another person’s behaviors, words, and actions. In one Sunday afternoon, however, the Holy Spirit placed right in front of them all that they needed to see in order for the deception to end! And let me tell you … the deceiving work the enemy was doing in their life would have won an Oscar. He used “religious” things, he used the Bible and manipulative biblically-toned language that he knew would capture their mind…ultimately, their passions and their will. The enemy knew where their vulnerabilities were, and where they were weak.

But when the truth was exposed, an action followed *abruptly.* Why? Because the one being deceived was presented with undeniable truth by people who loved them. The Holy Spirit used other Spirit-filled folks in opening their eyes to see the truth of what was happening in their life – deception.

So, before we move on, I want to encourage us to stop for a moment and let’s pray a brave prayer. One that may take a great deal of courage, but when we know that God loves us so much and has a perfect plan for our life that nestles us in His tender care, then we have nothing to be afraid of as we approach Him with this request:

*“Father, reveal in me, show me every place in my life where there’s deceit? Where I am lying or living a lie? If there is any way in me that is not pleasing to You because it’s deceptive, it’s manipulative, it’s fake, it’s pretending, it’s dishonest in any way, please show me and I want to confess that to You and ask Your forgiveness. I deeply want to live in complete honesty with You, and with those You have placed in my life by Your divine orchestration.”*  No need to rush this. Just sit with Him. Like a daughter sits with her mother as they hold each other on a rainy day, or like a son who climbs into his father’s lap just to lay his head on his chest. Just enjoy being with your Maker who knew you and formed you and had all the days of your life in His heart before you were ever born.

Talk openly with God. If you feel stuck in a situation due to deception, it’s never too late to free yourself by taking bold steps in the truth.

Philippians 4:5-6 tells us specific things TO DO. Write out as many as you can where we are being exhorted or encouraged to show certain behaviors. I’ll start things off with this one and will italics the words that give us descriptions of a behavior:

1. Let your *gentle spirit* be known to all people –
2. Do not be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Continue to make your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to God \*AMP version

* In everything
* By prayer and petition
* With *thanksgiving*

Now, we can’t DO rightly if we are not THINKING rightly. In other words, if our thoughts are not in alignment with the Word of God, the nature of God, and the ways and will of God, then our behaviors won’t be either. To be gentle in spirit, to get along and live and work in harmony with others, to not be anxious and not let our thoughts become weighted down with worry, to pray with gratitude….in order to conduct ourselves in these ways, there has to be mental habits in our minds. Our minds must be transformed by deliberately refusing certain thoughts, and by deliberately choosing certain thoughts. And the Holy Spirit is the Person who helps us do this – He takes the Word of God and begins to shape how we think. It’s similar to a Master Potter. They place a lump of clay on the spinning wheel, add just enough water continually, and begin to ‘shape’ the clay into the vessel they are wanting it to become. When we read God’s Word prayerfully, and then give thought to His Word purposefully, and then apply His Word to our way of living, the Spirit is able to take our life and mold and shape us into the vessel God has for us to become. It’s a beautiful thing! And we get in on all that God has for our life by one simple yet grossly profound decision of our own – choosing how we think.

Over and over again in Scripture we see the power of “thought.” This is why we have verses like:

Do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewal of your mind**, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and **take every thought captive to obey Christ**, 2 Corinthians 10:5

“For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But **we have the mind of Christ**. 1 Corinthians 2:16 \*\**We are given the ability to think Christlike the moment we give our life to Him and place our faith in Him as our Savior and Lord.*

I can remember standing at my kitchen island one day with tears streaming down my face as I prepared my family a meal. The tears were because of how I was ‘thinking’ toward a wrongful action that had come against me. I cried because all I kept rolling around in my thoughts was, “This dishonors You, Lord. This is abuse to me and to You. This is grieving me and it’s grieving Your Spirit. It’s wrong. It’s sin…” over and over I was allowing the pain of what had been said and done to me fester in my mind to the point that I just kept feeling and feeding the sting of the hurt over and over again.

Until, as I cried out to the Lord, I had THIS thought, “***But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head.”*** Psalm 3:3 came to my mind AS I prayed and when it did, I remember doing something to give action to what that verse had just *done* in my mind. I walked over to the light switch that was on our kitchen wall and I flipped it off. I took one finger and immediately turned that switch to off and said, “I am not going to think this way any longer. I am going to take captive my thoughts right now. I am turning these thoughts OFF. I will not feed my mind with thoughts that continue to bring injury to my spirit. I choose to lift my thoughts higher and I am going to think about YOU, O Lord. You are my Shield. You are lifting my head, and You are my glory!” And when I said that, I flipped the switch back on. And in doing that one exercise, I knew the Holy Spirit was telling me,

“Lisa, just like that, you must refuse to think in certain ways. Ways you are so in the habit of thinking when certain circumstances happen in your life. And instead, take captive your thoughts and make them obedient to God by *choosing to think of what He has said.* Refuse the condemning and depressing and defeating thoughts, and instead raise your thoughts higher and flip the switch to ON by thinking of God’s Word and pray it back to Him.”

I will never forget that moment in the kitchen, because it was in that moment that the Holy Spirit really helped me to understand how He counsels me…to always realize that I have been given the power and the ability (through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit) to think this way –

Philippians 4:8 – underline every word used in describing how we are to flip the switch of our minds to ON:

*“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”*

The same power that raised Jesus from the grave is the same Power that is alive in us enabling us to obey Scripture – to take our thoughts captive. To think on “these things.” God didn’t leave us alone to try to obey His Word. He gave us the most gracious blessing of all – the Person of the Holy Spirit! Our Counselor. Our Enabler.

This one chapter in Philippians addresses one of the most critical areas of our life - our thought life. Or we could call it, our *thought habits*. How we think determines more about what we will experience in this lifetime than we can possibly ever fully understand. But according to Scripture, especially what we read in Philippians 4, we see how imperative it is that we 'think continually" in a certain way. To "think continually" means  to "have thought habits." We have some now that we probably haven't really realized they are *habits*. But when we are faced with a certain circumstances, run into a certain person, walk into a certain room, or even think about a certain situation, there are thoughts that come to our mind *habitually*. And those thoughts hold power.

One last point I want to make about Paul’s instructions on “think about such things..” is this – In the Amplified Study Bible it uses the phrase, “….think *continually* on these things [center your mind on them, and *implant them in your heart*].  What does the word “implant” mean? In this Greek word, it is a verb not a noun. So when we look at the word *implant* as a verb it means “insert or fix in a person's body, especially by surgery.”

Paul couldn’t have chosen a more intentional word than the word “continually.” Because in the Greek language, it literally meant to center your mind on them and to implant them in your heart. In other words, thinking biblically needs to become a part of who you are and how you live your life. Taking captive our thoughts and making them obedient unto Christ needs to be a habit that we implant into our soul. Another verse in Colossians says, “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.” This is telling us to set our minds on Jesus. On heavenly things. On our reason for living on earth is because of our forever with Him in glory!

But what does all this have to do with Paul’s final word of instruction that we find in verse 19 –

*“And my God will liberally supply (fill until full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”*

What is the connection between how we think and God liberally supplying our every need according to His riches? Well, first let’s take a minute to write out our needs. Think about this and jot down what comes to your mind under each category:

Physical needs –

Financial needs –

Relational needs –

Emotional needs –

Spiritual needs -

Now, do we truly believe God is aware of all that we wrote out as needs? Here are some verses that may help us in answering that –

Jeremiah 1:5 - “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you [and approved of you as My chosen instrument], And before you were born I consecrated you [to Myself as My own];

Psalm 139:13 – “For You formed my innermost parts; You knit me [together] in my mother’s womb.”

Isaiah 44:24 – “For the Lord, your Redeemer, and He who formed you from the **womb** says this, “I am the Lord, Maker of all things, Who alone stretches out the heavens, Who spreads out the earth by Myself,”

Psalm 116:1 – “love the Lord, because He hears [and continues to hear] My voice and my supplications (my pleas, my cries, my specific **needs**).

As you read these verses of how He created you and knew you before you were ever born…that He hears you and knows your cries and specific needs, what comes to your mind? Does this make you a little bit angry because you feel certain needs in your life have gone unmet? Do you want to ask Him why He hasn’t met some very real needs in your life? It’s ok. He is with you and He loves you and whatever you are questioning or feeling, He understands. God never wants you to feel as though you can’t completely be honest with Him about your feelings. -- Or maybe you haven’t gone to Him for your needs, but instead you’ve spent most of your life trying to find ways to meet your own needs. Right now is such a tender time between you and God. Resist any urge to bypass talking with the Lord about your needs.

But where is the connection between ‘how we think’ and ‘trusting God to meet our needs?”

Here’s the connection – we find it in verses 11-13:

*“Not that I speak from [any personal] need, for I have learned to be* ***content*** *[and self-sufficient through Christ,* ***satisfied*** *to the point where I am not disturbed or uneasy] regardless of my circumstances.****12****I know how to get along and live humbly [in difficult times], and I also know how to enjoy abundance and live in prosperity. In any and every circumstance I have learned the secret [of facing life], whether well-fed or going hungry, whether having an abundance or being in need.****13****I can do all things [which He has called me to do] through Him who strengthens and empowers me [to fulfill His purpose—I am self-sufficient in Christ’s sufficiency; I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses me with inner strength and confident peace.]*

What we find in these verses is this – no matter what, if we have much or if we have little, if we live in abundance, or if we live without, if we are well-fed emotionally or if we are hungry relationally, no matter what … we can choose *this* habitual way of thinking 🡪 to trust God!

We can *believe*, (which means to think with certainty), that we can do all that He calls us to do through His strength and power. Our life on this earth is not about “us” but it’s all about God fulfilling His kingdom plans on this earth through us. We live ready for much and we live ready for loss. We live ready in need and we live ready in prosperity. We live ready in humble circumstances and we live ready in abundance because our needs ARE met in Christ.

When Jesus is our sufficiency, when we can honestly say as Paul, “To live is Christ, to die is gain,” then we now have a way of thinking that allows us to trust Him to meet all our needs – emotional, physical, relational, financial, and spiritual needs – “To live is Christ” which mean all that we need are all under His sovereign control and care. And we can *rest* - He will meet our needs.

As we tell Him our needs, … our need for forgiveness, our need to know His plans for our life, our need to have meaningful friendships, our need to pay off debt, our need to feel loved, our need to feel wanted, our need to know Him more, our need to understand, our need to live free of addictions, our need to live free of being controlling, our need to give generously … whatever our need is, it is the most reassuring and soothing reality of our life to know He is listening so lovingly. He is not a passive listener, but an active listener. And He listens with all of His heart!

I’m telling you, friend, for us … no matter what we face, how we struggle, how we prosper, when our life is anchored in this way of thinking….

*“I can do all things [which He has called me to do] through Him who strengthens and empowers me [to fulfill His purpose—I am self-sufficient in Christ’s sufficiency; I am ready for anything….*

Then we truly are living on ready!

What do you know for certain that right now the Lord is asking you ….

“Will you trust Me?”

Before we close up this time with Him in bible study let’s pray. If you want, go to a quiet room in the house and get on your knees. Nothing humbles us more before our Mighty King Heavenly Father than taking on a position that resembles our respect for Him and honor of Him. And not only that, but it sure helps us get in a bodily form that, (for me at least) every time humbles me. Reminds me of what a gracious God He is and what a privilege I have been given to call Him, “Father.”

There is one last thing I would like to tell you and it’s this –

Let’s always keep in mind this life principle from Galatians and Corinthians:

**“We reap what we sow.”**

1. [2 Corinthians 9:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%209%3A6&version=AMP)

Now [remember] this: he who **sow**s sparingly will also **reap** sparingly, and he who **sow**s generously [that blessings may come to others] will also **reap** generously [and be blessed].

1. [Galatians 6:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%206%3A7&version=AMP)

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked [He will not allow Himself to be ridiculed, nor treated with contempt nor allow His precepts to be scornfully set aside]; for whatever a man **sow**s, this *and* this only is what he will **reap**.

1. [Galatians 6:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%206%3A8&version=AMP)

For the one who **sow**s to his flesh [his sinful capacity, his worldliness, his disgraceful impulses] will **reap** from the flesh ruin *and* destruction, but the one who **sow**s to the Spirit will from the Spirit **reap** eternal life.

Let’s begin today asking the Holy Spirit to help us sow a thought life that honors God. That choose to think on His Word. That chooses to refuse ungodly and unwholesome and untrue thoughts, but instead to SOW thoughts that come into alignment with God and His Word. But let’s also ask for a reaping of a generous and glorious harvest! To see the result of our ‘right thinking’ to be seen in the lives of people! That our actions and behaviors, (that always reflect how we think) will touch lives! Oh, how I pray that my mental habits will sow into my heart the will of God and the nature of God, and then it touch the lives of people! That my thoughts will express themselves through actions and behaviors of love and care and concern!! There is such power in this --- we reap what we sow! So, let’s sow His Word into our minds! Let’s sow His Word into our decisions and actions. And ya’ll, we will see the reaping, the generous reaping of the glory and the blessings and the riches of God all around us!!

I love you dearly and I sure hope this small time in His Word has encouraged you.

Lisa