

## Introduction:

University of Tennessee: 12 Year Study

- Physically – “We are what we eat”
- Psychologically – “We are what we eat”

Wrong Thinking → Negative Emotions → Unwise Behavior → Devastating Consequences

OR

Right Thinking → Positive Emotions → Wise Behavior → Fruitful Consequences

## Summary

1. We are a product of our thought life.
2. Our emotions flow from our thought life.
3. What we allow to enter our mind is the most important decision we make each and every day.

**Question:** How can we stop stress before it starts?

**Answer:**

*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.*

*The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.*

Philippians 4:8-9 (NASB)

Verse 8 - Command #1 = Dwell on these things . . .

- **True** - objectively true, that which conforms to reality vs. things that are deceptive, illusions that promise peace and happiness.
- **Honorable** - translated “grave”, “worthy of respect”, “dignity of holiness” - it refers to those things which reflect the seriousness of purpose of a believer’s life (inspires “awe”).
- **Just** - “righteous”; used in N.T. to refer to the Father, Jesus, God’s actions, God’s character. It pictures duty faced and duty done vs. seeking comfort, pleasure and easy ways.
- **Pure** - from the same root word as “holy.” It means pure from defilement, moral purity and internal integrity; not contaminated.

- **Lovely** - translated “attractive”, “winsome”, “beautiful”; it pictures those things that call forth a response of love and warmth within us vs. bitterness, criticism and vengeance.
- **Admirable** - translated “of good report”: (KJV), “gracious”; it literally means “fair speaking.” **It describes the things which are fit for God to hear** vs. ugly words, false words, impure words.
- **Virtue and/or Praise** - a summary of sorts to “lift up” anything that has moral excellence; i.e., that which will motivate us to godliness; it is worth commending to others.

Why?

How?

Verse 9a - Command #2 = Habitually practice these things...

- Learned . . . Received
- Heard . . . Saw

Verse 9b - Promise = The God of Peace (blessing) will be with you.

## Summary/Application:

## Discussion Questions:

1. How does our thought life affect our emotions?
2. How would you describe the quality of your thought life? What adjustments do you sense God would have you make in what you **view**, **read**, and **think**?
3. Why is **habitual practice** of the truth so vital if we are to experience God's peace? Why does "duplicity" create stress in our lives?
4. What insight has God given you today to help you "stop stress before it starts" in your life? How will you choose to cooperate with God's process in your life?