

<sup>8</sup> Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things. <sup>9</sup> Do what you have learned and received and heard from me, and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

**From Pastor Paul: exhortations (4:2-9)**

- On Unity & ministry (4:2-3)
- On Joy & anxiety (4:4-7)
- **On Obedience & peace (4:8-9)**

**Pastor Paul: Personal reflections (4:10-18)**

- On need & contentment: Paul's testimony (4:10-14)
- On appreciation & Partnership: Paul's gratitude (4:15-18)

## HOW TO PRAY IN TOUGH TIMES: Last week (4:4-7)

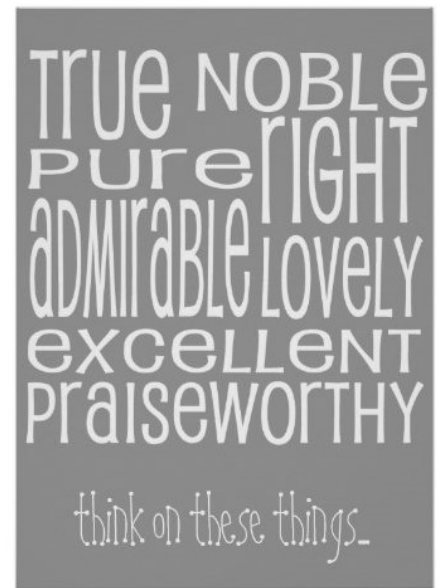
## HOW TO THINK IN TOUGH TIMES (4:8)

**Dwell on the right things.** these things: **Dwell** means to calculate or consider something. It calls for a focused consideration (“reckon”). **True** (*alethes*) speaks of what aligns with reality. For Paul, truth is found in God and inviolable. Suppressing it is the ultimate mark of fallenness ([Rom. 1:18](#), 25). Things that are **honorable** (*semna*) are serious matters of consequence. Sometimes the verb is used to translate the OT word “fear” in the phrase “fear of the Lord.” In secular Greek it describes an external act to earn favor with a god, so it is not often used in the OT. But there is a large cluster of related words that speak of piety and reverence. It is used of “respectable” in the Pastoral qualifications in 1 Tim. 3. The word **just** (*dikaia*) is a plural neuter...things that are just. In Paul, the word indicates an element of “righteous” and not just the “justice” of Greek philosophy. **Pure** (*hagna*) is a Greek term that refers to whatever is not tainted by evil. Was used of cultic purity first, then generally of moral uprightness. **Lovely** (*prospBILE*) means what is pleasing or agreeable, causing pleasure (“things we love”). Used of things or of persons. It is a broad term of what is pleasing to other people. It could refer to another person or to a beautiful thing, like a symphony. All these things should be **commendable** (*euphema*), “well spoken” or of good report.

**Shoot for the right things:** In summary, we look to focus on things of **moral excellence** (*arete*). This is the primary Greek word for virtue (we speak of Aretaic ethics, from this word). It is sometimes translated “goodness.” We are to focus on things that are **praiseworthy** (*epainos*). This word is used of both God and men.

## HOW TO LIVE IN TOUGH TIMES (4:9)

**The Categories.** The second command form in the passage is Paul’s call for believers to **do what** they had **learned and received** from Paul and others. Paul was using language of Hebrew learning culture where a disciple (learner) would **receive** instruction (Paul uses the “received” language often. See 1 Cor. 11:23; Gal. 1:9, 12; 1 Th. 2:13, 4:1; Col. 2:6). So they were to follow what had been taught, and also what they had both **heard and seen** in Paul’s example. Paul was hardly being arrogant here. There was not yet a completed Scripture, and Apostolic modeling was an essential part of demonstrating the Christian life being spoken of by its leaders.



**The Promise:** Paul uses the phrase **the God of peace** a number of times, usually at the beginning or the end of one of his letters. *Shalom*, or **peace**, is an important Hebraic concept. It is an important one to a people whose history was so colored by suffering and strife. Real *shalom* only comes from God. But constant negativity can darken out the peace that should be normative in the believer’s life (Psa. 29:11). Still, unless we fight the process by our own focusing on what is negative, the God of peace **will be with** us. The principle of replacement factors in here...we should replace tendencies toward negativity with a disciplined focus on what is **good and praiseworthy**. For the Christian this is more than positive thinking. It is **dwelling** on the good things God gives and does in our lives. The content of our positivity is not an uncritical or baseless optimism, but an intentional focus on what is real and good in our God.

