

# Philippians Think List

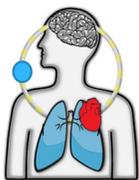
Random thinking is perhaps the easiest thing human beings ever do, but right thinking is perhaps the hardest thing we ever do. Of all people, Christians ought to be great thinkers. They should also possess the will to pay the price to be right thinkers. This is true because: (1) Christians worship God, and He is the Creative Thinker who made this vast universe; (2) Christians follow Jesus Christ as His “disciples,” a word which basically means “student,” or “pupil,” or “learner,” and (3) Christians are members of an historic fellowship called the “Church,” which has always encouraged learning.

No person can be a serious and practicing Christian without the developing and disciplined use of the mind. The Christian is called to renew his/her mind. The apostle Paul writes: “but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. [2 Cor 4: 16]” He further writes: “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, [Rom 12: 2].” If you are to develop a truly Christian mind, a special determination and a spiritual discrimination are necessary. If your mind is allowed to drift, it will invariably drift toward moral and spiritual shipwreck.

The strength of our relationship with Christ is maintaining a renewed mind, by simply monitoring our thought-life. In the book of Philippians, the apostle Paul give us six expansive categories of thought that, if used properly, will keep the Christian kingdom minded. We will look briefly at each one, but first let’s read:

*Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if*

## Philippians Think List:



### Think on these ...

1. True
2. Honest
3. Just
4. Pure
5. Lovely
6. of good report
7. if there be any virtue
8. if there be any praise

*The Philippians Think List slide  
illustration from my teaching series:*

**The Triumphant Church**

*(Heart / Brain Connection)*

*there be any praise, think on these things.*

## True:

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“Whatsoever things are true ... think on these things.” Truth is the first thing that should occupy a Christian’s mind. The word translated “true” is alethe, which means that which is factually true in contrast to that which is false. All truth is God’s truth, even when it is artificially divided by the world’s system. The source of every truth is God; the Creator of all things. So a Christian should anchor his life to God’s revealed truth and let it be the benchmark of his/her thoughts and life style.

## Honest:

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“Whatsoever things are honest or honorable ... think on these things.” The Greek word is semnos, which means “worthy of respect.” Life has its own built-in assessments. Not being built upon Divine truth, one’s life simply cannot finally be “honorable.” The Christian, on the other hand, should build his life around that which is worthy of respect. Paul points out that if the mind of Christ is in us, we will be controlled by things that are worthy of reverence. We will be “noble-mannered” people, with “noble mind and loyal nature.”

## Just:

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“Whatsoever things are just ... think on these things.” The word is dikaios, which also means “righteous,” something that has the stamp of God upon it; because only God can produce righteousness. It refers to that which corresponds to the divine standard. The believer has been made righteous, or right with God, through faith in Jesus Christ. His life is one that thinks about that which is right, not that which is wrong. Again, the foundation for this righteousness is God’s truth.

## Pure:

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“Whatsoever things are pure ... think on these things.” Remember that the characteristic at the head of the list is the most important. If a person is truly anchored

to that which is true in his thoughts and his life, the other characteristics will show up in his life. Remember, too, that many of Paul's readers had only recently been saved from impurity and immorality. They had worshiped in a religion that regularly featured activity with temple prostitutes. But captured by truth, they were now asked to commit their thinking to things that were morally stainless, blameless, and unblemished. The word is hagnos, which is the root word for "holy." The Christian should set his goal to think on holy things.

## Lovely:

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"Whatsoever things are lovely ... think on these things." Here the word is prosphile, which means "beautiful, admirable, attractive, agreeable, and pleasing." The Christian goal is winsomeness and attractiveness. Every believer should have a winsome lifestyle of attractive happiness which will be magnetic to everyone around him. The word Paul used has to do with relationships, and again we face the necessity to develop winsome relational skills when dealing with other people. Christians are to think on that which fosters harmony rather than on that which causes strife. When I am related to truth (characteristic number one in the list), people become very, very important to me, and relationships are crucial. A word of caution is due at this point: If one's lifestyle is not based solidly upon Divine truth, any magnetism that he exerts will be merely fleshly magnetism, sterile of God's endorsement, and will attract people to Satan's camp (where he himself lives). What a contrast to a "lovely" life!

## Good Report:

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"Whatsoever things are of good report ... think on these things." The word here is euphemos. Drs. Moulton and Milligan in their Greek lexicon suggest that this word "signifies the delicacy which guards the lips." In other words, our thoughts should give rise to expressions of the lips that would affirm other people and not scandalize them, and we should seek a lifestyle for ourselves that would easily allow others to give a good report of us. Is the report that people give of you when they spontaneously think and talk about you a truly "good" report morally and spiritually? Or is an automatic moral frown raised on Christian brows when they think of you? The Psalmist prayed, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3). Here,

the guard is placed over the mind as well, so that both the mind and the mouth are dominated by “things of good report.” Again, remember that no genuine “good report” can be given that is not based on God’s revealed truth. “Whatever things are true” is the monitor that heads the list.

## Conclusion:

A Christian mind will not just “happen” without effort and determination. The new birth alone will never produce a Christian mind, any more than mere physical birth without growth, learning and training will yield a philosopher. A Christian mind, like any other mind, is made of thoughts, and the development of a Christian mind requires the focus of those thoughts on Christian things. Consequently, steady spiritual discipline is necessary. Anyone who aspires to a Christian mind must train his mind by regular practice to find delight in the broad and pleasing categories Paul specified in our text. But how do we practice such a discipline? How do we develop such a mind? Let me be very practical as I conclude this writing. The final suggestions will sound so simple and earthy, but they are urgent.



Every Christian should maximize his/her opportunity for praise and worship when he hears the proclamation of God’s truth (the first characteristic in the list). Jesus said it in three crucial mandates: “Be careful that you hear;” “be careful what you hear;” and “be careful how you hear.” Your quest for a Christian mind will begin and end with the intake of God’s truth. Prepare your heart in advance for the truth God entrusts to you through sermons, Bible study lessons and individual quiet times, determining to hear God’s voice and obey His instructions. Also, discipline yourself to always take notes on the truths received so that you can retain them and relay them on to others.

Finally, every Christian should maintain a regular Christian reading program—even at the cost of other leisure activities (such as watching television, which today might be better labeled “lust” than “leisure”). Hardly any other activity has changed my life over nearly fifty years of being a Christian like the selective reading of Christian books. Charles Spurgeon, the great British preacher, read Pilgrim’s Progress over one hundred times, or twice a year, and this was only the tiniest part of his reading. It is said that reading opens new doors to the mind.