

# Abide in Me

**John 15:4**  
*Bible studies for disciples  
who make disciples*



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*A Strategy for Sanity*  
**Mind Control**  
Philippians 4:8-9

Our minds are a beautiful creation of God, but broken. We often find ourselves riddled with illogical anxieties or prey to ill-formed ideas. Sometimes we are stuck, like an obsession, with painful memories of the past or struggle with a thought life consumed with self-righteous judgment, covetousness, worry, or lust. There is something wrong with our minds and the way we use them.

We usually understand we are responsible for our actions. But what about the thoughts we allow to run wild in our minds? As we continue with our series *A Strategy for Sanity* we need the clear counsel offered by the Apostle Paul for how to better control our minds. The answer is not by pretending that everything is okay. The answer is found in the Gospel and then renewing our minds with godly pathways or filters for thinking and acting.

## **OBSERVATION** (*What does the passage say?*)

Before meeting with your Growth Group, read through the passage at least twice and perform the following prompts:

- Circle the word *brothers*, draw a line from it to the left margin and write *All Christians*.
- Place a box around the two main active verbs in the passage and write them in the left margin.
- Underline all 6 occurrences of the word *whatever*.
- Circle both occurrences of *if* and draw lines from them that meet in the left margin and write = *since there is*.
- In the right margin, list all eight virtues mentioned.
- Double underline both occurrence of *these things*.
- Place a  $\Delta$  over the sole reference to God.

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup> What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

**[A Serious] Icebreaker:** Can you recall a time when you believed something false? How did you come to see the error and what led you to a new pathway?

**INTERPRETATION** (*What does the passage mean?*)

1. Before you dive into the specifics, what immediately strikes you about this passage?
2. Why do you think Paul placed the first main verb (*think*) near the end of verse 8 and the second main verb (*practice*) near the end of verse 9?
3. Briefly discuss the eight virtues.

**APPLICATION** (*How does the passage apply to our lives?*)

4. Why and how is the Gospel the starting point for changing your thinking and filtering your thoughts? What happens when we try and control our minds without the gospel as our foundation?
5. Discuss: *What you think about and how you think about it turns you into the person becoming.*

6. How do we determine what fits this *thought filter* and what doesn't?

7. List some of the ways we feed our minds? Which areas lead you toward anxiety or peace?

8. What thoughts do you need to shut off? What would a shut-off plan look like for you?

9. What does it look like for the *God* of peace to be with someone?

***Commit Philippians 4:8 to memory.***

