

REJOICE, REFLECT, RELAX

PHIL 4: 4-13

I. REJOICE! MAKE GRATITUDE YOUR ATTITUDE

- A. “This is the day the LORD has made, we will be glad and rejoice in it” (Ps 118:24)
- B. Not necessarily enjoying everything but finding Joy in the LORD and HIS salvation
 - 1. Prefix **re** suggests a certain suspension of, distance from, perspective on events
 - 2. Often rejoice looking back on challenging, difficult times (e.g. boot camp).
- C. C.S. Lewis: *Surprised by Joy*

II. REFLECT! CONCENTRATE, THINK STRAIGHT

- A. Alarming evidence of poor thinking in *Pandemic of Lunacy: How to Think Clearly When Everyone Around You Seems Crazy* by J. Budziszewski
 - 1. Atheism—“the fool has said in his heart there is no God” (Ps 14:1)
 - 2. Sexual differences, transgender fantasies
- B. “As a man thinketh in his own heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7)
 - 1. Thoughts shape attitudes & acts—pessimism sours; realism guides; faith fuels
 - 2. Partial but important truths in *As a Man Thinketh* by James Allen and *The Power of Positive Thinking*, by Norman Vincent Peale
- C. Logic & awareness of fallacies always valuable, sorting out lies & distortions
 - 1. Biblical: “a text without a context is a pretext,” isolated statements & incidents subordinate to consensus of texts and theologians
 - 2. Philosophical: contradictions; *non sequiturs*; hasty generalizations; category confusions
- D. Paul’s “whatsoever things” encompasses most everything of value, highlighting abiding transcendentals (truth; goodness; beauty), underlining classical Greek virtues (prudence; courage; justice; temperance)
 - 1. *True (alethe)*—mind conformed to what is
 - a. “We hold these truths to be self-evident” re Nature and Nature’s God rather than inner voice
 - b. Creeds rooted in *indicative*, propositional conclusions/assertions
 - c. Commandments rooted in *imperative* declarations
 - 2. *Noble (semnos)*—awe-inspiring, majestic, *magnanimity* in Aristotle’s *Ethics*
 - a. Aristocrats throughout history (Roman patricians, English lords) embrace elevated codes
 - b. Aristocratic attitude: chivalrous; committed to care for dependents, needy
 - 3. *Just (dikaos)*—“the constant and perpetual will to give each person what is due him” (Justinian)
 - a. *Who deserves what?* Great question requiring study, evaluating evidence
 - b. Lady Justice, blindfolded, holding balanced scales
 - 4. *Pure (hagmos)*—holy, often used for ceremonial propriety, moral integrity, uprightness
 - a. Propriety in public worship services—right rituals (e.g. baptism, eucharist, marriages, funerals); orderly ceremonies, preserving good traditions
 - b. Propriety in sexual conduct—marriage, modesty
 - 5. *Lovely (prospiles)*—aesthetics matter in many areas, uplifting soul
 - a. Beauty’s objective dimension (contrary to “in there mind of the beholder” mantra)
 - b. Art & music & architecture & poetry enrich world
 - 6. *Good report/admirable (euphonies)*—uplifting, encouraging,
 - a. Gospel means “good news” and should bring joy to hearers
 - b. *Christian Science Monitor* uniques in seeking to print uplifting news

III. RELAX: BE CONTENT

- A. *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*, by Dwight Eisenhower
- B. Amish example re caring for creation & non-violent ethos
- C. *Small Is Beautiful* by E.F. Schumacher.