

Trimming the Lamp: Cultivating Healthy Thoughts

“All of this makes us even more certain that what the prophets said is true.

So you should pay close attention to their message, as you would to a lamp shining in some dark place. You must keep on paying attention until daylight comes and the morning star rises in your hearts.” (2Peter 1:19 CEV)

Biologically we know that our heart, through its various arteries, pumps blood to every part of our body. The state of our heart is a great determinant of the shape of our life.

Our heart is like a garden that if left untended or unguarded can quickly become a wild and beastly patch.

Our heart is also like a fountain from where a river begins its journey. Corrupt the fountain and the entire river is polluted. Whatever we allow to gain a foothold in our heart will eventually govern our entire life. Your whole character is a gallery showcasing your heart’s content. Your lips will always exude the deposits in your heart. “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” (Luke 6:45 NKJV)

Like a gentle stream needing maintenance, sometimes fallen trees and other debris if left, can clog up and change the character of the river; so you need to “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” (Proverbs 4:23 NKJV)

The seat of our emotions and thoughts is also called the heart. Just like good exercise is required by our biological heart to maintain optimum performance, so also our thought base need continual exercise to keep us healthy.

Philippians 4:8 gives us a perfect curriculum for healthy thinking: “...Brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things

are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.” (NKJV)

Let us look at it closely. We are called to ruminate only on THINGS with the following characteristics:

1. **True:** The thought must conform to the most rigorous standard of honesty. TRUTH
2. **Noble:** The thought must be polite, honourable and venerable
3. **Just:** The thought must be congenial with justice and righteousness.
4. **Pure:** The thought must be unalloyed. It must be chaste in every sense.
5. **Lovely:** The thought must be amiable. Really cuddly, not sour or prickly.
6. **Good report:** The thought must universally be considered reputable such that a true follower of Christ will be eager to take a lead on it.
7. **Virtue:** The thought must be Virtuous. Worthy of emulation and profitable for humanity.
8. **Praiseworthy:** The thought must be commendable before man and God.

Hey go ahead and score your general thoughts based on the above. How are we doing?

How about huddling with your family and discuss practical ways of supporting each other in this exercise. No family? Find a friend hungry for freedom and fruitful living. The rewards are immense.

Truly God’s word is our guiding light. Psalm 119:105 (NKJV) puts it brilliantly: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

Be drawn to God’s word as a lamp in a dark place. The closer we get, the brighter it becomes and soon our entire soul is lit up with ever glowing radiance.

I’ll be most glad to hear from you about how you got on with the Philippians 4:8 exercise.

God bless you abundantly.

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