



**SERIES: Philippians (May / June) “Finding Joy in the Journey”**

**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Thursday, June 24, 2021**

**Scripture: Philippians 4:9**

**NC0185**

**TITLE: Practice Makes Perfect**

If you want a good laugh, go golfing with me. I love golfing, but I’m pretty bad at it. The issue is, I don’t practice. I don’t go golfing enough to create a habit of good driving, chipping, and putting. Practice is the key. But there’s another piece to good golfing; it’s knowing how to stand – how to grip the handles – how to swing the clubs. It’s that combination of thinking and practice.

Well, this thinking and practice aren’t just true for golf. It’s true for all areas of life. This is what Paul had to say about it in Philippians 4:9 (ESV).

*What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*

Paul has just talked about the importance of controlling and feeding our minds, so our emotions and lives will produce a certain posture and makeup. That’s why Paul says, here in verse 9, those things *you have learned and received*. He’s recognizing the importance of the connection between our thinking and our behaviors, or the practice in life.

Friend and behaviorist, Dr. Michael Frisina, wrote in his book, *Are You Ready to Change?* the connection between our thinking, our beliefs, and our behaviors. Frisina rightly concludes that what we focus on, or think about, drives our beliefs. We think we can do something, or get away with something; it drives the corresponding belief. Think enough about mowing the lawn; you’ll soon believe you can and should. Think enough about sinning; you’ll believe you can and should. So what follows is your behavior. You thought it. You believe it. Therefore, you do it.

That’s why Paul says, think on or focus on what I just said. Then, practice these things. The reason they refer to a doctor’s business as a medical practice, is that he is in the routine of practicing or executing those functions. There is repetition and habit in their jobs. The same goes for our personal lives - what we focus on. As Paul said, focus on what is true, pure, and honorable. This will drive our beliefs and behavior. When we do this, we will experience God’s peace, which we need each and every day.

So here’s my challenge for you today: Practice what you’ve learned about God and godly living. We here at Back to the Bible believe that Scripture engagement is the ticket to spiritual fitness. When we engage or read, reflect, and respond to God’s living Word, the practice or habits follow.

So what is one thing you will do to practice righteous living? Identify, share it in the comments below, and do it. When we think and practice, we will show the church and the world Christ is real and active today. When this happens, Christ wins the day.