

Joy Without Limits :
The Joy of Proper Thinking
GULF SHORES CHURCH OF CHRIST
Sermon by Ray Reynolds

Text : Philippians 4:8

Introduction: We are studying a series of lessons on the subject of joy. We know that Jesus commanded His disciples to be joyful. **John 15:11** says, “*These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.*” God clearly hopes that we will adjust our thinking to have a mind like Christ. What does it mean to have proper thinking? Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “A man is what he thinks about all day long.” However, God was the first to say, “*For as he thinks within his heart, so is he*” (**Proverbs 23:7**). A person’s fundamental nature is not determined by his style of dress, his profession, or social status it is determined by how he thinks. Jesus’ disciples once asked Him about the distinctions between clean and unclean foods in Law of Moses. While Christ, who lived under the law, carefully observed those distinctions, He taught that what actually defiled men was not what they ate, but what was in their hearts (**Mark 7:20-23**). Thoughts have the power to defile us, but they also have the power to infuse us with joy and contentment. In **Philippians 4:4** Paul says, “*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice!*” He went on to teach that our thoughts help us to attain joy (**Philippians 4:8-9**). It’s a revolutionary thought to most people that joy is not dependent on getting the right spouse, having a baby, purchasing a new boat (car, house or other toys). . . its not dependent on graduating, getting into a good college, landing a great job, or receiving a promotion. Joy comes on the wings of proper thinking, but what is proper thinking? In this particular lesson we will focus on the joy of proper thinking. . . .

Discussion:

I. Thinking About Things That Are True

Proverbs 23:23

Ecclesiastes 7:2, 5

Proverbs 19:25

I John 2:14

John 17:17

John 8:32

II. Thinking About Things That Are Noble

I Samuel 13:14

Genesis 6:9

Proverbs 31:10-31

III. Thinking About Things That Are Just

Proverbs 28:5

II Samuel 8:15

I Kings 10:9

Job 29:14

Psalms 111:7

Lev 19:15

Proverbs 14:31

Acts 10:34-25

IV. Thinking About Things That Are Pure

Romans 3:23
Psalm 12:6
Psalm 19:8
Psalm 119:140
II Timothy 3:16-17
I John 3:3
John 8:46
I Peter 2:22

V. Thinking About Things That Are Lovely

Psalm 19:4-5
Ecclesiastes 1:7
Psalm 135:3
John 3:16

VI. Thinking About Things That Are Good

I Kings 4:34
Luke 7:3

VII. Thinking About Things That Are Virtuous

II Peter 1:3
Hebrews 7:28
Proverbs 31:10-31

VIII. Thinking About Things That Are Praiseworthy

I Corinthians 11:3
I Corinthians 16:1-2

Conclusion: “A man is literally what he thinks, his character being the complete sum of his thoughts” (James Allen). Are you careful with your thoughts? You may be robbing yourself of joy just because you are not a positive thinker! Each child of God should drink from the well of joy! What can you do to ensure that you are enjoying all of God’s blessings?