

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Beloved, Let Us Overcome Evil with Good! Pt 2

Philippians 4:2-9

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SermonAudio Blurb:

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I. Introduction.

- A. Last week, the idea of overcoming evil with good. We are in Philippians 4:2-9, which gives us three key areas in which we can practice good in the face of evil.
 - 1. Establish Godly Attitudes.
 - a. There were six key attitudes to develop: Peace, concern for others, joy, humility, hope, and thankful prayer.
 - b. Distinction between attitude and intention.
 - (1) Godly intentions are not the same as Godly attitudes, thinking, or actions. But they are often confused as such.
 - (2) Critical to understand this, for it is too often that we stop at intentions and go no further. We claim that our intentions were praiseworthy though they were not followed through into obedience.
 - (3) Those who disciple must learn to ask questions in such a way as to draw this out from those disciplined.
 - c. What is the difference? Some examples:
 - (1) Think of intentions as knowing the right thing but not doing it (James calls it sin, 4:17). Right here it is enough for many to clap their hands over their mouths and be silent.
 - (2) Think Saul in 1 Samuel 15 (take them through this with necessary comments through to vs 29).

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- (a) Show the intentions sounded so good, but they are not what was commanded.
 - (b) How many homes and workplaces would be changed if we stopped being Sauls?
 - (c) The sacrifice that God desired and desires is obedience.
 - (d) Make secondary comments on the nature of rebellion and divination.
- d. Good intentions to pursue peace do not mean you will pursue it. You go in with the right intention and leave with a bloody nose.
 - e. The same can be said of all these other attitudes.
 - f. Are they truly attitudes you have embraced? Or are they only intentions that you hold loosely to?
- B. The next two key areas of your life of overcoming evil with good are now in view. Thinking and Actions.

II. How To Overcome Evil With Good.

- A. Establish Godly Thinking.
- 1. We are a nation of people who think wrong. The reason for this is that the first person we consider with our decisions is not God, but ourselves.
 - a. And when we do think about God, it is too often done in a theologically unsound way.
 - b. Example again of the idea of the Trinity and the MacDonald/Jakes controversy.
 - c. The woman who divorced her husband because Jesus wants her to be joyful.
 - d. The man who abandoned himself to homosexual temptations because God made him this way.
 - e. The unrepentant sin that lingers and lingers because the Gospel tells me that I am not under condemnation now.
 - f. The person who continues to beat their head against the wall in some endeavor all the while claiming that they can “do all things through Christ who strengthens them.”

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2. I have found that all destructive or sinful decisions started by bad/wrong thinking. **Always**. Now, for some wrong thoughts come to mind and they give into them immediately, making them appear to be impulsive. But really it is just lacking self-control in this area.
 - a. **Proverbs 25:28** ²⁸ *Like a city that is broken into and without walls Is a man who has no control over his spirit.*
 - b. For others, there is a battle against the wrong thinking, but it is with the wrong weapons.
 - c. “Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. (Isaiah 1:18)
 - (1) Rich Hines’ perspective on this.
 - (2) There is an attack on critical thinking skills that are destroying our ability to be comfortable in working through issues.
3. Paul tells us to ponder these things. They are to capture our thinking. We are to chew and focus our minds upon these things.
 - a. That requires an act of the will. Not merely intentions, but an act of the will.
 - b. The biblical model of dealing with problems is through a biblical solution.
4. Jesus said that the greatest of commandments is to love the Lord with all of our mind, body, soul and strength. This means that all aspects of who we are come under a loving service to the Lord—including how we think.
5. To think right always requires us to start with God.
 - a. We are not dwell on worthless or evil things.
 - b. We are not to focus of sin.
 - c. We are to actively bring our minds off of those things of no value and onto godly issues.
 - d. For many that will require changing what you watch or read. But to overcome evil, you must develop godly thinking.
 - (1) Romans 6:11.
 - (2) Romans 12:2.

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- (3) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.
 - (4) Eph. 4:22-23.
 - (5) Colossians 3:16.
 - (6) 1 Peter 1:13.
6. With this in mind, consider briefly these terms in Philippians 4.
- a. Explain them briefly, they are easy to understand.
 - b. What is that which fills your mind? What do you let into your mind? How biblical is your mind set.
 - c. That is the challenge.
7. But if we do not know what is lovely, or what is just and right, how can we vote? How can we train our children?
- a. In pre-marital and marriage counseling I try to drive the man to the point of frustration in defining and expressing what it means to love the wife as Christ loves the church. Platitudes will not cut it.
 - b. In child-rearing it is easy to allow the short-sighted thinking and values of this world to define what we do.
 - (1) Think, Wilson's point that a boy must always defend the rightness of a girl acting like a girl.
 - (2) A young man who is sexually involved is to be rebuked because he is exploiting that young lady when God calls him to protect her.
 - c. In voting, we often betray a love of leisure or money in how we vote, rather than a person who best promotes these ideals given by Paul.
 - d. What does your money support?
8. Only when we embrace godly thinking will we be able to overcome evil with good—because we will know that it is evil, even if it is pleasant.
9. Think of how much of your troubles would be resolved if you would gird your mind up and think on gospel-established demands. When you value

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truth and true beauty as God has made them, you will become a radically different person.

10. So, to overcome evil, we must establish godly attitudes, godly thinking, and lastly, we must

B. Establish Godly Actions.

1. “Practice” is the point. There is a process needed to be able to practice, but the goal is not those things, it is to be practicing godliness.

a. To lose sight of this is like walking off of the track in a race prior to crossing the line.

b. It is a word that bears comment: it is ‘*prasso*’ and it carries the idea of not just doing, but being preoccupied with doing it. It is a work of repetition.

c. We would use it to refer to a lawyer or doctor who are practicing their profession.

d. In seminary you learn what is known as practical theology. Though there are different ideas on what this means, it is generally accepted that it refers to theology applied. It is not merely the theological concept of the Trinity, it is how the knowledge of our Triune God affects how we preach, teach, discipline, love, hope and such.

e. Paul is calling all to move beyond merely the abstract and into the practice of the gospel.

f. There is only one way ultimately that you overcome evil, it is by doing good. Intentions will never do anything in themselves.

2. To do this requires four things. You need to learn, receive what is taught, hear, and see.

a. In other words, you look for godly examples, study them and follow them. Paul says that the example that they should use is himself.

(1) Let that sink in and it allows you to rethink what humility actually looks like.

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- (2) He offers himself up as a standard for them to live their lives out. See what he does, what he values, how he reacts and then copy them.
 - (3) Here is why we need to be slow to be teachers.
 - (4) But if you are ready to be a teacher, there is no value in pretending you are not.
 - (5) I drive this point in often regarding discipleship relationships, the goal is not to be with that person, it is to make them a person who is ready to disciple another. It is replication.
 - (6) How many of you can say, “follow me, listen to me, do what I do?”
- b. Learn.
- (1) This is where we get the concept of a disciple. One who is following to learn.
 - (2) The teaching comes in a multitude of ways, but the heart attitude of the recipient is crucial, it is one that is bent in submission to the teacher.
 - (3) Example is 2 Timothy 3:10 compared to vs 6-9.
- c. Receive what is taught.
- (1) Here we have the idea of embracing, not merely hearing.
 - (2) There are those who sit with arms crossed and minds locked. No desire to receive. Ready to argue.
- d. What you hear.
- (1) This is probably looking at those things others had told them about Paul and his teaching.
 - (2) His reputation was all over the Gentile world and the word was out. Think about what they heard.
- e. Active observance.

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- (1) When you are with those who are mature in the Lord, what do you see?
 - (2) No matter where I am at I am constantly watching, observing and noting what is seen.
 - (3) But I also note what is missing. What is central. What is loved and what elicits a strong, negative reaction.
 - (4) Example of John MacArthur and not eating cake.
 - (5) First hand knowledge is often some of the most powerful lessons learned.
- f. What do I draw from this? That Paul had confidence that what he taught and what he practiced were one and the same.
3. Paul says to practice them. This is a repetition of actions until it is part of your lifestyle.
- a. Are you a person who is determine to master a gospel-driven, gospel-define life?
 - b. Can you give a “why” to what you do? Why you do it? How you do it?
 - c. We must relentlessly pursue godly doing.
4. To combat evil, you cannot just have godly attitudes or godly thinking, you must put them into practice.
- a. Frankly, if you don’t do them, you do not truly believe them. They are not your delight.
 - b. Here is where you get into those nasty idols of the heart. Those things that drive you and that you delight in.

III. Conclusion.

- A. God gives us a great promise then at the end of all this.
- B. As these are developed, then God will be with you.
 1. Is He already with you? Yes.
 2. But this is a unique presence, one in which He covers and protects you. One in which He comforts and cares for you.

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- C. You show me a person who has only godly intentions and I will show you a person who is thrown about by every trial and issue.
- D. You show me a person who has embraced godly attitudes, trained their minds to think godly thoughts, and who are practicing godliness, and I will show you a person who is stable and worthy of imitation.
 - 1. This is work, but it is a good work. It is a God-ordained work. And therefore it is a Spirit-empowered work.
 - 2.
- E. Beloved, pursue these things and overcome evil with good.

Small Group Questions

- **In a world filled with evil, what are the various approaches Christians have used to deal with it?**
- **How does a church seeking to be missional need to see it?**
- **If you were forced to make a choice (and you are) which of the three key areas described in the sermon is where you are seeing the greatest challenge and the greatest change? How can your Community Group help you and encourage you in these?**