

## Where Is Your Focus?

Many people would be amazed to learn that most things in their personal life are strongly dependent on their focus. Mood, decisions, choices, daily planning and activities, one's overall sense of well-being – all of these are far more dependent on focus than on actual, material circumstances. Often people will reject this truth because it would mean that they, themselves, are the root cause of their unhappiness, frustration, etc. Recognition of personal responsibility would mean, they wrongly reason, even more unhappiness: "It's all my fault, and I can't bear that much guilt!"

When done properly, the contrary is true. By "properly" I simply mean recognizing and accepting the fact that God has placed within your hands the ability to create happiness in the only true place it can exist - your own mind. The first step is to realize that since you are in control of your mind, and no one else, then no one else has the actual ability to control your responses, moods, etc. The bad news is: "I'm responsible for my own sorrow - I can't blame anyone else." The good news is: "If I'm responsible, then I have the **power** to change it!

In Philippians 4:4-9 (one of my most oft-quoted passages) God gives us incredible enlightenment! The peace of God, **which surpasses all comprehension**, will guard our hearts (the seat of our emotions) and our minds (the seat of our logic and understanding), in Christ Jesus. That happens when we actually rejoice, keep anxiety at bay and pray (Philippians 4:4-7).

The second step is literally to **focus** (ponder, consider, think about) on positive things. Paul includes a list in v. 8, "true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, good repute, excellent, worthy of praise. You absolutely have the power and ability to control what your mind **focuses on**.

The third step is to practice the lifestyle of Paul in the ways he follows Jesus. "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things and the God of peace will be with you," v. 9.

Did you catch the one / two punch? First, the peace of God will guard you. Then God, Himself, the God of peace will be with you. Peace and presence! No wonder King David wrote, "I will fear no evil for Thou art with me," Ps. 23:4. Peace from the focus of my mind on positive things and presence because I am walking in the footsteps of Paul and Jesus (I Cor. 11:1 implores us to "Imitate me as I imitate Christ.")

Focus of mind is not some fantasy out of reach. It is not some gift reserved for the super-holy. It is a very real and preciously specific process by which we attain the unspeakable peace and incredible (but real) presence of God.

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