

Meditate on Whatever Is Lovely

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Here is one of the best pieces of advice that a mental-health professional can give to people: “Focus upon the positive factors of this life.” It should come as no surprise that this concept is found in the Bible.

One verse that promotes this approach is Philippians 4:8.

Philippians 4:8—“Finally, 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.”

We began a series to talk about the characteristics mentioned in this verse. Today, we will talk about things that are “lovely.”

Recognize negative

Before we look at this week’s characteristic, I want to remind you about a realistic approach in life—recognize negative, but dwell on positive.

- Numbers 13:26-33—Although the other spies became preoccupied with the negative factors, Joshua and Caleb recognized the challenges and focused upon God’s promises.
- Luke 14:26-33—The Son of God’s instruction to count the cost includes recognizing the challenges and focusing upon God’s promises.

Greek word in Philippians 4:8

Let’s notice the Greek word used in Philippians 4:8.

- *Prospiles* (No. 4375 in *Strong’s Concordance*) is the Greek adjective in Philippians 4:8 translated as “lovely.” It is used only here in the New Testament.

Other translations

Here are a few other examples about how *prospiles* is translated in other Bible translations.

- Revised Standard Version—“lovely”

- New American Standard Bible—"lovely"
- The Twentieth Century New Testament—"lovable"
- James Moffatt Translation—"attractive"
- The New Testament: An American Translation (Edgar J. Goodspeed)—"amiable"
- The Epistle of Paul (W.J. Conybeare)—"endearing"

While the English word *lovely* may initially spur thoughts of an outward appearance, a Bible student is quick to recognize the importance of focusing upon the deeper motivation of life and the inner beauty of a person.

Deeper motivation

Notice a few examples of the deeper motivation of life.

- Matthew 6:2—Charitable deeds in private.
- Matthew 6:5—Praying in private.
- Matthew 6:16—Fasting in private.

Inner beauty

Notice the inner beauty of a person.

Proverbs 31:25-28—"Strength and honor are her clothing; she shall rejoice in time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness. She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her."

1 Corinthians 13:4-7—"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."