

# GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

## 20 – “Whatever”

11/19 @6:30

Grace Group at  
3513 Northpointe Dr

11/21 @6:00

Grace Group at  
2070 Corley Dr

11/21 @6:30

Grace Group at  
1710 Mariposa Dr

**ICE BREAKER:** Do you have a “life verse”? If so, what is it?

**REVIEW:** Was there anything covered or said on Sunday that you had any questions or comments about?

**READ:** Philippians 4:8

As we started the fourth chapter of the book of Philippians I told someone that we are officially in the portion of Philippians that makes it everyone's favorite book. Really this last portion of the book is the “greatest hits” of this letter, and there are verses that we are all pretty familiar with. Last week it was “rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice.” Next week we will see “I can do all things...” take center stage. And here, this verse is one that most of us have heard. But with that we also often don't actually listen to it (not *quite* as bad as Philippians 4:13... but that fight is for later!). So today I would like to focus on what things we should think on, hopefully avoiding both legalism and licentiousness.

To help us think through how to use these verses, I would like to use an example that is relatively NON-controversial, to help us learn principles to later apply to many other things. So with that, let's *try* and use Philippians 4:8 to answer the following question: should christians listen to secular music?

First the legalistic answer: NO! Let's just run a quick test. Is it true? Well Jesus says in the high priestly prayer: “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.” (John 17:17). So if it is not God's words, it is not true. Is it Honorable? Well we should honor godly biblical principles and thoughts, which the music of the world certainly does not. Is it just? Well only God is truly just, and so music that is set against him probably does not meet that standard. Is it pure? Well, usually not when all they seem to sing about is “Sex, drugs and Rock and roll”. Is it... I think you get the point. Some people answer this by saying that the “whatever” in this verse is a universal catch all, and if something does not meet the standards perfectly we should completely abstain. But there is a (pretty big) problem here. We would never be able to think about anything! This would be an impossibly high standard if all we could ever think on were things that were perfectly true, honorable, just, pure (note here... anything that has been made by human hands is tainted by the effects of sin, so this one is going to rule a LOT of things out!), etc. So this is probably NOT how we should interpret this verse.

So then the licentious answer (note: I really just wanted two words that begin with the letter “l”... this just means “a lack of legal or moral restraints”): OF COURSE! Let's just run a quick test. Is it true? Well, they are speaking the truth of “sin that is fun for a season but whose end is destruction” (see Heb 11:25 and Philippians 3:19). Is it honorable? Well, these talented musicians have put much into their craft, and we can honor that for sure. Is it lovely? Well it *sounds* lovely, at least to me! Is there *any* excellence? Well, again we can listen to it and say “that is an excellent song”, even if the message and heart of it are more... questionable, to put it nicely. Here the “whatever” is much more inclusive to say that if anything has just a little of any of these traits it is something we should think on. But I hope you are seeing the problem here too... This means there are pretty much NO bounds on what we can or should think of. So this again is probably NOT how we should interpret this verse. So how do we move forward?

Well, here is one of those cases where looking and trying to be too specific in each and every word can backfire, and instead we should take a step back and think: what are the principles that Paul is teaching us here? And I think it is less of a universal principle that we apply *cate blanche* to any situation and rather a thought that guides us. So can christians listen to secular music? I think the Philippians 4:8 answer is: IT DEPENDS! At this moment and at this time, what are you thinking about? Is it truth and beauty and excellence or is it rather something that does not live up to that standard? In this way we see it less as a measure of what is OUTSIDE of you and more of a measure of your heart.

### DISCUSS:

1. Does using this verse as a measure of your heart make it harder or easier to apply? Why?
2. What are some other situations that we should think through in this way (further than “should christians listen to secular music”)?
3. How can we guard our hearts such that the things that we are thinking on live up to this standard?