

“MEN OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY”

Presents

Kingdom Approach to Dispute Resolution

(8 Boundaries of Thoughts)

Philippians 4:8 (NLT)

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is **true**, and **honorable**, and **right**, and **pure**, and **lovely**, and **admirable**. Think about things that are **excellent** and **worthy of praise**.

Why must we resolve conflicts (settle disagreements)?

(Philippians 4:1-7)

- 1) We must settle disagreements because we belong to the Lord (Philippians 4:2).
- 2) We must settle disagreements because disagreements negatively affect our spread of the gospel (Philippians 4:3).
- 3) We must settle disagreements because our community involvement and relationships can be affected as a result of disagreements among some (Philippians 4:3).
- 4) We must settle disagreements because our joy is affected when we disagree (Philippians 4:4).
- 5) We must settle disagreements because it is proof of our gentleness/consideration (yielding). The Lord is coming soon and expects to find faith among us (Philippians 4:5).
- 6) We must settle disagreements because it resolves worry (Philippians 4:6).
- 7) We must settle disagreements because our prayers can be negatively affected as a result (Philippians 4:6). We are more likely to complain to God instead of praying to Him. We are more likely to be ungrateful to God instead of thanking Him.
- 8) We must settle disagreements because the enemy will use the circumstance as an avenue to steal our peace (Philippians 4:7). Disagreements pull down our guards – the guards (boundaries – peace) of our hearts.

1) True

Greek word “alēthē” meaning unclosedness, unconcealedness, disclosure or truth.

- When we go through challenges, disagreements there is a tendency to focus on the “unknowns”, “what ifs”, “could it be”, “maybe”, etc.
- There is a general tendency to focus on the closed, concealed, which may eventually be untrue when discovered.
- Focus on what you are certain about and avoid focusing on possibilities that you cannot give an account for.
- This portion is not necessarily talking about truth as in the word of God rather *true*, as it accords with *fact (reality)*.

Examples:

- You might be falsely accused of stealing and everything around you points to the facts that you are innocent. Nevertheless, your opponent consistently accuses you of stealing. In circumstances like this, choose to fix your thoughts on the true facts, not the accusations.
- You might be falsely accused for miscommunicating, however, all the facts of the email thread proof you communicated correctly. In such situations, choose to fix your thoughts on the true facts, not the accusations.

2) Honorable

Greek word “semnos” meaning holy and worthy of God.

- The word of God is Holy and worthy of God. There is a conscious effort required to think “the word” of God especially when our emotions are unstable.
- There is a cycle we must be conscious about – **THINK. SPEAK. HEAR – THINK. SPEAK. HEAR – THINK. SPEAK. HEAR.** This is so because our “thoughts” determine what we “say”; we then “hear” what we say and so on. “...Out of the abundance of the heart, our mouth speaks (Matthew 12:34 (NRS)). We hear what we say first even before the one whom we are speaking to.

- So, when we experience disagreements, there is a tendency to allow the evil one to flood our thoughts negatively, nevertheless, choose to think thoughts worthy of God (semnos). This will require acting consciously on our part.

Example:

- There is a tendency to mull over the negative words we hear being said to us. In this context of conflict resolution, when we mull over negative words, it dwells in our thoughts. Rather, choose to replace these negative thoughts with holy thoughts. Thoughts concerning what God's word says about you.

3) Right

Greek "dikaia" meaning correct, righteous (relates to *conformity to God's standard*).

- When we think, we should make sure we think thoughts that are correct and at the same time in conformity with the Kingdom standards. In today's society, not every correct thought conforms with kingdom standards.

Example(s):

- Usually, when people disagree over a matter, it is correct to approach the other party in a very peaceful manner in order to resolve the disagreement (s). However, an instruction from the Father may require that you sit back and do nothing. Although a peaceful confrontation seems correct, it does not conform to the Kingdom standards at that given time.

4) Pure

Greek "hagna" meaning free from ceremonial defilement, holy, sacred.

- Think thoughts free from religion, rituals. Avoid thoughts that are "expected" to be thought given that situation. Rather, think thoughts that conform to the Kingdom standards.

Examples:

- The expected thoughts of a person with a spouse who is cheating, is to consider cheating as well instead of trusting God.
- The expected thoughts of one failing an exam is to consider preparing for a repeat of the course instead of trusting God.
- The expected thoughts of one who was involved in a heated argument is to stop talking to the other person or “cut them off” instead of hearing and trusting God for His outcome concerning the situation.

5) Lovely

Greek “prophilē” (used once in the bible) meaning pleasing, agreeable.

- In the dispute, were there things you all agreed upon that you would rather focus on, instead of focusing on something that is/was unpleasing and disagreed upon? If non, default to the word of God. Thinking about the word of God is agreeable and pleasing at all times.

Example:

- Some disagreements between individuals may still make room to identify areas for resolution. It could be one area only, nevertheless, choose to dwell on that aspect (one area) instead of all the negativities.

Physical (Practical) Actions You Must Take

6) Admirable

Greek “euphēma” meaning well reported of, spoken in a kindly spirit, laudable (an action, idea, or goal deserving praise and commendation), reputable.

- Negative reports are the reason for disagreements. So, in order to guard our hearts, choose to speak kind words, deserving, commendable, reputable words about the person.

Examples:

- When you meet others, give a good report about the other person, speak in kind spirits, your actions about them should be commendable, your action towards them should be praise related.
- As much as possible, direct your praises about them, to them.

The only way to fulfill/satisfy this aspect of your thought is to act upon it rather than just thinking about it.

7) Excellent

Greek aretē meaning moral goodness.

- Moral good, or moral ideal, is an action that reduces harm or increases good for moral agents, without causing unwanted harm to any moral agent. So if you can reduce the pain of someone suffering, and you do, you are acting on a moral ideal and doing a moral good (<https://www.quora.com/What-is-moral-good>).

Example:

-Find out what the person needs and buy a gift for them. It will not feel comfortable to do such an act but remember it is a command. This action will help reduce your suffering.

The only way to fulfill/satisfy this aspect of your thought is to act upon it, rather than just thinking about it.

8) Worthy of Praise

Greek epainos meaning commendation, praise, approval. To commend is to praise publicly.

Example:

-Seek opportunities to publicly praise the one with whom you had a disagreement.

NB:

These kingdom steps are not necessarily recommendations for intimacy (closeness in relationship) rather practical ways to guard your peace.

Also, these steps serve as practical ways to have dominion over the enemy.

Compiled by TOMS - 02/01/2019