

Think on These Things

Over the years it has been interesting to see how often culture aligns with scripture... *not very often*. But when it does, it is noteworthy. Obviously, our culture is becoming increasingly evil. Crime, immortality and even idolatry are on the rise. Without God, these cultural crashes inevitably bring frustration and despair in our society. But individually, it is not so inevitable.

Back in the 1960s, Bob Luman recorded a song written by Boudleaux Bryant entitled, *Let's Think About Living*." The opening lyrics are quite honest about songs reflecting violent crime and despair, but move quickly into the chorus with, "*Let's think about living, let's think about loving... let's forget about the whining and the lying and the shooting and the dying and the fellow with the switchblade knife, let's think about living, let's think about life.*"

God's plan is for His faithful people to respond to His word and this song parallels that plan. *Frustration* is natural, normal, and often the right response, but *despair* is not. Paul covers some very important bases in 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 He is very open and honest as he recognizes negative things in life, but he quickly moves to the antidote:

7 But we have this treasure in earthen containers, so that the extraordinary greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; **8** we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; **9** persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed; **10** always carrying around in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

11 For we who live are constantly being handed over to death because of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our mortal flesh. **12** So death works in us, but life in you.

Then, after reminding us of our own coming resurrection and the grace of God in verses 14 and 15, Paul seals the passage with this encouragement:

16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer person is decaying, yet our inner person is being renewed day by day. **17** For our momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, **18** while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

We are, indeed, "perplexed but not despairing" (v. 8) if and when we focus not on things temporal, but on the eternal (v. 18). Maybe Paul was serious when he taught us to rejoice, pray and to let our minds dwell on the positive things in Philippians 4:4-9.

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