

What if...

We Look for the Good?

Philippians 4:8-9

PPT Title

What if We Look for the Good?

Main Point: When we look for the good, we will find peace.

Key Verse: *Finally, my brothers and sisters, always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things.* - Philippians 4:8

Props: a white board and marker, a real dollar and a fake dollar; miner's hat or light

INTRO

Video
(Start at :09
end at 1:25.)



I have a video clip for you to watch. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8TTnm1CcRHM>
That piece of land in Australia has been a round for a long, long time. That gold sat in the ground for hundreds—probably thousands—of years. I wonder how many people walked right over that dirt without ever thinking to dig for gold! When they looked down, all they saw was, well, dirt. Is the dirt valuable? Nope. But there was something very valuable covered in the dirt.

What did the man have to do to find the gold? He had to look for it! He had to look for the good. He even had equipment (a metal detector) to help. And then he had to dig. He had to dig through 23 1/2 inches of dirt. Do you think it was worth the effort to do all that digging in order to find that treasure? Was it worth the trouble to brush that dirt away? Why? (Because what he found changed his life!) Well, today we're going to see that if we are willing to dig through some dirt in our own lives, and look for the good, we will find a treasure worth more than gold!

BACKGROUND



We are almost finished with our study of Paul's letter to the Philippians. What did we talk about last week? (Conflict and worry.) The opposite of conflict is PEACE. The opposite of worry is also PEACE. The next two verses are pretty amazing. Paul wrote them to tell everyone how to have PEACE. Now, remind me, where was Paul while he was writing? (In jail or prison.) Who is normally in prison? Criminals, thieves, violent people. Would you want to live with those people? Would that be scary? Do you think prison is normally a peaceful place? Just imagine: there was Paul, locked up in prison, telling those outside of prison how to have peace!



THINK ON THESE

(Teacher: Please share some personal stories throughout the lesson on whatever points hit home with you. Personal stories really make lessons come alive!)

Finally, my brothers and sisters, [This is like saying, let's just take care of this once and for all] always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things. Do what you have learned or received or heard from me. Follow my example. The God who gives peace will be with you. - Philippians 4:8-9 **Write these bold words on the white board.**

WHAT'S TRUE

I'd like to spend a few minutes specifically on what's true. This is at the top of Paul's list, and it's a biggie. True means: what actually is, the fact, what's real or genuine.



What is the opposite of the truth? Lies! You may not realize it, but we hear lies all the time. Sometimes we hear lies from other people (which includes TV, Internet, books). It might be that someone calls you names that aren't true. Or sometimes the lie isn't about you. It might be about God. Someone might say, "God didn't really create everything." Is that true? No! People lie about all kinds of things.

Sometimes we think up lies in our own imagination. These might be like, "It's no big deal if I'm mean to my sister. Everybody does that." Or it might sound more like, "I made a bad grade because I'm so dumb." Neither of those are true at all.

And lots of times, we hear lies from the devil. He lied to Eve in the garden, didn't he? He even lied about God; he accused God of not wanting the best for Adam and Eve! The Bible says the devil is the father of lies (John 8:44). Did you know that the devil can whisper lies to us? Sometimes he makes us think it's our own thoughts. He's very sneaky that way. He'll lie to us about who we are, who God is, how much we matter and the plans God has for us. The devil always lies.

Really, there's no end to the lies we could list as examples. So how do we tell the truth from a lie? We compare what we hear and what we think to God's Word! **Show Bible.** God's word is completely 100% true (John 17:17).



Call up a volunteer and hand him a fake dollar bill. Ask: Is this a real dollar bill? Are you sure? How do you know? (You've seen plenty of the real ones so you know when you see a fake.) That's exactly right. But some fake money looks very much like the real thing. When someone starts to work at a bank, they are taught how to spot fake money by knowing real money inside and out. **Hand student a real dollar.** They spend hours looking it over, front and back; they hold it up to the light, front and back; they feel the texture of the paper; they taste it KIDDING! They don't taste it! (Don't allow child to taste it!) But they learn what real money looks like so when a fake bill shows up in their drawer, they'll think, "Hey. Something isn't quite right about this. I need to investigate further." **Thank your volunteer.**

That's what we should do with God's word, the Truth. We should read it, hide it in our heart, and learn the kinds of things that God says and doesn't say. We should really *know* it. That way, when a lie comes our way, we'll automatically think, "Hey. That doesn't sound quite right. Let me investigate that a bit." Then you look into the Bible and see what God says about it. Pray and ask God to show you the truth. When you identify a lie, don't believe it! Just say, "I reject that lie." For example: You just said no one likes me, but God said He sings over me in Zephaniah 3:17! I reject the lie!

THE GOOD

Let's look at the rest of this list. I'm sure we could spend a whole morning on each of these. But let's look at them briefly. **Write supporting words next to original words on the white board.**

noble: this one is having good character, doing what's right

right: this means correct and just.

pure: this means free from things that are bad. Sinless.

lovely: delightful, beautiful

worthy of respect: things that we honor, or think highly of

excellent: very high quality

worthy of praise: to say great things about

I don't expect you to remember the definition of all of these! But I think, overall, we

could say these things are GOOD. Write GOOD very large. So Paul is telling his friends to “Always think about these things” or “Look for the Good!” Draw eyes: G^ooD to help kids remember.



So, look for the good in every situation. Of course it’s easy to find the good on Christmas morning or at a birthday party or on the last day of school! On those awesome days, it’s like the gold is just sitting on top of the ground. Everywhere you step you’re tripping over gold nuggets. Those days are easy.

But other days are not like that at all. Some days, life seems so unfair! Some days we have to sit out at recess even though it was someone else’s fault. Some days we hear our parents arguing. Some days we get picked on at school. Some days we are sick or someone we love is in the hospital. These are the days when it feels like there is no gold—nothing good, right, pure, or lovely. That’s when we have to get to work. Pull up a nearby student and put the miner’s hat on him/her. That’s when we have to put on our miner’s hat and look for the good. Maybe you have to sit out at recess, but it gives you time to talk to someone you normally don’t get to talk to and you make a new friend, so that’s excellent. Maybe your sister is in the hospital, but suddenly tons of people are praying for her and even people who never believed in God offer up a prayer, so that is worthy of praise! So instead of being so mad and frustrated with your situation, God brings you peace!

And we have to look for the good in the people in our lives. How many of you have at least one person who annoys you or you have conflict with sometimes? I bet we all have several. Well, maybe you are only seeing the bad and not the good. Finding the good qualities in people can be sort of like a treasure hunt! (And for some folks, we have to dig a little deeper than others :)

But seriously, not one of us is perfect. Look around the room. *There’s NO perfect person!* Therefore, in your family, in your class, in your group of friends, you are living with a bunch of imperfect people! If you always focus on what is wrong with everyone, you’ll be bothered all the time! But if you can focus on what’s good about the person, you will have peace. You’ll have peace inside you because you aren’t so aggravated, and you’ll have peace in the relationship because you won’t fuss and fight with them so much. (Remember, you aren’t perfect either. Wouldn’t you rather people look for the good in you instead of focusing on your faults? Matthew 7: 12)

When we focus on the bad we see everything the other person does through the lens of what we don’t like. (It’s like we keep our eyes on the worthless dirt instead of seeing the priceless gold!) Pull up another student to put on the miner’s hat. If you are frustrated and can’t see the good stuff, ask God to show it to you! Pray, “Lord, You created this person, and You don’t make mistakes! Please show me the good stuff. How did You intend them to be? What is Your good plan for them? How can I help bring out the best in them?” And pray for them to be the person God wants them to be.

For Older Kids: Who can tell me the opposite of this statement: “Thinking about what’s good brings peace”? (Thinking about what’s bad takes away peace. Thinking about what’s bad brings fear or conflict.) Remember this when you make choices about what TV shows, movies, books, and video games you spend your time on. Every time I flip through TV channels, I’m reminded that our culture has an obsession with everything that is NOT GOOD. Remember: Filling your head with sinful or violent images will rob you of the peace God wants you to have!

JESUS



Look at our list on the board. Are these things from the kingdom of light or the kingdom of darkness? (Definitely, the kingdom of light!) And actually, this list describes Jesus, Himself! (Luke 2: 52, John 14: 6, Philippians 1: 9-12) It would be great to start every day thinking about Jesus! When you study Jesus, you are living out Philippians 4: 8!

APPLICATION



Someone once said, “Anyone can find dirt. It takes a miner to find gold.” Will you be a miner of whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, worthy of respect, excellent and praiseworthy? Will you look past the crummy stuff in your life and in other people to look for the good?

When you hear someone complaining (in my family we call it “venting” but it’s really just a huge dirt-fest) tell them, “Wait a minute. What if you look for the good? What good is there in the person or situation that you are complaining about? Most importantly, what does God say about it?” This really and truly brings a heart change. What you’ll find is worth more than gold!

PPT Key Verse

Key Verse: *Finally, my brothers and sisters, always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things.* - Philippians 4:8

PPT Main Point

Main Point: When we look for the good, we will find peace.

(Teacher note: Isn’t it interesting that heaven is paved with streets of gold? Revelation 21:21 There, with no sin, no sadness, no trouble, we won’t have to look through any of the dirt we struggle with on earth! We will only have what’s true, noble, right, pure, lovely, worthy of respect, excellent and praiseworthy. In fact, for us to think on these things now is to live out what Paul tells us in Philippians 3:20—live as citizens of heaven.)