

# The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Woman of Grace:

## Discreet: Choosing a God-Controlled Mind In a Godless World Titus 2:4b

In Titus 2, the first word of v.5 calls each of us to pay attention to our own, personal, spiritual mental health, for God's sake.

There are only two mental health providers in the Universe:

- the first One says that He came to give Life that is Abundant; and
- the other one came only to kill, steal, and destroy.

At salvation we go from the destroyer's control to Christ Jesus' life that is endless and abundant. However, we still live in fallen human bodies, in a cursed and sinful world.

Often unsaved unbelievers have no idea who is controlling their minds as they head to destruction; they do not realize that sin **always** pays everyone back with boredom, guilt, shame, loneliness, confusion, emptiness, loss of purpose, and finally death in the form of conscious, endless, punishment in Hell.

Equally tragic is the reality that many saved believers do not focus on the One who wants to control their minds, and thus they do not obey what God's Word tells them to do to avoid the consequences of sin that are in effect even as a believer. Sin **always** pays us believers back with boredom, guilt, shame, loneliness, confusion, emptiness, loss of purpose, and most terribly—the loss of rewards.

Because of those truths, Paul was led by the Spirit of God to write the words of Titus to every believer that would ever live. God's Word the Bible declares that:

### **God Desires we Maintain Our Spiritual Mental Health**

God is vitally concerned about your mind. He wants you and me to stay in tip-top spiritual health. Our spiritual and mental health are vitally linked. Our minds are the subject of many verses of the Bible.

Our minds are the gateway into the spiritual world and most of those verses challenge us to consider what choices we are making for the health of our minds. Often we fail to realize how deeply we impact our mental health by our personal choices.

Please open to that first word I am referring to in Titus 2:5. Of all the words designating the spiritual qualities God desires in us, this may be the most timely of all.

Paul explains to every believer in Titus 2 that we desperately need:

## **God-Controlled Minds**

The Greek word God inspires Paul to write is **sophron** translated in the New Testament as “discreet, sensible, or self-controlled”. The meaning of this word is vital to our spiritual lives.

The Greeks derived it from two words, which mean literally **sos** (“healthy or sound”) and **phren** (“mind”). God wants all of His children to have healthy minds. Mental health is vital to our spiritual lives. All of our communication with God is spiritual (through our mind and spirit) and not physical.

So the communications pathway, the spiritual supply line and everything that has to do with God flows through our regenerated minds. This word discreet, or self-controlled, or sensible (however your Bible renders **sophron**), means: *to keep one’s mind safe and sound*.

In Titus 2:5 this word describes a woman **with a mind surrendered to God’s control**.

Her mind is surrendered to God’s gracious sanctifying power; and she learns to govern every instinct and passion until each has its proper place and no more.

This safe and healthy mind is the only universal character quality of the 24 qualities we find listed in Titus 2:2-12.

In the space of just six verses here in Titus 2, Paul declares this quality God desires is stated as part of the life of godly older women (2:4), godly younger women (2:5), godly older men (2:2), godly younger men (2:5), Biblical elders (1:8), and—to every Spirit-filled and Spirit-led believer (Titus 2:12; c.f. Romans 12:3).

So as we look at this word from God, it is first of all in context to be the personal life-choice for younger women; and secondly, it is to be the curriculum on the mind of godly older women as they spend time nurturing younger women; and thirdly it is for every man in the church whether in a leadership role or not, and finally to every redeemed man, woman, and child—because it is universally applied to every believer in Christ’s church.

As we delve into this verse, God’s Word makes one thing perfectly clear: God wants your mind under His control.

More than anything else God wants to saturate, influence, fill, direct, dominate and control your mind.

**If God has your mind - He has your body,**

**If God has your mind** - He has your emotions,  
**If God has your mind** - He has your appetites,  
**If God has your mind** - He has your time,  
**If God has your mind** - He has your money . . .

Do you see the point? The one who gets your mind gets it all. Your mind is the prize!

## **God Desires Healthy Minds**

The immensity of the impact on our lives of our mental health is hard to understate. The constant dangers to our mental health, and the impact that the spiritual world can have on that health, is largely unknown by most believers.

The US Government National Institute of Mental Health states that 26% of American adults have some form of mental illness in 2010 (see tables at the end of this message). The LA Times this week said that Californians surveyed said that 20% of them suffered from mental health needs. So we live in a world with epidemic levels of mental health needs.

God wants to help you to keep your mind healthy; and He warns of the dangers of allowing ourselves to drift into self-induced mental illnesses.

Just as there are diseases and sicknesses that can be prevented by simple antiseptic choices, proper hygiene, and safe handling of pathogens in the physical world: there are unsanitary, unhealthy, and dangerous spiritual choices that humans can make that can rob them by their own actions, of mental health.

Those who have unhealthy or sick minds spiritually are called by various terms in God's Word: "anxious minds" (Luke 12:29); "debased minds" (Romans 1:28); "blinded minds" (II Cor. 3:14); "corrupted minds" (II Cor. 11:3); "earthly minds" (Phil. 3:19); and "double-minded" (James 1:8; 4:8).

The battle is for our minds. Satan is seeking to steal the minds of God's children. Your mind is the key to knowing God. Only a mind stayed on the Lord can have perfect peace. A mind devoted to Christ is the road to God's plan for your life!

Most often mental health is only thought of in a negative way, like someone who has phobias, paranoia and mood swings, we say they have some form of mental illness (or that they lack mental health).

But God was way ahead of modern psychiatric medicine when He instructed that Christ's Church cultivate habits that lead to mental health. The Bible's terms we pass over without really considering the implications are: "sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7); "guarded mind" (Phil. 4:7); "right mind" (Mark 5:15); "stayed mind" (Col. 3:2); "girded mind" (I Peter 1:13); a "renewed mind" (Romans 12:2); and a "spiritual mind" (Romans 8:6). All of these express that:

God wants your mind given to the pursuit of His Kingdom, His Word, and His Christ!

## God's Mental Health Guide

Please turn now to the mental health prescription God gave to each of us, Colossians 3, and stand as we listen to His prescription:

Colossians 3 (New King James Version)

1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 **Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.** 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. [Step # 1 Focus on God]

5 Therefore **put to death your members which are on the earth:** fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them; 8 But now **you yourselves are to put off all these:** anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, [Step # 2 Repent of all known Sin]

10 and have **put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,** 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. [Step # 3 Surrender Obediently to God's Plans]

12 **Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on** tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And **let the peace of God rule in your hearts,** to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly** in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. 18 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. 20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. 22 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the

Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

## **Pray**

Take a moment to note in your Bibles God's three steps to spiritual mental health:

1. **Focus on God** (Colossians 3:1-3)
2. **Repent of all known sin** (Colossians 3:4-9)
3. **Surrender Obediently to God's Plans** (Colossians 3:10-25)

We have now come to the universal element for every believer—as described and prescribed by God—and that is a God-controlled mind, a Word-saturated mind, a Christ-seeking mind. So we can confidently say that:

## **We Must Have God-Controlled Minds**

The Holy Spirit of the Infinite and Unchanging God of the Universe breathed out through Paul a list of life-choices, godly character traits, grace-energized actions that please God and are useful to Him.

Do you think very often about what type of diet, rest, care, and exercise leads to mental health?

A further application of this call to a God-Controlled Mind would be: choosing to think about life through God's filter, the Philippians 4:8 grid.

The healthy spiritual mind eats and exercises with God's mental diet and avoids whatever would contaminate or pollute that mind. The only things we are to think deeply upon, fill our minds with, and make a regular diet are things that are:

Philippians 4:8 (NKJV) Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate (NAS "dwell"; ESV "think") on these things.

Sadly it seems that Satan has caught many believers off guard. While they carefully avoid many obvious doctrinal dangers, perhaps the most powerful mind-robber has been overlooked.

## **Beware of Mind-Polluters**

Back in Haslett Junior High School in the 1960's we had a teacher who was very much against smoking. He described our lungs as delicate, wet pure white toilet paper that

held every contaminate we breathed in. Then he showed us the contents of cigarette smoke. None of us wanted black, filthy, poisonous tar on our delicate white tissues of our lungs.

But our minds are so much more delicate, and infinitely more susceptible to contaminants. Satan is neutralizing the power of so many godly minds, little-by-little every day through the onslaught of the polluted media that overflows us like a raging flooded river.

Either we choose to have a God-controlled mind or a World-controlled mind. Either we give in to a Media-saturated mind or pursue a Word-saturated mind. That was the challenge that the Lord directed Paul to place before the church at Crete in this letter to Titus, and to all of us since.

Our world spends most of their time seeing the world through the ungodly eyes of our media. Today more and more believers are finding their worldview, their values, and their guidance for life's decisions from TV, secular books, unsaved professionals, secular magazines, unbiblical commercials, and the unknown originations of much material on the web.

Sadly, many believers follow secular and ungodly guidance and direction more than God and His Word. What you choose for your mind today has consequences.

- If you choose to be entertained by godlessness--it will callous you;
- If you choose to be entertained by sensuality--it will defile you;
- If you choose to be entertained by violence--it will desensitize you;
- If you choose to be entertained by evil--it will distance you;
- If you choose to be entertained by worldliness--it will discourage you;
- If you choose to be entertained by Satan's mind--you will forfeit the blessings of having the mind of Christ.

Let's be blunt: don't say you are committed to Christ unless you are disciplining your mind for the active pursuit of godliness!

The battle is for our minds. Satan is seeking to steal the minds of God's children. How do we stay healthy spiritually? Gs gives us the:

## **Steps to the Healthy Spiritual Mind Christ Seeks**

Let's look at the choices Paul taught we should make to have minds that pointed to our Holy God.

1. **Healthy Spiritual Minds make the choice to surrender to Christ's control daily.** Romans 12:1-2 I beseech ("appeal" ESV/"urge" NAS) you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable* ("spiritual worship" ESV) service. <sup>2</sup> And

do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (NKJV)

***Have you started a daily renewal of your surrender? For your own spiritual health, He desires you to do so today!***

2. **Healthy Spiritual Minds make the choice to focus upon the Glory of God.** I Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? <sup>20</sup> For you were bought at a price; **therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.**

***Have you started feeling the weight of God's glory upon every part of your life? For your own spiritual health, He desires you to do so today!***

3. **Healthy Minds choose to resist evil influences:** *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them* (Ephesians 5:11).

***Do you seek to turn away from all evil influences? For your own spiritual health, He desires you to do so today!***

Our challenge this morning is: will we do our part to cultivate spiritual mental health?

We must decide this morning to break with the crowd of believers who do not focus on the One who wants to control their minds.

We must choose to obey what God's Word tells us to do, and avoid the consequences of sin even as a believer.

Our mental health is affected by sin, because sin **always** pays even believers back with boredom, guilt, shame, loneliness, confusion, emptiness, loss of purpose, and most terribly—the loss of rewards.

Surrender to Christ's control daily; and choose to focus upon God's glory all day long; and constantly resist evil influences by God's grace TODAY!

## **Fact File: The World Feels the Effect of a Lack of Mental Health**

**“One in five Californians say they need mental health care”**<sup>1</sup> (Shari Roan, LA Times, July 28, 2010): Almost 5 million California adults say they could use help with a mental or emotional problem, according to a survey released Wednesday by researchers at UCLA. About 1 million of them meet the criteria for "serious psychological distress."

"The burden of mental illness on health and productivity in the United States and throughout the world has long been profoundly underestimated. Data developed by the massive Global Burden of Disease study, conducted by the World Health Organization, the World Bank, and Harvard University, reveal that mental illness, including suicide, ranks second in the burden of disease in established market economies, such as the United States ... Nearly two-thirds of all people with diagnosable mental disorders do not seek treatment ... When people understand that mental disorders are not the result of moral failings or limited will power, but are legitimate illnesses that are responsive to specific treatments, much of the negative stereotyping may dissipate." Mental Health: A Report from the Surgeon General<sup>2</sup>

#### Latest Research On Psychiatric Disorders

1. Acute Stress Disorder,
2. Adjustment Disorder,
3. Agoraphobia,
4. Alcohol Dependence or Alcoholism,
5. Alzheimer Disease or Dementia,
6. Amphetamine Dependence,
7. Anorexia Nervosa,
8. Antisocial Personality Disorder,
9. Asperger Syndrome or Disorder,
10. Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder,
11. Autism or Autistic Disorder ,
12. Avoidant Personality Disorder
13. Bipolar Disorder/ Cyclothymic Disorder
14. Borderline Personality Disorder,
15. Brief Psychotic Disorder,
16. Bulimia Nervosa
17. Cannabis Dependence,
18. Cocaine Dependence,
19. Conduct Disorder,
20. Delirium,
21. Delusional Disorder,
22. Dementia,
23. Dementia Associated With Alcoholism or Alcoholic Dementia,
24. Dependent Personality Disorder,
25. Dysthymic Disorder
26. Generalized Anxiety Disorder
27. Hallucinogen Dependence,
28. Histrionic Personality Disorder
29. Inhalant Dependence
30. Major Depressive Disorder,
31. Narcissistic Personality Disorder,
32. Nicotine Dependence
33. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder ,
34. Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder,
35. Oppositional Defiant Disorder
36. Panic Disorder,
37. Paranoid Personality Disorder,
38. Phencyclidine Dependence,
39. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
40. Schizoaffective Disorder,
41. Schizoid Personality Disorder,
42. Schizophreniform Disorder,
43. Schizotypal Personality Disorder,

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<sup>1</sup> [latimes.com/news/health/boostershots/la-heb-mentalhealth-20100728,0,2495137.story](http://latimes.com/news/health/boostershots/la-heb-mentalhealth-20100728,0,2495137.story)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.mentalhealth.com/>

44. Schizophrenia,
45. Sedative Dependence,
46. Separation Anxiety Disorder,
47. Shared Psychotic Disorder,
48. Social Phobia,
49. Specific Phobia
50. Tourette's Disorder

**The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)<sup>3</sup> lists the following as the disorders of 2010:** Mental Disorders in America: an estimated 26.2 percent of Americans ages 18 and older — about one in four adults — suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. In the U.S., mental disorders are diagnosed based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition (DSM-IV).

**Mood disorders (10 % of adults):** include major depressive disorder, dysthymic disorder, and bipolar disorder.

1. Major Depressive Disorder (7 % of all adults): is the leading cause of disability in the U.S. for ages 15-44, and is more prevalent in women than in men.<sup>6</sup>
2. Dysthymic Disorder (1 1/2 % adults): symptoms of dysthymic disorder (chronic, mild depression) must persist for at least two years in adults (one year in children) to meet criteria for the diagnosis.
3. Bipolar Disorder (3 % of all adults)

**Suicide** (1/10 % of all people)

**Schizophrenia** (1 % of all adults)

**Anxiety Disorders (18 % of adults):** include panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and phobias (social phobia, agoraphobia, and specific phobia).

1. Panic Disorder (3 % of all adults)
2. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (1 % of all adults have OCD)
3. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder ( 3 1/2 % of all adults have PTSD): war veterans, and others after violent personal assaults such as rape, mugging, or domestic violence; terrorism; natural or human-caused disasters; and accidents.
4. Generalized Anxiety Disorder (3% of all adults have GAD)
5. Social Phobia (7% of all adults):
6. Agoraphobia (1% of all adults): involves intense fear and anxiety of any place or situation where escape might be difficult, leading to avoidance of situations such as being alone outside of the home; traveling in a car, bus, or airplane; or being in a crowded area.
7. Specific phobia (9% of all adults): involves marked and persistent fear and avoidance of a specific object or situation.

**Eating Disorders:** three main types of eating disorders are anorexia nervosa (1%), bulimia nervosa (1%), and binge-eating disorder (3%).

**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder** (common in children; 4 % of adults have ADHD)

**Autism:** is part of a group of disorders called autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), also known as pervasive developmental disorders. ASDs range in severity, with autism being the most debilitating form while other disorders, such as Asperger syndrome, produce milder symptoms. (At present 1% of all 8 year olds per CDC)

**Personality Disorders** (10% of Americans 18 and over): represent "an enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the expectations of the culture of the individual who exhibits it." Several more common personality disorders include:

1. **Antisocial Personality Disorder (1% adult pop.):** is characterized by an individual's disregard for social rules and cultural norms, impulsive behavior, and indifference to the rights and feelings of others.
2. **Avoidant Personality Disorder (5% of adult population):** is characterized by extreme social inhibition, sensitivity to negative evaluation, and feelings of inadequacy. Individuals with avoidant personality disorder frequently avoid social interaction for fear of being ridiculed, humiliated, or disliked.
3. **Borderline Personality Disorder** (1.6 % of adults have BPD): is defined by the DSM-IV as "a pervasive pattern of instability of interpersonal relationships, self-image and affects, as well as marked impulsivity, beginning by early

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-numbers-count-mental-disorders-in-america/index.shtml>

For Further Application to the first three points earlier:

4. **Healthy Minds choose to commit to a life of truth and kindness:** *“putting away lying”, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor”, “be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you (Ephesians 4:25, 32).*

***Are you committed to honesty and kindness? Are you willing to humbly forgive others—even when ill treated? For your own spiritual health, He desires you to do so today!***

5. **Healthy Minds choose to repent of my past:** *... But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks (Ephesians 5:3–4).*

***Have you repented of those old ways that grieve, displease, and quench the work of the Spirit in your life? For your own spiritual health, He desires you to do so today!***

6. **Healthy Spiritual Minds choose to follow Christ's calling:** *We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).*

***Have you truly comprehended what a special calling God has given to you? For your own spiritual health, He desires you to do so today!***

7. **Healthy Minds choose to practice the spiritual secret of putting off and putting on:** *Put off your former conduct [lifestyle], be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:22–24).*

***Have you learned their spiritual secret of putting off the old habits and putting on the new in Christ? Are you being renewed by getting God's Word deep within your heart? For your own spiritual health, He desires you to do so today!***

8. **Healthy Minds choose to release all my anger and hurt to God:** *“Be angry, and do not sin” ... nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor ... that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good .... And do not grieve the*

*Holy Spirit of God .... Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice (Ephesians 4:26–31).*

***Have you released your anger and pride to God? For your own spiritual health, He desires you to do so today!***

## APPENDIX: **Words that God Chose for Us**

That brings us back to the plan of God for your mind. When the Lord set out the description of the godly New Testament woman of grace He chose a word that deeply communicates His desire. That word is the Greek word **sophron**.

There are many ways to study the Bible: book studies, chapter studies, verse studies, subject and topic studies, background studies—but perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Bible studies are those that examine closely the individual words that God chose to use in His Book. That is what we will be doing this morning.

Because God's Word is the best commentary on God's Word join me for a study of this very uniquely Christian word. God used this word only to describe believers, and makes it a quality He wants to see in all believers.

The basic meaning of this word **sophron** in the New Testament (a Greek word here as an adjective) is being serious about spiritual things; living a disciplined life: which means self-controlled and not addicted to anything.

**Sophron** is part of a family of New Testament words that use the noun, verb, adverb, and adjective form of the very same word. Let's look at these words in the order they appear in the Greek vocabulary of the New Testament.

When Christ healed a demonized man those who saw him described him as being in a "right mind" (sophronouta # 4993 in Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35). That is the word Paul uses.

When Paul challenged Timothy about his fears, phobias, and anxieties he told him that God didn't prompt those wrong attitudes, rather God gave him a sound (same word sophronismou # 4995) in II Timothy 1:7.

### **1. God Wants You Serious About Spiritual Things**

This word (Strong's number 4998 **sophron**: of a sound mind, sane, in one's senses; curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate) is an adjective that occurs 4x in the New Testament:

- Titus 2:5 [younger women] **to be discreet**, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. NKJV
- Titus 2:2 that the older men be sober, reverent, **temperate**, sound in faith, in love, in patience; NKJV
- Titus 1:8 [an elder] but hospitable, a lover of what is good, **sober-minded**, just, holy, self-controlled, NKJV
- I Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, **sober-minded**, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; NKJV

## 2. God Wants You Restoring Others to Serious Spiritual Living

We find this same word as an action verb (4994 **sophronidzo** verb 1x) describing the need for the older, godly grace-energized women to exhort earnestly the younger women by “restoring them to their senses, so they moderate, control, curb their minds”. That is the sense of this word in--

Titus 2:4 that they **admonish** the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, NKJV

This same word is found as an adverb (4996 **sophronos** adverb 1x: ‘with sound mind, soberly, temperately, discreetly’) further down in this chapter.

Titus 2:12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should **live soberly**, righteously, and godly in the present age, NKJV

- God says that His grace-energizes us into being serious about spiritual things;
- His grace teaches us how to live a disciplined life: which means self-controlled and not addicted to anything;
- Believers energized by God’s grace are in control of their choices, seeking out God’s priorities;
- God wants us serious about life, temperate, and avoiding excesses;
- God’s grace gives us a clarity of thought that leads to an orderly life;
- His grace leads us to thinking through the Philippians 4:8 grid.

## 3. God Wants You Regaining a Confident Mind

Again we find this word in a noun form with another shade of meaning (4995 **sophronismos** noun/masc. 1x: ‘an admonishing or calling to soundness of mind, to moderation and self-control; self-control, moderation’) as Paul encourages Timothy his son in the faith. Timothy exhibited a problem many believers struggle with, he was timid and fearful. This verse was Paul’s strong encouragement to him in his struggle.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of **a sound mind**. NKJV

Even a casual reading of II Timothy 1:4-8 leads us to see that Timothy was fearful, timid, felt worthless even to the point of tears, and even struggled with being ‘ashamed’ of his ministry for the Lord.

Note that Paul does not harshly rebuke him, but gently reminds him of many things. He tells Timothy he has nothing to be ashamed of. He had a great upbringing though his father didn’t help, his mother and grandmother were godly (II Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15). Paul reminds Timothy of his special position as a choice servant of the Lord, personally trained (Acts 16:3) with a special gifting (II Timothy 1:6). In short Paul says there is no reason that Timothy should be timid and fearful—yet he was!

Timothy appears to have a life-long need for encouragement to be bold and go on serving the Lord. It is very possible that the stomach problems he struggled with (I Timothy 5:23) were directly tied to his emotional problems of a fearful and timid personality.

If you are a person that feels uncomfortable around people, if you draw back from people who reach out to you, if you feel inferior to others, and you are afraid of always saying the wrong thing so that people dislike you—then welcome to the club.

One of the greatest pastors and servants of the Lord of all time was so much like you. Timothy, son-in-the-faith to Paul, servant-of-the-Lord to the largest church of the New Testament world was just like you. Paul does not chastise him, scold him, rebuke him harshly, or say that he was unspiritual. Rather, Paul says give your mind back to Christ's control each time you start to fear.

The fear, the discomfort, the feelings of inferiority and shame that Timothy felt were just part of living inside a fallen body, with flesh-influenced minds and emotions. The solution was to make a conscious choice by faith to keep surrendering his mind back under Christ's control. Paul way saying—

- Timothy, God's grace can energize your mind to understand who you are in Christ;
- Timothy, His grace teaches your mind to live a disciplined life: which means self-controlled and not addicted to anything including fear and timidity.
- Timothy, believers energized by God's grace are in control of their choices, seeking out God's priorities which include fearing not.