

How to Be a Good Roman

- ◆ Roman citizenship carried with it certain rights and expectations
 - ◆ Citizens were expected to be *virtuous*
 - ◆ Defines *good* or *manly*
 - ◆ *Citizenship*: how one conducted himself

Why Are We Talking About This?

- ◆ The Apostle Paul was a Roman citizen
- ◆ He took the gospel to a Roman colony
- ◆ He wrote a letter to that Roman colony
 - ◆ “Conduct your citizenship in a manner worthy of the gospel” (Phil. 1:27)
 - ◆ “Our citizenship is in heaven” (3:20)

Thinking and Acting Like Citizens of Heaven

Philippians 4:8-9

Whatever is True

- ◆ *Conformed to the nature of reality*
- ◆ Accurately describing the way things really are (John 19:35; 21:24)
- ◆ Eternal principles of morality (e.g. – *respect*): revealed in creation (Rom. 1:24-25) and conscience (Rom. 2:1-16)

Whatever is True

- ◆ Expression or reflections of God's character/nature
- ◆ Recognized and idealized by *wisdom*
 - ◆ Romans borrowed from the Greek thinkers/philosophers

Whatever is True

- ◆ Roman Virtues: friendliness, tenacity, perseverance, dignity, discipline, gravity, frugality, industriousness, justice, duty, prudence, self-control, truthfulness, ...
- ◆ Modeled by Christ Himself

Whatever is Honest

- ◆ *Worthy of or inspiring reverence, drawing respect, venerable*
- ◆ Used of certain Greek gods
- ◆ Holding to the highest principles/ideals
- ◆ Translated as *dignified* (1 Tim. 3:8, 11; Titus 2:2)

Whatever is Right

- ◆ *Conforming to the rules and regulations of what is considered right and just*
- ◆ God (Ps. 33:5; 89:14; 97:2)
- ◆ Abraham (Gen. 18:19); David (2 Sam. 8:15)

Whatever is Right

- ◆ “How blessed are those who keep justice,
Who practice righteousness at all times!”
(Ps. 106:3)
- ◆ “To do righteousness and justice is
desired by the Lord more than sacrifice.”
(Prov. 21:3; cf. 1:2-3; 8:20)

Whatever is Pure

- ◆ *Unmixed, untainted, unstained, chaste*
- ◆ No hint of evil or worldliness
 - ◆ God: 1 John 3:3; cf. Hab. 1:13
 - ◆ Us: 1 Tim. 5:22; Titus 2:5

The Pulpit Commentary

“We are to have God’s own love for that which makes and keeps us pure, and his own abhorrence and loathing of sin as that which defiles.”

Whatever is Lovely

- ◆ *Things that are worthy of love; things that befriend; beautiful expressions*
- ◆ Actions that endear us to God and one another
 - ◆ Example: God *demonstrated* His love for us (Rom. 5:8)

Whatever is of Good Repute

- ◆ Things that *sound good*
 - ◆ A *good* name or reputation
- ◆ *Virtuous, noble, above the norm*
 - ◆ Courtesy, justice, respect, humility, ...

If There is Any Excellence

- ◆ 1 Pet. 2:9

- ◆ Praises, virtues, glorious deeds, etc.

- ◆ 2 Pet. 1:3

- ◆ Glory, goodness, virtue, worthiness, etc.

- ◆ 2 Pet. 1:5

- ◆ Moral excellence, virtue, goodness, etc.

If There is Any Excellence

- ◆ Non-Christian term
- ◆ Paul: “If there is anything virtuous—even from your old value systems...”
 - ◆ Civics, philosophy, chivalry, etc.
 - ◆ Whatever is in line with God’s character

If Anything Worthy of Praise

- ◆ *Commendation or acclaim associated with moral excellence*
- ◆ Non-Christian term
- ◆ Paul: “If there is anything held in high regard among men as moral...”

Dwell on These Things

- ◆ *To put together with one's mind, reckon, reason, using one's mind to come to the right conclusion (see 3:13)*
- ◆ *Tense: Present Active Imperative*
 - ◆ *"You, Do this now!"*

The Pulpit Commentary

“The apostle implies that we have the power of governing our thoughts, and so are responsible for them. If the thoughts are ordered well, the outward life will follow.”

Dwell on These Things

- ◆ In other words, make yourself think along these lines, according to these patterns
- ◆ All of these morals and virtues are to *infect* and *impact* your decision-making process (see 1:9-11)
- ◆ Renew your mind (Rom. 12:2)

The Things

- ◆ “...dwell on these things, which things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me...”
- ◆ This was not new information (see 3:1)
 - ◆ *Safeguard: security from peril*

Learned and Received

- ◆ *Learned* emphasizes the action of the pupil: it wasn't just taught, they learned it
- ◆ *Received* implies *acceptance, possession, taking ownership* (John 1:11, Cor. 15:1, 3)
- ◆ Both imply formal instruction

Heard and Seen in Me

- ◆ Paul lived what he taught, and called others to live what he lived and taught
 - ◆ 3:17 (1 Cor. 4:6; 11:1; 1 Thess. 1:6)
 - ◆ What if we are not following his example? (3:18-19)

Spiros Zodhiates

“Christian behavior is not an automatic result of salvation; it is learned by conscious practice and imitation, by conforming to His Word.”

Practice These Things

◆ *To do repeatedly or habitually*

◆ Acts 26:20; 2 Cor. 5:10

◆ *These things* refers to *which things* which refers to the things in verse 8

◆ Bottom Line: Appropriate and Implement

And The God of Peace Will Be With You

- ◆ Comforting or conditional?

- ◆ Should *And* be *And then*?

- ◆ Context: 4:6-7

- ◆ “But He is intimate with the upright”
(Prov. 3:32b; John 14:21-24)

Yeah, but...

- ◆ “Isn’t this just self-effort?”
 - ◆ No, it is responding to God in faith
 - ◆ The Holy Spirit is telling us to do it; we need to walk according to what He says
 - ◆ The Holy Spirit empowers us to actually do it

Why?



Why?

- ◆ This is part of seeking and pleasing Him (cf. Heb. 11:5-6)
- ◆ Not everyone who is living God's way is seeking Him, but everyone who is seeking Him lives His way

So What?

- ◆ Fill your mind with the things that God values: truth, character qualities, virtues
 - ◆ Learn from biblical characters
 - ◆ Study ethics / morality
- ◆ Look for opportunities to put them into practice