



Series: ðWholesome Thinkingö

Study #2

The Context Of Wholesome Thinking

“Finally, brethren . . . think on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

I read an explanation regarding a broadcast in which the reporter had only given part of a story. Because the aired segment was not heard in the context of the entire account, many questions were raised and answers were demanded. Actually, the report was the first of several segments, segments that would eventually reveal the whole story. The mix-up shows the importance of understanding a story in its proper context.

When studying scriptural verses, it is important to study them in the light of the context. Each verse (other than the first and last verse of the Bible) is preceded by and followed by other verses. The message in these verses leads up to and extends the emphasis of the particular verse that is being studied. No single verse can be separated from the verses that surround it. It must be examined in the light of its context.

In all reality, the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is the greater context. Then, book by book, the sixty-six books of the Bible become the closer context. The chapters and the verses form even a more intimate context. So, in the context of the whole Bible, in the context of the book of Philippians, and, particularly, in the context of Philippians, Chapter 4, we approach the matter of wholesome thinking.

Wholesome thinking is only possible in the context of being “in” Christ! The words ðin the Lordö are found three times in the first four verses of this chapter (see 4:1, 2, 4). We know by what is stated in other epistles, and by the first verse of this epistle, the words ðin Christö represent the exalted position of all believers (see Phil. 1:1). In that light, the instructions in verse 8 are for them and only for them. Yes, the context of proper thinking is ðinö Christ.

Wholesome thinking is only possible in the context of living “through” Christ! While it is true that Christians are to keep, or guard, their hearts, it is mere fantasy for them to imagine that they can do this in themselves, or in their own strength. The hearts and minds of saints can only be guarded ðthrough Christ Jesusö (4:7). Yet, in their weakest moments, believers can claim His enablement. Thus, the Apostle declared, ðI can do all things through Christ Which strengtheneth meö (4:13).

Wholesome thinking is only possible in the context of serving “by” Christ! As Paul assessed the service and sacrificial giving of the church of Philippi, he wrote, ðBut my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesusö (4:19). Knowing then that the Lord Jesus is our sphere, that the Lord Jesus is our strength, and that the Lord Jesus is our supply, let us look to Him in the process of wholesome thinking.

