

4/2/20 – Whatever

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. - Phil. 4:8

I've had a number of conversations with people recently about the news. The sentiment, "Why don't they ever report on anything good anymore?" has been around for a long time. My dad and I reminiscing about when I was young and we would spend Labor Day at my uncle's cottage. Upon arriving Friday night, we'd all sit together and talk, and the news was always on. Even then, we inevitably remarked about how negative it was. And it has only gotten worse today. It seems like news broadcasts - TV, radio, internet, whatever - feel people will only tune in for negative, sensationalist news, so that's what they put out. And sadly, they're right. So what to do?

Some, like me, have stopped watching altogether, focusing on the CDC and WHO websites instead. Some complain about the news, yet always seem to complain about "last night's news" meaning they are still watching every day. Others take it upon themselves to spread that news far and wide. We all seem to play the game of "who found out the worst first", and we're really good at it.

Enter Paul's letter to the Philippians. Paul has some pretty direct commands for us in this regard. He encourages us as disciples not to obsess about the negative. To not make it part of the news we share with others. To not even think about it. Instead, Paul says, think about what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. I don't think most of today's news fits this category (note that this is ONE category, not several. Just because it's true doesn't mean it is therefore worthy of our thoughts.)

If we were to put this into action, with the same ferocity that we put other of Paul's commands into action, it would change our entire lives, and the lives of those around us. Our anxiety would drop if not disappear. Our actions would change for the better. Our outlook would be more hopeful, more positive, and more Godly. People would be excited to talk with us because we would be different than the others they talk with. In fact, we'd become encouragers, hope-bringers, and guides. We would become different, separated out from the crowd for God, in a word, holy.

Think over your last 4 major conversations. Did you follow Paul's command? Were your thoughts and words true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy? Imagine if they had been. How might those conversations have changed? How might those you were talking with change?

This is a good one to write down and post somewhere public and often-seen. This is a great bible memory verse. But most importantly, it's a great command to live out.

Would you join with me in committing to eliminate all negative, hopeless, fear-mongering conversations during this COVID-19 issue? The news will bring all the warning and

negativity anyone needs - let's be the people who, because of our faith, bring hope, nobility, and grace to their lives.