

Family Togetherness Week of Prayer  
**September 3 - 9, 2023**

**2023 Resource Book**

# **KEYS TO HEALTHY MINDS**

## **Flourishing Families**

**Adventist Family Ministries**

# SUNDAY THINKING WELL

## Key Verse

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, ...noble, ...just,...pure,...lovely, (or)...of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, think on these things. Phil 4:8 NKJV

Write the verse in a thought bubble to remind you to focus on positive thoughts.

## Exploring Thinking Well

Our thoughts are important. What we think shapes our emotions, actions, our relationships, and our spiritual lives. When we focus on our worries, on the chaotic and tragic things happening in the news, and on our mistakes and struggles, we can become overwhelmed with anxieties and fears. Those powerful feelings will influence our behavior, and may cause us to prioritize our own needs, rather than the needs of those around us.

When Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians he was in a very challenging place. He was in prison and awaiting execution. For a human being, that must be one of the most stressful and distressing life situations. But Paul's letter is full of joy and hope. In the closing paragraphs he lists some of his 'secrets' for staying emotionally positive in the face of great challenges. At the heart of the passage is his famous text (Phil 4:8) that encourages us to focus our minds on things that are beautiful, lovely, virtuous, excellent, pure, and uplifting. Today we will explore how Paul did that, with God's help, and how we can learn to think in similar, healthy ways.

## Positive Paul

(Philippians 4)

Paul lived in a prison. He didn't live there because he had done something wrong. He lived there because he told people about Jesus, and some people didn't like that. Paul couldn't go where he wanted to go. He couldn't do what he wanted to do. He couldn't even eat what he wanted to eat or go and see his friends.

Living in a prison wasn't very pleasant. It wasn't cozy and comfortable like your house. Paul had to wear chains, eat stale bread, and sleep on a hard bed. I wonder how you would feel if you were Paul? Sad, lonely, angry, frustrated, afraid? He probably felt some of these things occasionally. But Paul knew that he had a choice, and even though his life was hard, he chose to be positive and happy. After all, he knew that Jesus loved him, and that Jesus was taking care of him and what could be better than that? Paul had been through some hard times before...shipwrecks, beatings, and even snakebites! He learned that the best thing to do in

difficult situations was to think about things that were good and lovely and pure, because Jesus would make everything turn out for the best in the end.

Sometimes we think that feelings just land on us, and that we can't do anything about how we feel. But, even when we are in a tough place, we can choose to think about the things that make us happy! It might sound strange, but it works!

Paul decided to be thankful for God's blessings in his life. He chose to think about lovely things like the wonderful flowers and animals that God had created. Even on the days that were difficult, he thought about his happy and funny memories...He chose to be kind to the guards and other prisoners so that everyone could see God's love shining in his life. And whenever he was worried about anything he prayed and gave it to God to look after.

Paul found ways to be amazingly happy in a very hard situation. He wrote down all his special secrets for being happy in a letter to his friends in Philippi, and ever since then other people have used his special secrets to keep their thoughts happy, too.

The next time you feel sad and worried, remember how much Jesus loves you. Imagine Jesus giving you a big hug and saying encouraging things to you. And then choose one of Paul's special secrets to help put some more happy thoughts back into your head.

Do you have things that you are worried about? Do you have troubling thoughts that buzz around in your head like a wasp? Catch them like this (mime catching a bug in your hands) and then close your hands in prayer and give them all to God, like this... (Pray the following prayer).

### **Open Hands Prayer**

- Start with everyone's hands cupped, as if they are holding their worries in their hands.
- Praise God for His love.
- Thank Him that we can give our worries to Him because He loves us.
- Turn your hands down and 'drop' your cares into God's hands.
- Thank God for looking after your worries.
- Turn your hands up and out in a position to receive.
- Pray for God's peace in place of your worries.
- Thank God for His gift of peace.
- Amen

### **Thinking Well Activities**

**Flourish! - Choose well - think well - live well - grow well!**

#### **What's bugging you?**

- Cut out some large paper 'bug' shapes.
- On one side of the paper write one of your worries.

- Find a Bible verse that can help you with your challenge.
- Turn the paper over and write the Bible verse.
- Whenever something new is worrying you, make a new bug and find a new verse.

### **Positive Poster**

Make a large poster of happy thoughts. Write each happy thought in a thought bubble. You can cut the bubbles from different colors of paper to make the poster bright and cheerful.

- I am surrounded by God's love.
- I am special to God.
- I am forgiven by God.
- I can do good things because the Holy Spirit has given me gifts to help others.
- I can make a positive difference in the world by being a blessing to others.
- Whatever is happening, Jesus is always with me.
- Add other positive thoughts when you think of them.

### **Promise Box**

Make a promise box together.

- Find an attractive gift box or bag.
- Write your favorite promises on small cards.
- Keep them in the box/bag and add more as you discover them in God's Word.

### **'Reset' Button**

When a machine or a computer is overloaded and stops working properly, there is often a 'reset' button to press. When you press this button, things might stop working for a while, or go to 'sleep'. But then the machine will start working properly again.

- Find something to be your family 'reset button'. It may be a large button from an old garment. Or it could be a colorful plastic lid from a bottle, or a flat toy squeaker.
- When someone is feeling overwhelmed by difficult thoughts, they can press the button and sit quietly for a while, praying that God will help them untangle their messy thoughts.