

# 26-0222a Transcript

## 26-0222a - Wholesome Thinking, Part 1, Jim Lokenbauer

**Bible Readers:** Roger Raines and Wyatt Woosley

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## Wholesome Thinking, Part 1

### Scripture Readings

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading** (0:04 - 0:48): Roger Raines

**Philippians 4:4-7:** (0:04) Good morning. I'll been reading from the book of Philippians chapter 4 verses 4 through 7. (0:14) Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say rejoice. Let your gentle spirit be known to all (0:22) men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication (0:31) with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, (0:38) which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your heart and your

**Continued**

mind in Christ Jesus. (0:46) This concludes this reading. (0:48)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading** (0:53 - 1:13): Wyatt Woosley

**2 Peter 3:1:** (0:53) Good morning. I will be reading 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 1. (1:00) And this is now, beloved, the second letter I'm writing to you in which I'm stirring up (1:08) your sincere minds by way of reminder. This concludes this reading. (1:13)

## Transcript (0:04 - 26:51), Preacher: Jim Lokenbauer

(1:19) I believe that was Wyatt, wasn't it? Good job, Wyatt.

(1:24) Good morning, everybody. The lesson I'm presenting to you today is to show the importance of (1:32) wholesome thinking. It's my intention to present this lesson in two parts.

(1:40) Let me first say that the Holy Spirit is concerned with what we occupy our minds with, (1:47) especially we as Christians. When Peter says in 2 Peter 3 1, dear friends, this is now (1:55) my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome (2:02) thinking.

It's really Holy Spirit wanting to stimulate us to wholesome thinking. (2:11) Other Bible translations use the phrase sincere minds, pure minds, or honest minds. (2:20) In the context of Peter's letters, he was writing to them to prepare them (2:25) for the false teachers that would infiltrate the church at his time and would bring in worldly (2:33) ideas and practices.

He wanted them to be of sound and clear mind so they could remember and compare (2:42) his teachings and those of the apostles against what the false teachers would be presenting to (2:49) them so they wouldn't be led astray. So our lesson today isn't about false teachers, (2:56) but about how wholesome thinking reinforces good mental health and lets us see God's will (3:04) and big picture for us. A little bit about some of the three things that affect our wholesome (3:18) thinking that makes it unwholesome.

In everybody's lives, they experience fear, (3:27) worry, and anxiety at one point or another, and

those are all examples of common (3:35) kind of emotions we have that affect us to have unwholesome thinking. (3:44) They're closely related experiences, but they have distinct differences, like fear, (3:53) which we've all experienced, is a natural emotion that triggers an immediate response to a present (4:00) or real danger. It sets off the body's flight or fight system, preparing you to react quickly, (4:10) such as when you encounter a dangerous situation when you're driving.

(4:15) Fear is typically short-lived and goes away when the danger is over. (4:21) Worry, we've all experienced that, and it's a thinking process of a mental preoccupation (4:29) of all the possible negative outcomes something can have. Worry creates repetitive thoughts about (4:37) problems, often in an attempt to anticipate or solve them.

While worry can be a normal (4:44) part of planning, it becomes an issue when it becomes excessive and uncontrollable, (4:51) which leads to anxiety, and anxiety is worry on steroids. It's different in that it's a future (5:01) oriented state of stress or dread about possibility of threats that may or may not even (5:10) exist. Unlike fear, it is not tied to an immediate danger, but rather to anticipate problems such as (5:23) an upcoming sermon you may have to give, or an exam, or a job interview, or health concerns.

(5:31) Anxiety is an unpleasant, complex combination of emotions that could include fear, apprehension, (5:39) and worry. If anxiety persists over time, it can often lead to restlessness, sleeplessness, (5:48) which I experienced last night, and difficulty concentrating and even cause panic attacks. (5:57) Anxiety affects our physical health as well, as leading to physical symptoms like muscle tension, (6:05) heart palpitations, nausea, chest pain, and shortness of breath.

Many people have gone (6:14) to the hospital thinking that they're having a heart attack, when actually it's anxiety. (6:22) All three of these negative emotions rob us of our peace of mind, which promotes wholesome thinking. (6:34) Worry, and fear, and anxiety are unwholesome thoughts that are negative and considered bad (6:42) for our mental health, and I believe that we are in a mental health crisis in this country (6:49) because of unwholesome thinking.

Practically every family has someone or knows of someone (6:57) who is struggling with a mental health issue of some kind, whether it has been diagnosed (7:04) professionally or not. You can often tell when someone's not right in their mind, (7:10) and you do this by listening to their words and observing their actions. (7:14) So what does wholesome actually mean? I love Webster, he defines it this way, (7:22) sound, contributing to the health of the mind, favorable to morals, religion, or prosperity, (7:30) has wholesome advice, wholesome doctrines, wholesome truths.

In ancient times, the heart (7:38) was thought to be the center of all thought, emotion, and morality, and even memory. (7:46) Pagan Egyptians believed that so strongly that during the mummification process (7:52) of a deceased person, the heart was actually preserved inside the body. They thought that (8:00) the heart would be weighed in the afterlife to determine the deceased's worthiness.

They (8:08) weren't too far from the truth on that. The Greek philosopher Aristotle also believed (8:14) it was the heart, not the brain, that was the center of psychophysiological systems. (8:22) He believed the heart generated vital pneuma, which is the spirit of breath that traveled (8:28) through the blood vessels to produce sensation and movement.

He observed that some animals moved (8:36) and felt even without a brain, leading him to conclude

that the heart had the primary function (8:42) of that. We see the idea of the heart having the role of being the center of thought also (8:50) in Judeo-Christian belief system. As a refresher in the Thessalonian letter, (8:57) Paul mentioned that humans are three-part beings, body, soul, and spirit.

And in Genesis, we read (9:06) that God breathed the spirit of life into the body of man, and he became a living being. (9:14) So it's the spirit that animates the flesh, giving it life. And when a body is dead, the spirit (9:21) returns back to God, scripture tells us.

Recall also Moses telling us in the book of Leviticus (9:30) that the life of the creature is in the blood. So when you consider both of those statements, (9:38) the spirit giving life and the life of the creature is in the blood, are they suggesting (9:43) that the spirit within us resides in our blood? Something to think about. (9:50) We know physiologically the heart is the organ that pumps the blood, that the lungs oxygenate (9:57) and sends our blood through our body, giving it sustaining oxygen and nutrients.

(10:03) We know it's our brain that is the amazing input-output device, that central nervous system, (10:11) working together with all the other organs and systems. So isn't it any wonder that King David (10:21) praises God saying, I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Jesus, being the creator of us humans and (10:30) knowing us inside and out, both physiologically and spiritually, he alludes to this ancient idea (10:37) of thought being formed in the heart.

So I wonder if the invisible part of us, our soul, (10:45) resides perhaps in the heart as well. Listen to Luke 6, 43 through 45. Jesus said, (10:54) no good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.

Each tree is recognized by its (11:01) own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes or grapes from briars. The good man brings (11:09) good things out of the goods stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out (11:16) of the evil stored up in his heart.

For out of the overflow of his heart, his mouth speaks. (11:25) So here Jesus shows us that the thoughts of somebody's heart, whether good or bad, (11:32) will be made obvious by their speech and actions. This is one of the ways we determine (11:39) what kind of a person someone is.

We will know them by their fruits. So whether the mind is in (11:48) the brain or in the heart doesn't really matter. It's there.

We are responsible for what we think (11:56) about and meditate on, what we choose to dwell upon in our minds or in our heart. We have to (12:04) exercise our minds to train them to evaluate thoughts that enter into our minds, and what we (12:13) need is a standard in which to compare them with. That, of course, is the Word of God.

(12:21) Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 10 5, we demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself (12:30) up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought and make it obedient to (12:39) Christ. When someone speaks evil of God or the Word or his church, we should be there to defend (12:46) what we believe in. There are a lot of false religions, bad theories, and philosophy that (12:53) sets itself up against God's Word, and we need to know God's Word well enough to demolish those (13:01) false claims.

Paul tells us to take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ. (13:12) What is that? That is the exercise of the fruit of the Spirit known as self-control. (13:20) We should weigh each thought

and compare it with the moral teaching of the Lord, (13:26) and if it's contrary to his Word, reject it.

Find it to Christ without dwelling on it. (13:35) We can't stop thoughts from popping in or forming in our minds. It's just the way we're made.

(13:44) But if a persistent bad thought keeps popping into your mind, we need to not only reject it, (13:52) but we need to pray about it and refocus our mind on something else. (13:58) Peter gives advice on this exercise in 1 Peter 1, 13-16. He says, (14:08) therefore prepare your minds for action.

Be self-controlled. Set your hope fully on the (14:17) grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform (14:25) to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance, but just as he who called you is holy, (14:33) be holy in all you do.

The Lord has written, be holy because I am holy. So Peter says in so many (14:42) words that when those old evil desires we used to have come knocking again, as obedient children, (14:51) we must take action and exercise self-control. We must remember that we have been purified of all of (15:00) our sins by the precious blood of Christ, and that we've been sanctified by that blood to be holy (15:08) and to live holy lives.

So it's beholden upon us to only be thinking good, wholesome thoughts. (15:18) So when those bad thoughts pop in our head, or formulate in our head, or if Satan puts them there, (15:27) we have to take captive those thoughts, weigh them, and reject them if they're contrary (15:34) to God's holy word. God wants us to think holy thoughts.

When unwholesome thoughts pop in our (15:45) mind, we evaluate them, comparing it to the word, and either reject it or redirect our minds by (15:53) remembering the hope of heaven we have, and think of heavenly thoughts. We're not alone in this fight (16:00) over our minds. Satan wants us to fail and dwell upon those negative thoughts that make us feel (16:09) unworthy, useless, and defeated.

He'll stir up evil thoughts that can entice us and lead us astray. (16:19) He'll stir up old simple thoughts to try and get us to dwell on those things in order to get us to (16:27) go astray. We've been saved.

We've been redeemed. We've been purged of those things. And so when (16:37) those things pop up, do as Christ did when he was confronted by Satan.

Use the word of God (16:47) to defeat what it is he's trying to put in your mind. Jesus also gave us help. The very helper (16:59) that he promised that would come that night when he was in the upper room, he said to the disciples (17:05) that he would send the helper to help us out, and that's Holy Spirit.

And when we become believers (17:14) and obey, we receive Holy Spirit. So we're not alone in this walk of life. We have God in us, (17:25) the Spirit, and we must believe that he'll help us.

If those oppressive evil thoughts seem to be (17:32) overwhelming you, pray to your Father in heaven, ask for his strength, his help and guidance, (17:41) and then immerse yourself in his word. Our dear brother Paul, the apostle, (17:48) gives some excellent advice, just as Peter did. And so let's look again at the word that was (17:56) read for us earlier, Philippians 4, 4 through 7. We'll go verse by verse and kind of, (18:05) what was that word you used again this morning, Steve? Ruminare.

We will ruminate upon it. (18:12) Ruminare to illuminate. I like that.

So verse 4, rejoice in the Lord always. Keep in mind this is (18:22) God's solution for when we're dealing with unwholesome thoughts, okay? Rejoice in the Lord (18:31) always. I will say it again, rejoice.

Paul's saying this when in the face of persecution by (18:40) the Gentiles and Jews, Paul and the church were in constant danger. And we're starting to see that (18:48) today where churches are in danger of worldly people coming in and persecuting. Yet he commands (18:59) and encourages them to rejoice always.

Why? He wants us to always remember who we are. We are (19:10) God's elect. We are children of God, the bride of Christ.

To be able to rejoice in the face of (19:19) adversity means that you trust God, who is our higher power. He's bigger than any problem we have. (19:30) As we will see, rejoicing is the perfect antidote against anxiety.

Rejoicing is part of wholesome (19:39) thinking. It gets our focus off of ourself and our own problems and focused on where we're going. (19:48) Paul told the Corinthians, so we fix our eyes not on what is seen but on what is unseen.

For what is (19:55) seen is temporary and what is unseen is eternal. So Paul wants our outward focus going on our goal, (20:05) not to be consumed with me, me, me. We've got a whole generation of me, me's that are just so (20:14) self-absorbed they can't focus on helping others.

It's all about them. Don't fall into that category. (20:27) We are blessed with the hope of heaven.

So remember, God holds us in the palm of his hand (20:34) and no one can take us away from him. We are spiritually protected by God. If we are going (20:42) through trials, he is there with us and may permit us to go through some of these tough times, (20:49) but it's an order to build our Christian character, to test us, to see if we get it or not.

(20:59) That's what builds our Christian character. So Paul gives us a double apostolic command (21:07) to rejoice and that's not a helpful suggestion. That's Paul commanding us, (21:14) rejoice in the Lord always.

I will say it again, rejoice. So Peter also encourages the believers (21:22) to rejoice. In 1 Peter 4, 12-13, he says, Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial (21:30) you are suffering as though something strange were happening to you, but rejoice that you may (21:38) participate in the suffering of Christ so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

(21:47) So rejoice in the face of adversity. It's up to us to always have a good disposition. Others (21:56) will then see us and want a piece of that.

Wow, why is that guy so happy? Verse 5, (22:06) Let your gentleness be evident to all, the Lord is near. The mind under self-control, (22:14) following God's word, will be at peace and as a result will have calm and gentle spirit. (22:23) The Christian should always remember that God is near to help and to guide and at times to correct.

(22:31) Verse 6, Do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and petition with

thanksgiving (22:38) present your requests to God. There it is, one of the great adult sins, anxiety. (22:47) And anxiety can have severe harmful side effects as we mentioned earlier on the body and on the (22:55) mind.

And our father in heaven doesn't want us to suffer that way. He wants us to have peace. (23:03) Anxiety is fear and worry on steroids.

And do you recall when the disciples were in the boat (23:10) and it was about to be sunk because of the turbulent sea? What did Jesus say to them? He (23:17) said, oh you of little faith, why were you afraid? So anxiety, worry, and fear, they are the lack of (23:28) trust in God. When you turn something over to God in prayer, believe that he will work things out (23:36) for you in time. And know that sometimes he permits things to happen to us for our personal spiritual (23:44) growth.

After we pray, trust him and be at peace. Matthew said in verse, in Matthew 6, Jesus said, (23:56) therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, about your body, (24:03) about what you will wear is not life more than food in the body, more than clothes. Look at the (24:10) birds of the air, they do not sow or reap or gather in the barns.

And yet your heavenly father (24:16) feeds them. Are you not more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to (24:25) his life? Therefore, do not worry saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall (24:31) we wear? For the Gentiles strive after all those things and your heavenly father knows that you (24:37) need them. But first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be (24:45) added to you.

Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will worry about itself (24:53) today as enough trouble of its own. So we must turn over our requests, petitions, and concerns (25:03) to God by prayer and thanksgiving. And when we do things his way, verse 7 there, is the result.

(25:16) And here's verse 7. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your (25:25) hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. So when you rid yourself of anxiety, worry, and fear, (25:34) those negative dark emotions that erode our faith, and we give them up to God who cares for us, (25:44) God's peace will rush to fill that void where anxiety used to be. And that peace of God will (25:53) actually guard our hearts, the physical us, and our minds, the spiritual us, giving us precious (26:03) peace of mind that defies description.

So tonight we're going to finish this lesson on wholesome (26:11) thinking, but right now we offer you the invitation for anyone to let their needs be known. If you (26:18) desire the help or prayers of the saints, we ask you to come forward and let us know. But let me (26:25) finish right now by saying that when you put and practice God's methods for good mental health (26:32) into practice, Isaiah says of God in 26-3, you will keep in perfect peace the steadfast mind (26:43) because he trusts in you.

So trust in God and he'll keep you in perfect peace.