

Think On These Things

Jesus said that when we are insulted and falsely accused because of our faith in Him, we should rejoice and be exceedingly glad (Matthew 5:12). The phrase used by Matthew, “be exceedingly glad” is only found in the Bible. It has no secular use. I am not surprised; no one in the world jumps for joy when things are going badly. We tend to grumble and complain and see whom we can blame for our misfortune. The last thing we want to do is be joyful. Yet, if we would remember to offer the Lord a “sacrifice of joy” then, as David promised, our hearts would be lifted above our difficulties (Psalm 27:6). The “problem” may remain, but in His strength we are able to work through and overcome them.

If we think of Jesus, we grow in love and He becomes our shield against negativity and depression. When we look to Jesus we have found the path to inner peace. Thinking about the Lord, studying his word, and prayer all help to renew us in mind, heart, and spirit. Paul, in writing to the Philippians, urges us to deliberately meditate on the beauty and greatness of God. In one of his most lyrical passages, Paul wrote “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report....think on these things.” (Philippians 4:8)

Paul understood that the Lord keeps in “perfect peace” those who are consistently mindful of His loving presence within them. (Isaiah 26:3) If we consistently think more about Jesus and less about self, we may experience negative thoughts, but we will never be overcome by them. Let us keep our eyes on Him and remember what He said, “Look to me and be safe.” (Isaiah 45:22)

Obviously, the battleground in our struggle for peace and joy is in the mind. Yet we have control over what we think and how we will react to circumstances.

Reflection:

- ♥ Do we give in to our struggles, or do we give them to the Lord?
- ♥ Share with someone (or the whole group) a struggle that you are trying to give to the Lord.
- ♥ Discuss how your heart has been enriched by God’s Word.
- ♥ Discuss how your daily struggles and trials have enriched your heart.



Closing Prayer:

God help us to grow spiritually in our everyday lives. Help us to understand that spiritual growth will never come without Bible study, prayer, and discipline. Use our daily struggles to teach us more about you. And may we always have a teachable heart. Amen.

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