***Things We are to Think About - PH84-01
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 4:8-9***

Please open your Bibles to Philippians 4:8, where the apostle Paul now comes to the first of the last two verses in which he is summarizing what he has had to say about a Christian's personal happiness. In the immediate context, the apostle Paul has given us a formula for personal happiness. This formula had a condition toward man, and it had a condition toward God. The condition toward men for happiness, he said, is to practice a considerate reasonableness in view of our own impending judgment by Jesus Christ at the Judgment Seat of Christ. So we saw how the Word of God in verse 5 called upon us to exercise this kind of reasonable considerateness in our dealings with other people, and not to be too heavy-handed. This is the principle of live-and-let-live. Yet, we are to perform that which is our duty. We are not to neglect that which is our responsibility.

The second condition was toward God, and that was that we are not to worry about anything. Rather, whatever comes into our lives, with thanksgiving, we are to take it to the Lord in prayer and faith rest it there. That is, we are to take it to the Lord in prayer, and then we are to remain confident that he doesn't need our help to solve the problem we have taken to Him. We can simply leave it there. That's the principle of resting by faith in the capacity of God to perform that which He has promised to do in our behalf. That's how prayer works. So we have this condition toward man, and this condition toward God, which if met, lay the groundwork for personal, genuine happiness.

Paul says that God's peace and happiness, as a consequence of meeting these two conditions will act as a guard over our minds through Jesus Christ. That is, God's happiness will protect our thinking from human viewpoint which destroys our personal happiness. It is a state of mind, and God Himself stands as guard with His happiness over our thinking. Such joy from God is beyond human capacity to understand; to reproduce; or, to enter into. It's just something we cannot imagine. It is something that God alone can give us.

Now we come to what are, perhaps, the most strategic pieces of this whole epistle on happiness: verses 8 and 9. For in these verses, Paul closes his teaching on happiness by stressing that the source of all happiness is divine viewpoint thinking, and, secondly, positive volition to doctrine. Verse 8 says that the basis of happiness is divine viewpoint thinking. Verse 9 says that positive response (that is, acting upon Bible doctrine) is the second factor. The two together produce monumental personal joy, and there is no other way to have it. Anything else is a fake pseudo substitute, and is short-lived.

First of all, what we're going to do today is take verse 8 and do the exegesis. We're going to seek to explain to you exactly what the Greek Bible says in verse 8 so that we have that before us. Then we'll go to an analysis of a very important thing that Paul says at the end of verse 8 concerning these things, which he does not explain, but which modern studies give us an understanding of why the Bible tells us to do something, as happened so often in the Old Testament. When God told the people to do certain things: in the way of quarantine; in the way of sanitation procedures; in the way of being related to exposure to sunshine; and, so on, He did not explain why these things were important. It was only in later centuries that science developed and uncovered the medical reasons why God told them to follow certain procedures in order to protect their physical well-being.

So at the end of verse 8, Paul, just in a few words, makes a declaration concerning these qualities that he lists, and this declaration he does not explain. But in our day, within the last 50 years, there has been monumental research done, and understanding gained concerning why Paul put those words at the end of verse 8. This is information concerning how the mind works and how the mind affects everything you do, almost like a mechanism inside of a torpedo guiding that torpedo toward a certain pre-destined pre-directed zeroed-in goal, and it's going to get there.

Your life, whether you know it or not, as of this moment, has been programmed to a certain goal, and you're moving toward that goal. Until you have reprogrammed yourself, whether that goal is good or bad, you're going to get there. There is nothing you can do to keep yourself from going toward the goal that you have programmed: whether it is success or failure; whether it is evil or good; or, whatever it is. Until you are reprogrammed, you're going to get to that specific end.

Paul, under divine guidance, is telling us something that modern psychiatry and psychology has only learned in recent times. But the Bible already told us how to act upon this principle so that we would be blessed by it, and be able to function on it, before we even knew it existed.

So let's have the explanation (the exegesis) first of verse 8. Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brethren." The word "finally" is the same word that we had in Philippians 3:1. It is the Greek word "loipos." "Loipos" means "the remaining" or "the rest." In the Greek here, it has the definite article "the," so that it comes out as an idiom meaning "as far as the rest" or "in conclusion." It indicates a change in the line of discussion. Here Paul has been talking about the basic conditions for personal happiness. Then beginning in verse 8, he introduces some final practical advice on achieving and maintaining personal happiness. So he uses this little word "loipos" in order to introduce the fact that now he's going to give us a summary thought. He's going to bring it all together. That's what he means when he says, "Now as for the rest (or in conclusion), here's what it's all about.

He addresses these people as "brethren." In the Greek, this is the word "adelphos." "Adelphos" refers to believers who are in the city of Philippi to whom he is writing. This instruction has to do specifically with happiness for regenerated people. Therefore, it is directly applicable to you and me today. It has to do with that which is for born again people and their personal happiness. Therefore, it is of utmost importance. This is a very critical bit of information.

"Finally (as to the rest – tying it up), born again believers, whatever things are true." The word "whatever" will be reoccurring several times in this verse as you can see. We will look at it once. It's the Greek word "hosos." "Hosos" means "as many as." It is an idea of quantity. It is referring to numbers. Here it has reference to as many as are of this particular type. He's going to name eight different categories of things.

This is a category. Within this category, there will be many different things that qualify under this particular category. So that's why he keeps repeating this word "hosos" to indicate that he's not talking about just one specific thing. But when he names this thing, there would be various expressions within that category of that particular quality. So it refers to a number of things in each of the categories which follow.

It is in the neuter gender. Therefore, that indicates that it is not speaking about people, but about things – therefore, about ideas; about actions; about certain concepts; and, about various specific practices. The identical form will be repeated five more times. The word "are" is the Greek "eimi" which is simply the verb "to be." It is the verb indicating an existing condition. It is in the present tense. Therefore, he's speaking about something that always is. It's active, which means that these are live, active qualities. It's indicative. It's a statement of fact."

**Things We are to Think About**

1. **True**

Category number one is "true." It says, "As many things as fall into the category of being true." The Greek word is "alethes." "Alethes" means reality. It refers to that which is not an illusion. It is more than just the idea of being truthful. It is more than just the idea of telling the truth. It has to do with that which conforms to reality. In other words, it refers, in part, to divine viewpoint as revealed in the Word of God.

Divine viewpoint is reality. The truth concerning God's creation is reality. How man is made; the nature of man; and, how man functions under the divine institutions is reality. It is referring to whatsoever falls into the category of understanding God's point of view. That's what is true. It is true because it's grounded in God and in His revelation. It isn't true because most people happen to believe this particular thing, or because most people happen to practice it. It is something which is true because it is compatible to what God has done and to what God has said.

This is something that a Christian cannot just instinctively come to. This is not something that a Christian instinctively knows – what is true. What is true is something that a Christian is taught in Bible class. That's how a Christian comes to what is true. So for a Christian to be able to know that he is dealing with something that is true requires that he has been instructed in the Word of God.

Religion is saturated with a lot of human viewpoint which does not reflect spiritual reality, but is rather an illusion. So category number one is "whatever is true," and he's going to tell us at the end what we are to do with these things, and that is that these should characterize our thinking. Category number one for a happy person is to have his thinking compatible with the things that are true – not the things that people have told you; not the things that you have always thought were the case; and, not the things you have always believed, but the things that are true.

1. **Honest**

Category number two has to do with "whatever things are honest." "Whatever things" is repeated again to indicate that we're dealing with a category of things. The word "are" is not in the Greek at this point. From now on, the word, as you see, is in italics in your English translation to indicate that it is not in the Greek language. The Greek language is now making a very pointed rapid fire type of listing of qualities. He just lists these qualities, and he doesn't even interrupt the line of thought by throwing the verb in there. So the verb after this is understood.

"Whatsoever things are honest." The word "honest" in the Greek is "semnos." The word "semnos" connotes the idea of gravity and dignity. It actually means "venerable" or "august." It connotes a seriousness of purpose. It connotes self-respect in your conduct. We would probably summarize it in our English language with the word "honorable." This means something that commands respect.

There are some things that a Christian will do that are honorable, and there are a lot of things that a Christian can do that are dishonorable. That is, there are many things that we can do that will command the respect of people. There are other things that we will do that draw out their contempt for us. A Christian, if he is going to be happy, cannot live under the contempt of other people. If it has been your habit to have some characteristic or some quality that is not honorable, then you have drawn toward you peoples' disgust, their contempt, and their lack of esteem. You have lost standing in their sight because of something you do.

The Word of God says that you want to think twice before you do a thing like that, because you may get something you want, but you have so lost in esteem, in the sight and in the eyes of other people, that you're not going to be happy with what you have. You're going to be really miserable because of it. A Christian's motives; a Christian's manners; and, a Christian's morals should merit the respect of people, and not their scorn. So the second category for a happy person is to do and to think upon the things that are honorable.

1. **Just**

A third category he calls "whatever things are just." Again, "whatever things" is repeated to indicate another category of concepts, and the verb "are" is not in the Greek. The word "just" in Greek is "dikaios." "Dikaios" means right conduct, whether by human standards or by divine standards. It has the idea of duty done. So the idea is whatever is right, either by the laws of man or by the laws of God, is the sort of thing that a Christian should center his thinking on, and consequently, his practice. A Christian should be characterized as a person who does what's right. God is righteous because there's perfect agreement between His acts and His nature. He does that which His nature demands. God is right, so we say that He's righteous.

This is in the neuter tense, so, again, it's referring to things. Right conduct is the idea. The Christian's conduct should be one that does the right thing. It should follow divine good. The issue of "right" has to be determined, however, again, on the principles of doctrine – not on human good. Your conduct can be good as far as men see good, but God says those things are filthy rags in His sight. Your conduct, when it says it must be good and it must be right, must be that as per God's view.

Satan makes the evil of human good, which flows from the old sin nature, appear to be more righteous sometimes than the divine good of God the Holy Spirit in the Christian. God the Holy Spirit in the Christian, for example, says that if someone is threatening to take your life, and has a lethal weapon and is coming at you, that the Christian thing to do is to stop him, and, if necessary, to kill him. But along comes some human viewpoint idea of what is good and what is right – for example, like the Quakers in this country. They will say, "Oh, no, you should not kill him because the Bible says, 'Thou shalt not kill,'" which, of course, it doesn't. It says, "Thou shalt not murder." The Bible forbids murder one, but the Bible does not forbid killing.

During the Vietnam War, the Quaker groups were very prominent in our country, as they have been in the past, in saying that the United States should simply disarm, and that we should reduce our military force. Their rationale for that was because anybody who joins the military joins it for one singular purpose – to learn how to kill people. You don't go into the military because it's so glamorous to wear the uniform, unless you don't know what it's all about. Anybody who stands up and raises his right hand and takes that oath of allegiance to the United States, and to defend the United States and its Constitution against enemies, both internal and external, and to do that without any mental reservation, what you are swearing before Almighty God to do is to learn how to kill people. From the day you walk into a military basic training program, that's what you're being taught to do.

And if you've ever been through it, in the back of your mind lies any number of ways by which you can kill a human being – by which you can deliver lethal blows, with weapons or without, because that's what you were taught. The Quakers say, "It's wrong to learn to do that. Therefore, the United States should disarm itself." Somebody asked them, "What if our enemies who threaten our national security, such as the communist world, refuses to disarm itself as well?" The answer from the Quakers was, "Then the United States should do it unilaterally, until we don't have a single bit of military power and of defense available to us."

You ask yourself, "What kind of thinking is that?" The Bible certainly condemns that. That is contrary to everything that the Word of God says concerning the control of evil against both a nation and an individual. Here is an idea from the devil that is presented in such a wonderful way that people actually say, "Yes, that's right, we shouldn't kill people. That is ugly." And it is ugly to kill people, and the battlefield is an ugly place. It's a horrid place.

You say, "Well, we shouldn't teach people to do that." Pretty soon, Satan, with his human viewpoint, has made God's divine viewpoint of defending the national entity and your self-preservation appear to be wrong. It makes Satan's viewpoint look better than God's. It makes Satan's viewpoint look to be more gracious and kind and loving than God's. The only way you can keep from getting distorted and twisted up in your thinking is to go back to the Word and see what the Bible says on these things.

So the Bible says, as a Christian, if you want to be happy, do what's right, and set your mind upon a pattern of doing what is right. The question then comes up, "What is right?" Now you're back to the Word again. You're back to the Word of God so that you are not deceived, and so that Satan can't take something that's evil, like human good, and make it seem better than the Holy Spirit's divine good. A Christian's practices should be in harmony with God's will and with God's standards. That's what's right.

1. **Pure**

A fourth category, he says, is, "Whatever things are pure." "Whatever things" indicates another category. There is no verb in the Greek. The word "pure" is "hagnos." "Hagnos" means "to be free from moral defilement." It refers to freedom from whatever is morally unclean. It means unsullied. It means a pattern of thinking which is free from imagining that which is dirty, or the practicing of that which is evil. It means wisdom from God. James 3:17 says that wisdom which is from above is "hagnos" wisdom. It is free from moral defilement. The Christian mind does not indulge itself in what is sordid, shabby, and smutty. The translation "pure" is a good translation. That's exactly what it means. It means to be pure thinking.

We live in a day, because of the communication media and the lowering of public moral standards, when if you want to be impure in the use of your senses, you've got more opportunity than people have had in many centuries. You can be impure with all of your human senses, and you can just use them as channels through which a sewer of impurity can flood into your soul. The Bible says you can do that, but when you do, you will destroy your personal happiness. So if you want to be happy, your mind is to be centered upon that which is pure.

1. **Lovely**

A fifth category he calls, "Whatever things are lovely." The word "whatever" indicates another category. There is no verb "are" in the Greek. The word "lovely" is "prosphiles." "Prosphiles" means "pleasing" or "agreeable." The word comes from the word "pros" which is a preposition meaning "toward," and from the word "phileo" which means "to love." So what this means when you put it together, "prosphiles," is "what moves toward love" or "love worthy."

We would perhaps put it in English best by the word "winsome." This is conduct which calls for affection. It is conduct which charms people. It is conduct which is to be admired by people so that they are inclined to imitate what they see in you. You are to so conduct yourself that you are just a winsome person, rather than the fact that you're the kind of person that when people see you coming, they know that you have so much resentment, bitterness, and negative qualities, that they want to avoid meeting you. That's what this is speaking about.

The person who is not a winsome person is neither a happy person. The person who does not call forth the warmth and admiration of people, so that they are attracted (or at least they are kindly disposed) toward the individual is not a happy person. That's a person who feels rejected. What this word is talking about is to have a quality of thinking on a category of things that enables you to be received rather than rejected by people.

1. **Good Report**

A sixth thing, he says, is, "Whatever things are of good report." Again, "whatever things" is a category. There is no verb "are" in order to continue building an impact here as one word is added to another. "Of good report" in the Greek is "euphemos." "Euphemos" means fair-speaking. It means uttering auspicious and commendable words; that is, words which are high-tone quality; words which ennoble the hearers; and, words which lead to spiritual growth.

In classical Greek, this word "euphemos" was used to describe the words of a good omen, and they lived by omens. Whenever a priest could cut open an animal and look at the liver and the innards, and then declare a good omen that he had seen there, this meant that fortune was going to follow the person in whose behalf he was making this examination. His declaration was called a "euphemos" because it was a good omen, and therefore, it was something that the person welcomed to hear.

That's the idea here. Christians in their speech should not cause people to feel defiled. Their words should be fit for God to hear. They should be things that are of a quality nature – commendable and ennobling words. There's a lot of speaking among people, and certainly this is characteristic of the people of the world, which is degrading. There's hardly any place you can go to work out in the world where you are not constantly degraded by the conversation of people around you.

What the Word of God says is if your speech is degrading, then you become an unhappy person. If you find that you are not able to speak attractively, but you are speaking in a gross and degrading way, then the Bible says that needs to be changed, or you're not going to be happy. Certainly this should not be the case with the Christian.

1. **Virtue**

Then two summary statements come at the end of verse 8. These are marked for us by the word "if." "If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise. The word "if" is the Greek word "ei," and this is a first class condition. That means, "If, and it is true." There is something in the way of virtue. "There be" is not in the Greek. "Any" is the word "tis," and its means "whatever." "If there be whatever kind of virtue." The word "virtue" in the Greek is "arete." "Arete" we may translate by the word "lofty." The things which refine elevate a human being. This is whatever ennobles. That's the legitimate thing for a Christian to think on – whatever is lofty, and whatever is elevating. It refers to the idea of excellence in general. This is the only place this word is used in the New Testament. The idea is whatever is of the nature of excellence, and that these are the things to think about.

It is amazing the reaction we'll get sometimes when we seek something that is in the pattern of excellence. We have this problem in Berean Christian Academy. Sometimes when we simply want to upgrade the quality of students by their personal appearance, it is amazing the reaction we'll get from parents who do not appreciate excellence. This is not a quality that the natural human heart seeks. Yet, without the quality of excellence, you cannot be happy. This is why, again, in the military service, so much stress is put upon personal appearance. The pursuit of the lofty qualities of excellence in various directions is characteristic of those who are achievers.

1. **Praiseworthy**

The second summary point, he says, is, "If there be any praise." And again, "If there be" is first class condition, so it is saying that there are things that are like this. It is true. Praise is "epainos." We would translate it by the word "praiseworthy." It refers to a category of things that is worthy of God's praise. So he sums it all up in these two things. Anything that has the quality of excellence (it's lofty, or it's elevated) or whatever has the quality of being praiseworthy (that God can commend, and that you can do in His sight without being ashamed), that summarizes it.

**Think**

Then he comes to the very significant statement as to what to do with these particular eight things. Here they are once more, the Christian's thought pattern: true; honorable; right; pure; winsome; attractive; lofty; and, praiseworthy. What should we do with them? Well, the apostle Paul, by divine inspiration, knowing how the human soul works, gives us a fantastic declaration that only now in modern times we understand. "Think on these things." The word "think" is the Greek word "logizomai." The word "logizomai" means "to reflect on carefully," "to concentrate," or we would say "to focus." That's a critical word – focus upon, or concentrate upon. The idea here is to make something the dominant subject of your thoughts – something that your mind dwells upon.

There are many things that your mind dwells upon. There's no way you can help doing that. Throughout your day, there are things that your mind dwells upon. In your moments when your thinking isn't demanded by your job or something else, your mind will wander off to dwelling upon something. It can dwell upon things like this: true; honorable; right; pure; winsome; attractive; lofty; and, praiseworthy. Or it can dwell upon things that are just the opposite of that, and that are in contrast to every one of those things. Something is going to happen to your life, whichever one you choose, and you will not be able to control where it goes. If you choose in contrast to these categories he's listed, you will be doing things that even you will be ashamed of, and you won't understand. You will say, "Why am I doing this because I really don't want to do this." How can that be?

There is a very simple explanation. This word "logizomai" is present tense. That means we are to follow the constant pattern of focusing our attention upon these eight categories of things. It is middle voice which means it will be to our personal benefit if we do it. Then it is an imperative which means that God is commanding us to do just exactly that. "These things" is the Greek word "houtos," and it is neuter plural, so it's "these things," meaning these things that we have just listed – these eight qualities enumerated. So whatever is not lofty and praiseworthy (that summary category) in the Christian's life is a threat to his happiness. Paul's point is to feed your thinking (your conscious mind) on such things so that the result in your life will be happiness.

Remember that the word "think" on these things means to focus on them – to reckon with them as the only things that are worthy of your attention. The point is that high-thinking will program you for happiness. That's what Paul means in 2 Corinthians 10:5, when he says, "Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

**The Subconscious Mind**

How does this work? What is it that Paul is telling us that we have only recently come to understand? First of all, let's take a look at the structure of the mind. Actually, the mind has two levels. Modern studies have revealed that there is, first of all, the conscious part of your mind. Modern studies have also revealed that there is the subconscious part of your mind. There is the conscious and the subconscious. The mentality of the soul functions on both of these levels, and they're both very real. The subconscious mind, we have now discovered, is actually placed into the human soul by God to play the role of a computer.

As a matter of fact, much progress in the building of our modern computers was the result of understanding how the mind worked, and the other way around too. As they began discovering how they could make computers work, it occurred to some people, "I wonder if this possibly is how the mind works, because it is fantastic that the mind is programmed by something." At some point, a human being is propelled toward a goal or an object willy-nilly. That's where he's going. It's like a torpedo fired from a submarine that has been programmed to go to a certain target. It's going to get there.

Now, what is the guidance system that enables a human being to go toward a certain target? They have discovered that, as a computer can be programmed to reach certain goals, so the subconscious of the human being can be programmed to reach certain goals and certain desired (or undesirable) ends. In other words, the subconscious is the guidance system of your soul. Thus, where you go is determined by your subconscious. The subconscious is programmed by the conscious mind.

That, of course, is the next question. If my subconscious is my guidance system that takes me (and I cannot change where it's going to take me unless I reprogram it), how can I program it so that my subconscious is carrying me to goals of happiness rather than to goals of unhappiness? And it is the conscious mind that programs the subconscious. So in other words, what a person believes automatically determines what a person will do, because what a person believes is what is put into the subconscious. Now, whether those beliefs are true or false (whether they are worthy or unworthy) doesn't make any difference to the subconscious. It's just the mechanism that's going to function, whatever is put into it. But the guidance that the subconscious gives will be according to what you have put in there with the conscious mind.

So a person's life is determined by his subconscious viewpoint. How he acts in any given situation will be determined by how the subconscious has been programmed as the result of what has been taken into the conscious mind. That is why we tell you that sheer willpower will not enable you to resolve some undesirable practice in your life. Sheer determination will not be sufficient to enable you to remove negative qualities from your personality. If you think they will be, you're going to be disappointed. Until you change the programming of the subconscious, it's going to override your conscious thinking. It is going to override what you know you should be doing; where you should be going; and, what you should be like. The thing that's going to take charge is the subconscious. So what you think is fantastically important.

If you want to be happy, your mind should focus in and should concentrate upon categories of this type – things which fit into these categories. Godly living for the Christian is the product of godly programming of his subconscious. So Paul prescribes this mental thought pattern which will program the subconscious for happiness. What we think about determines what we become in life. Our capacity for living is determined by what we put into the subconscious.

Notice the directive role of this feature of our thinking. This system of guidance of the subconscious is automatic. It was built by God into the soul. You do not consciously control the subconscious. It is an automatic guidance system. It is comparable to our terminology when we refer to the directive mind. The conscious mind is the perceptive functioning of the mind where we are learning things. The subconscious mind is the directive mind where we form actions, putting that in another form.

So the subconscious is the guidance system that is going to move a person in whatever direction it has been programmed to move him. The subconscious is so powerful that it will overcome the influence of the conscious mind. For example, you are faced with eating a very fattening dessert. Your conscious mind tells you not to eat that dessert because it has such high calories, and because you're overweight. But your subconscious mind has been programmed by you to the belief that you're destined to be fat because it runs in your family, and your family has passed on fat from one generation to the next for years. So you have programmed yourself subconsciously: "I'm just fat. That's it." So what do you do?

Well, your subconscious says there's no reason for you not to eat the high-calorie dessert, because you're going to be fat. So enjoy yourself. The result is that while your conscious mind says, "I shouldn't eat this thing", your subconscious overrides, and you cannot keep yourself from eating this thing. Until you reprogram the subconscious against eating that which puts on weight, you're going to keep eating what puts on weight. Your mere willpower and determination is going to break down.

This is the same thing when dealing with people who may offend you in one way or another. Someone rejects you. Someone rejects an idea. Someone rejects an opinion that you have. Someone insults you in some way. Someone picks on your children or something. Well, your conscious mind knows that self-pity is going to destroy your happiness. You get to feeling sorry for yourself over the fact that someone has offended you, and that's bad business. But your subconscious has been programmed to the viewpoint that people always treat you like dirt, and nobody ever appreciates what you do for them. So because you have programmed yourself to the idea that people always mistreat you and never appreciate you, you react with self-pity even though you have learned (maybe in recent weeks) that self-pity is the primary destructive force of happiness. It will lead you into depression every time.

The subconscious is programmed to the viewpoint that you choose to program it to. The result is that once you have programmed it, the consequences are predictable. So the old song in the musical opera Oklahoma goes, "I'm just a girl who can't say no." While that may be true, the reason that you're a girl who can't say no is because your subconscious has been programmed. That's why you can't say no. Your conscious mind will tell you that you should say no. But because the subconscious is programmed to say, "Yes," it always overrides it.

Human beings have learned behavior patterns resulting from the input of beliefs into the subconscious guidance mechanism. That's how you learn things. You put things into the subconscious, so you have learned behavior patterns. Animals do not have this. Animals have what we call "instinct." That is, the subconscious of the animal is preset, and he can't change it. He has to build the nest this way. He cannot exercise rational thought and say, "I'm going to make this nest better this year so that it will hold together better and won't be so drafty. He's going to make it the same way every time. If it's a lousy nest, he's going to keep building bad nests. He is programmed to build a nest in a certain way, and he cannot change it. Do you know why?

Because he's not made in the image of God? That's what makes you different from an animal. It is the fact that you are in the image of God, which means that you can exercise rational, determinative thought. You can reprogram your subconscious. But the animal cannot. He knows what he should do to survive in his species. He even knows what direction to go to get to the warm climate when it's necessary, and so on. But mere willpower and determination cannot change your conscious responses. They have to be changed by something deep within you.

So the subconscious is designated by God to guide the believer into a life of happiness, and to make corrections as necessary to keep you on course. That's what it's doing. Your subconscious is like the guidance system in a torpedo that keeps correcting so that that torpedo, when it moves off course, is brought back on course until it finally reaches the target it's been programmed for. That is how the subconscious works.

This raises a fantastic truth about why we do things the way we do – things that are destroying us; things that are grief to us; things that are humiliation to us; things that make us ineffective with people; things that keep us from enjoying a successful life; and, things that keep us from moving ahead in our business lives, in our personal lives, and in various relationships, even when we know that those things are bad. Why in the world does a girl who has grown up with an alcoholic, abusive father marry that kind of a husband? There is a condition where that is inevitable. Why does a man who has had a father who has been a beast to him when he grew up, grow up, in spite of anything he tries to do, and he's a beast to his children?

Here's the crux of the meaning of Paul's statement: Think on these things." This can revolutionize your life once you understand the principle behind these words. And we'll continue to tell you about that in the next session.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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