

AN ENCOURAGING WORD FOR TROUBLING TIMES #130 *(by Rev. Dr. Alice Wolfe, 10/16/20)*

“What You Think About Affects Others”

With all the bad things going on in our world today, it's easy to think about and focus on the lies, deceit, division, evil, and injustices around us. However, we choose what we focus on. In Philippians 4:8 (NRSV), Paul said,

“...whatever is true, whatever honorable, whatever just, whatever pure, whatever pleasing, whatever commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

When we focus on the lies and evil in world, that's all we begin to see. When we focus on the problems and division in our lives and world, that's all we begin to see. However, God calls us to focus on whatever is good, right, and true—and that takes effort. Sometimes, it's harder than others.

I once heard a story of an elderly pastor's wife who was known for her ability to make positive comments about every facet of her husband's ministry. The church choir, however, consisting of seniors with waning voices, had defied positive but truthful comment. Finally, she solved the problem one Sunday. As the choir members filed into choir loft, she leaned over and said to the person next to her, "Aren't they walking well this morning?"

Gripping and complaining about troubles and problems is easy, but it only makes things worse. The more we focus on the problems; the more negative and critical we become—because that becomes all we see. What's worse is that our negative spirit is contagious and spreads to others. Negativity is a pandemic far worse and more deadly than the Coronavirus, and it destroys many. Therefore, we must choose to focus on what's true, noble, right, pure, and admirable. When we focus on these things, they push out and replace our negative, critical thoughts that lead to negative and critical actions. We would do well to pray and ask God to help us replace our bad, false thoughts with good and true thoughts. The more we do; the more of God's goodness and truth we'll see! The more of God's goodness and truth we see; the more others will see Jesus and his goodness in us!

PRAYER:

Loving God, you are good, just, kind, honorable, patient, forgiving, the Way, the Truth, and the Life! Forgive me when I focus on the trials and troubles instead of on you. Fill me with your Spirit and help me to focus on you and what is true, honorable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise. Help me focus on you and anything that brings honor and glory to you, so that my thoughts, attitudes, and actions point people to you! Amen.