**The Facet of Inner Happiness, No. 1 – BD16-01**

The Word of God always has one of two effects on those who hear it. 2 Corinthians 2:14-16 says, “Now thanks be unto God who always causes us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savior of His knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one we are the savor of death unto death and to the other the savor of life unto life, and who is sufficient for these things.”

So the Word of God this morning can be a life giving fragrance or it can be something that has upon it the smell of death or doom. This is the difference between positive and negative volition. This is the thought behind James 1:22 that says, “Be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

The Word of God is to be a mirror that reflects what we are. It is to rival us to be what God expects us to be. In this passage in James 1, He goes on to say that we are sometimes like people who look in the mirror, we see our natural face, we behold ourselves as we are, and we turn around and forget what we are. But when we look into the perfect law of liberty, and we continue in it, and we do not forget what we hear, then this man, the Word says, shall be blessed in his deed.

Now God expects from His pastor-teachers that they explain the Word of God in such a way that it acts as a mirror for His people. In 2 Corinthians 2:17 the apostle Paula and his associates could say, “For we are not as many who corrupt the Word of god, but as of sincerity (but as of God, in the sight of God), speak we in Christ. Negative volition, James 4:17 says, is sin.

So the Word of God is for us a mirror. It is to be presented in such a way that people can see themselves. Not to see themselves reflecting the personality that we all set forth in order to deal with each other, but to see ourselves in the true temperament that constitutes our real soul, as we are, as God sees us. Negative response to this mirror and what we see in this mirror is a very serious thing. The Word of God indicates to us that we are responsible and accountable for what we have learned and what we understand from the Word of God.

Luke 12:47 says, “And that servant who knew his lord’s will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whom much is given, of him shall be much required, and to whom men have committed much, of him will they ask for more.”

Now here’s a very sobering principal from the Word. This principal says that the more you know of the Word of God, the more accountable you are. For this reason we have cause to believe that even in hell itself there will be degrees of punishment, depending on what people knew, depending on the information that they had to guide them. And he who had much information to guide him will be held the more accountable.

So negative response to the Word of God is a serious matter. For this reason it is some respects a dangerous thing to attend a place where sound doctrine is put forth, if you go negative toward it. For that which could have been a fragrance of life has upon it the stench of doom.

Now we have been looking at how to be a spiritual mature Christian. We have seen that God has provided a pentagon of defense in our soul. This has certain facets. As we examine the scriptures, we find that there are about five basic sides to what a mature Christian is. He is grace-oriented. He operates on the fact that God is important. God is the one who makes things possible for us. It is not what we do for Him; it is what He does for us, and that’s grace. Another facet is that he has a mastery of the details of life. Everything he possesses, everything he has is viewed as just a detail. The main thing in his life is doctrine, the knowledge of God. He has a relaxed mental attitude. Mental attitude sins are dealt with. They are removed. They are confessed, so that his mind is at ease with God and man. He has a capacity to love because he has entered into doctrine.

Now I’m sorry to say that it seems that most Christians are not in a position in their response to the Word of God that they can develop very much spiritual maturity. I think the percentage is very very high on the side of Christians who do not come to spiritual maturity. They simply do not respond to the Word of God. They hear it, and they listen. They pay attention. They’re not opposed to it, but they simply do not enter into the Word of God in such a way that this structure can become a deep reality with them. In one way or another we rationalize that we have fractures in some of these facets within our own soul.

Today we’re going to begin looking at a fifth (facet). It seems rather appropriate here at this Christmas season—the facet of inner happiness. Everybody wants to be happy, and yet most people find that what they consider to be happiness goes in cycles. They’re happy, and they’re not happy. They go up and they go down. What would make you happy today? Are you happy today? Are you happy as a way of life? Or, are you happy in an up and down fashion? What would you say would make you happy today? Happiness is different things to different people.

I have before told you the story of the four friends who had gathered and were asking themselves to each explain what each felt happiness was, and they were of different nationalities. One was a Frenchman. They asked him what he thought happiness was. He said that happiness is a loaf of bread, a bottle of wine, a piece of cheese, and love. Another fellow was a German. He said that happiness is sauerkraut, schnitzel, and all that good stuff for my stomach. Then another fellow as an Englishman. He said that happiness is a little cabin on the lake with my dog by the fireplace, and my pipe, with the sunset sinking in the lake. The last man was a Russian. He said that happiness is when he was sitting at home, he has put the children to bed, he and his wife go to bed, the house is quiet, and everyone is asleep. Suddenly there is a knock on the door. He jumps out of bed and answers the door. There’s the secret police and they say, “Are you Ivan Ivanovich?” I say, “No, he lives upstairs.” That to me is happiness.

So happiness to different people is different things. But you notice that in all of those illustrations, there are circumstances, people, situations, and externals upon which happiness is based. Happiness is a widespread problem. There are people floating around trying everything under the sun from morning to get happy. Christmas time is a misery time for a lot of people. We are centering on how to make people happy. We are teaching people that to be happy at Christmas time is all these you’re going to get. All these externals you can experience—the Christmas tree, the carols, the snow, and the sleigh rides. All of these things make (you) jolly.

Christmas falls on Saturday this year, so next Sunday we are going to gather the day after Christmas. Now we’re going to have some of the most miserable people in all the world here in this auditorium. They got what they didn’t want. They got the wrong size. They got it but they know that they’re going to have to pay for it. Just on and on. They’re going to be the most miserable people in the world, next Sunday morning.

And yet when we look into the Word of God, we’re constantly confronted with the fact that God says, “It is my purpose for people to be happy.” What is the source of inner happiness? What does God mean by inner happiness? Well God has designed Christians to be live in a perfect stable condition of happiness. John 15:11 points that out to us when the Lord says, “These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full.” Human viewpoint says that happiness is something that you do. It’s something you seek, something you have, or it’s something you create. But people reach these goals and they’re still not happy. But, divine viewpoint says a total different thing. Divine viewpoint says that happiness is an inner matter of the soul, and that happiness finds us.

If you were to go out of here this morning and say, “Now I’m going to learn how to be happy,” you’re already doomed. Happiness, in God’s sense, is something that finds us. The Bible doesn’t use the “happiness” as such. Generally what it speaks about are the words “joy” and “gladness,” as the way you find them in the usual translations. The words “joy” and “gladness” refer to happiness. The word “happiness” itself in English comes from the word “happen,” a “happening.” It’s associated with something that happens. It’s related to some person, some thing, or some event. It’s defined as an emotion that comes to us because of a happening that pleases us.

The happiness that God has for us is more than an emotional response. When the Bible uses the words “joy” or the word “gladness,” it indicates that it’s speaking about a stabilized mental attitude toward God. It is a relationship of your thinking with God. Consequently, it’s not dependent upon a person, or a thing, or an event. Galatians 5:22 tell us that happiness, or joy, is part of the fruit of the spirit. There is no happiness whenever you are outside of that inner (temporal) circle of fellowship—fellowship which is based upon the Word which produces for us the ground for happiness. 1 John 1:3-4 says, “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that ye also may have fellowship, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, and these things write we unto you that your joy may be full.” All that God has written to us in the Bible in the form of doctrine is in order that our joy may be full.

So happiness is not a matter of something on the outside of us. It is something that is eternal. It is based upon our fellowship with God as we know about God through doctrine and through biblical principles.

If you’ll turn to Psalm 51, we have an example of this relationship to God which is essential to happiness, as illustrated in the experience of David. In Psalm 51 David had been guilty of a very grievous sin, and the first four verses declare the unhappiness within his soul. “Have mercy upon me, oh God, according to thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgression and my sin is ever before me. Against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight that thou mightiest be justified when thou speakest and be clear when thou judgest.”

In verse 8 he expresses the misery of his soul, “Make me hear joy and gladness that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.” Now David had also written the 32nd Psalm, the first verse of which says, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” So David knew that blessing was a matter of sin being covered. He knew it was a matter of sin being confessed. Therefore he understood, as demonstrated by Psalm 51, that if there was to be happiness in his experience, it had to be in that inner circle of fellowship where sin was confessed. Without it there could be no happiness. Verse 12 of Psalm 51 says, “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.” He hadn’t lost his salvation but he had lost his happiness. “…and uphold me with a willing spirit.” A spirit which is willing to make confession.

Now when you’re a new Christian you have a certain amount of happiness because you’re filled with the spirit at the point of salvation, but being happy is something that you have to develop. It doesn’t come automatically in the Christian life. It takes a habitual filling of the Holy Spirit by confession of known sins. It takes daily operating of that grace system by which God teaches you spiritual things. It takes breathing out full knowledge from your human spirit toward God and toward man. And it also takes developing all those other facets of your soul. Your happiness is going to be at a level dependent on the total maturity of your being.

So here’s the design that God has for happiness. God has perfect happiness. God was never unhappy. He was never unhappy in spite of Satan, in spite of man and the sin that has been brought into His creation. God knew from the beginning that this was going to pass. It did not disturb Him, and He was never unhappy over it, because the essence of God was going to solve the problem, and it was going to remove the problem of sin and was going to convert it into divine good.

So God’s plan is that you and I should share His perfect happiness, not only now, but forever. All of us have sinned but grace has made a way out. If we accept the solution that God has provided for our sin, we can share his mental attitude which we enter at the point of salvation. So all Christians are in the position, interestingly enough, to have a stable happy life. They have a quality which is not affected by circumstances, people, or things.

Yet many Christians never do enter this relationship. They have a wrong basis for the happiness that they seek. God know we would have trouble. Job 5:7 tells us we’re born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. God knew we would be tested. 1 Corinthians 10:13 tells us we’ll be tested, but not beyond what we can deal with. He knew we would have suffering (Romans 8:18). None of these are happy things, but all of these in themselves do help to build spiritual maturity. The very problems that we think would make us unhappy God uses to develop a stability of happiness in our soul. The more you have developed your spiritual maturity structure, the happier you will be.

The grace-oriented Christian doesn’t run around asking why things are happening to him. The grace-oriented Christian knows that Romans 8:28 is true, that all things are being brought together for divine good. So he doesn’t run around saying, “Why is this happening to me?” He knows why—because God is producing some divine good. A spiritually mature Christian doesn’t fall apart when he loses the details of life, because as Hebrews 13:5-6 tells us He will never leave us or forsake us. So whatever possession you have or whatever detail of life you may lose does not tear you apart.

The Christian who has a spiritual maturity does not resort to self-pity or mental attitude sins because he has a relaxed mental attitude. Nothing will destroy your happiness like mental attitude sins. The Christian knows who and what God is so he’s capable of loving Him and entering deeply into his relationship with God.

God’s happiness will stand up under all adverse conditions. Inner happiness is the kind of happiness that God speaks of, (meaning) no mental sins and no buildup of callouses on the soul. Happiness on the outside is going to enable you to enjoy all of the things that you possess, to express love, and to remain stable in adversity. It’ll protect you from disappointment over the details of life. How many people are unhappy because in some of the details of life, they have entered adversity? These are hard times economically that we live in. When people are having hard times economically, the church is usually the first to feel it. When the offerings are marginal, it’s reflecting the hard times of our economy and the demands upon people in the details of life that they pursue.

But Hebrews 13:5-6 says, “Let your manner of life be without covetousness. Be content with such things as you have for He hath said, ‘I will never leave thee or forsake thee,’ so that we may boldly say, ‘The Lord is my helper and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.’” It protects us from disappointment over the details of life. It protects us from disappointment over circumstances.

Philippians 4:11 says, “Not that I speak in respect of want for I have learned in whatever state I am in this to be content. I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound. Everywhere in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry; both to abound and to suffer need.” When we have inner happiness, circumstances are not going to disturb us. It protects us from disappointment over people.

Colossians 3:1 says, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, for Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, and set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.” … In our relationships with people, we often set our affections on things that are earthy, (or) on people, and people can wreck your happiness. If your happiness is dependent on your relationship to any human being, you are in trouble. I can tell you young people, you young adults something—that some of the people that you now feel are some of your best friends, you will in time discover that they are not such good friends of yours. Or at least they have phased out from being such comrades of yours.

When I was younger, my pastor, who was a major influence in my life, told me that. He said (that) these friendships have a way of cycling out. If your happiness is dependent on somebody; if your fun in life and your joy and your enjoyment of externals is because of somebody, you are destined for some troubles, because people change. People are motivated by things that are not always the best motivations in the world. And they who were once comrades with you will no longer be comrades with you. As a matter of fact, they’ll be (really) on the opposite side of the fence. You have to learn that if you’re going to experience God’s happiness, it’s not dependent upon people. This way nobody can get to you. Nobody can undermine. Nobody can strike. Nobody can bring distress.

Now, you’re aware of it. You’ll stand and you’ll watch, and you’ll observe what people do. Things will filter back to you as to what they’ve said. Their attitude will come through. But when there is inner stand and you’ll watch it. That’s all you’ll do. You’ll just stand and watch it, and you’ll be observing how God will deal with it. You’ll keep operating on what you know is right, but you’ll watch what God is going to do about it. That’s very important to learn when you’re talking about inner happiness. It keeps us relaxed. And it keeps the capacity for love going.

Now there is a means for inner happiness. Philippians 4:4 actually commands it. It says, “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, ‘Rejoice.’” Now God never commands us to do something that He doesn’t also give us the means to execute. How do we enter into inner happiness? Well just like we’ve been building up all the rest of this spiritual maturity structure, so in inner happiness, it begins with Bible doctrine. 1 Corinthians 2:16 says, “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.” Who has known the mind of the Lord, that we can instruct God? We have the mind of Christ. How do you have the mind of Christ? Through the Word of God. In this book, God has recorded His thinking. The more doctrine you have stored up, consequently, in your human spirit, the greater will be your inner happiness.

John 17:13 says, “Now come I to thee, and these things speak I in the world that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.” God has always been happy. It is the characteristic of God to rejoice, and He wants you to be happy, and He has made it possible for you and me to share that happiness, but it is all structured on the Word of God. Grace has made it possible for us to be happy apart from externals.

John 15:11 says, “These things have I spoken unto that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full.

So we’re going to have to, as believers, remain faithful in functioning under this grace system for spiritual perception that we’ve already taught you about. The fact that no matter what your human IQ is, you can receive spiritual things into your spirit where God can use them to guide you. Jeremiah 15:16 says, “Thy words were found and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart for I am called by thy name O Lord God of Hosts.” John 13:17 says, “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”

So you have to keep operating on the Word of God. One way or another, day by day, you have to take in the Word of God. We told our Academy parents the other night at the Academy program that God’s Word tells us that Jesus Christ is the living Word, and God has given us to Him as an unspeakable gift, an indescribable gift. But He has also given us a written Word, and this too, it says, that we must live by daily. So this system has to function.

Now you see why most people are not happy. How in the world can the person who is an unbeliever be happy at all? The only happiness he knows is the happiness attached to happenings: some person, some event, (or) some thing. That’s all he’s got. So it’s up and down, up and down, he’s happy and he’s unhappy, he’s happy and he’s unhappy. And the average Christian is not that receptive to the Word. The average Christian is not a fanatic toward the Word of God. The average Christian will not take the attitude that nothing stands in his way toward receiving the Word.

I had a student recently say to me the reason he makes progress in a certain activity and another student does not make progress in a certain activity is because, he said, I permit nothing to stand between me and this activity. Whatever else I have to do, I arrange my life that nothing stands between me and this activity. Whereas it’s not this important to this other person, and he lets other things come in between himself and that activity. Now that was just some good thing that they were doing, but the same thing applies toward the Word of God. It is hard to find Christians who are fanatics for the Word of God, and who will let nothing stand in the way of their daily taking it in.

Now we preceded our remarks this morning by showing you that the Word of God says you’re held accountable for what you know. And discipline is brought upon your life. There are some young people that find it very difficult to read the Bible. They find it very difficult to sit down and listen to a tape, and to study the Word of God. They don’t really feel they need it. They think they’ve been to Sunday School once, and they got it. There are some young people who find it very difficult to pray. They’re embarrassed to pray in public. They’re very nervous to do it. They’re not at ease with God in talking to Him which reflects that down deep in their heart there is a negative attitude toward what God has said and an attachment to the world. When you begin to get a clear picture of what God has said, you begin to see the areas of your life where the breaks have to come. People who find it hard to pray, people who find it hard to pursue the Word of God find it that way because they see areas in their life that they’re going to have to separate themselves from and they don’t want to do it. Areas that have come under judgment and condemnation because of that Word that they have received. Those people will never be happy.

Now when you’re young, you always think that there’s something out there that when you get to it, that’s going to be it. So you go. And you get there and it’s not quite what you thought and you realize that what you need is to fill it out a little more. So you go a little further. And it takes you several decades of your life and then you look back and you say, “You know, I’m not getting anywhere. All of these goals, I get them one at a time. And what have I got? I’ve got nothing when it comes to real satisfaction.”

That’s when you discover that God knows what He’s talking about—that happiness is an inner matter. It is not an external thing. Now, it has external expressions, but it begins on the inside. And it begins with the preciousness of the Word of God.

Now you can find some happiness in people. That’s true. Maybe you’re here with somebody that’s a date this morning. Maybe you’re here with somebody that you’d like to marry. Or maybe you’re sitting on one side of the auditorium wishing you were sitting by somebody on the other side. And you think you’d be real happy if you could have that situation. Or you might feel that you’d be happier if you were sitting on the other side of the auditorium that you are sitting next to. And that that would make you happy. Any possible combinations. But you’ll find a certain happiness in people.

You’ll find a certain happiness in circumstances. Some of you are going to really enjoy singing in the Cantata tonight. Some of you are going to really enjoy going out caroling. Some of you are going to really enjoy the Christmas bonus that you are getting. I can tell by the smiles on your faces that you’re real pleased with that, that you’ve received.

You can find a certain amount of joy in the details of life. Some of you are going to get some real kicks out of those presents that you get this week. You’re going to find a certain amount of joy. But the point is that is true only for a moment. It’s a short-lived thing. It doesn’t continue. Because the time comes when the party is over. The time comes when the party is over. And then there ain’t no more fun. There’s no more joy, and you wonder what happened to the great time. It’s like when you invite that gang over to your house. And the place is an uproar of activity of joy and happiness. Then they walk out and the party is over. Then you look at the debris, and you wonder where your joy went to.

Now the only happiness that you’re going to enjoy on a permanent basis is what God gives in grace. With this God gives us the capacity to enjoy the things of life and to enjoy spiritual things far more. He gave to give us, the Bible says, and abundant life. The fullest happiness possible. The happiness of God Himself.

Now this is reflected in our Christian service. You’re eager to serve the Lord, then along comes pressures. Then how do you act? It’s very interesting to watch Christians who are eager to serve the Lord. And some Christians serve the Lord as faddists. They are faddists. They cycle. Because their happiness in the Lord’s service is also structured on externals. Not because they have God. Now we’re going to go back to the Old Testament, perhaps next Sunday, and we’re going to look at those Jews again in their Exodus experience. They’re a tremendous example of people who tear themselves apart because they had the wrong basis for happiness. People who had the greatest opportunity in the world to be happy, and they ended up in the greatest of anybody.

This is what Christians do. Their service is on the wrong basis, so their happiness in serving the Lord is on the wrong basis. What happens? Well they start complaining to people. They’re under the pressures of the work. They start complaining. They break down and they cry. They can’t have it their way so the cop out. Or they start looking around for a crutch. Somebody to blame.

The greatest way to destroy, to show that your happiness in the Lord’s work is externals, is when you cut out. Or you begin to complain. Because if your happiness is inner, then no matter what happens in the course of the work of serving the Lord wherever you are can never affect that. Any time you see a real genuine problem, and you are right that it is a real genuine problem, you’ll be able to stand back and say, “I will now watch the workings of the Lord.” You’ll be just like those Jews. You’ll put your hands in your pockets and you’ll stand there on the shores of the Red Sea, and you’ll watch God’s solution. That’s all you’ll do. And then you’ll enter into it.

But you’ll stand by and watch. You won’t fly off someplace else where you think now you’ll be able to be better and be happier. People who float around and are mavericks and who fly off never find more happiness. If you could only look into their souls, you would find a hellish misery is all that remains. And a longing. And I’ve had them express it to me in so many words. A longing for what they once knew before they decided to split off and float off someplace else where they could find their happiness.

So this lasting happiness, if you know the Word of God, if you’re filled with the Spirit of God, this lasting happiness will be your experience. You’ll remain calm. You’ll stand by to watch God solve things. And furthermore, you’ll keep right on serving. 1 Thessalonians 2:2 expresses this principal. “But even after we had suffered before, and were shamefully treated, as ye know at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.”

Now I think that’s a great verse. Paul says he and his associates, “… even after we had suffered before, and were shamefully treated…” For what? For delivering to people divine viewpoint. At Philippi he says, “We were bold in our God to speak the gospel unto you with much contention.” He says, “We had to do some fighting back. We had to do some debating. We had to put some things in line. We had to make some things clear. We had to make the picture straight. There were some distortions, and we had to review the chain of events so that it was clear on why we’re here. And who started the chain of events that brought us here?” And Paul says, “We had to do a little contending, but we stood by our calling in Christian service, because the satisfaction remained there in spite of the burdens that were upon them. And with spiritual maturity in your soul, you have an inner happiness when things are tough as well as when things are very prosperous and everything is going wonderfully.

Now we have an example of a breakdown of happiness. One of the prime examples of this is King Solomon. As you know, Solomon had everything going for him that a person could ask. But suddenly we find this man going in a frantic search for happiness apart from the Word of God. He quit functioning on the grace system of perceiving spiritual things and he lost the source of happiness that he had. Over in the book of 1 Kings, chapter 11, beginning at verse 9, we read, “And the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel who had appeared unto him twice and had commanded him concerning this thing that he should not go after other Gods. But he kept not that which the Lord commanded. Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, ‘For as much as this is done by thee, thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes which I commanded thee, I will surely tear the kingdom away from thee and will give it to thy servant.’”

Now when you think back upon Solomon as a young man, he became king when he was 18 years old. He was the son of Israel’s greatest king David. And he came to the throne God said, “I’ll give you anything you want.” And he asked for wisdom. For an 18-year-old, that’s great. He could have asked for all kinds of foolish things. But he said, “Give me wisdom. Give me divine viewpoint like no man that has ever lived so that I may lead your people aright.” From that magnificent position, Solomon descended to the point where we can read, “The Lord was angry with Solomon because His heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel.”

Well what did Solomon do? He proceeded to pursue all kinds of things in life to find happiness. The book of Ecclesiastes will give you the history of his experiences. He’ll tell you one thing after another that he tried, and he tried, and he tried. Once he got away from the Word of God, once he went negative to the truth, once he started building callouses upon his soul, his happiness went down, down, down, and the more frantic he became to find it. And he tried everything that people try today. He tried education. He tried science. He tried sex. He tried building. He tried much learning. And one thing after another he’ll describe to you, and every bit, he says, was emptiness. It was nothing.

And yet his fame was so great, God had so blessed this man that the Queen of Sheba came from Arabia to see him. She said, “I want to know whether you are really as great as they say you are.” And when she came, she said, “What I heard about you was only the half of it. You’re far more than I thought you were. Far greater than anything I’d heard. Now what was this woman admiring. Here the Queen of Sheba enters heaven because she sees something in Solomon. She saw in this young king a spiritual maturity structure that so reflected the glory of God that she was want to this God. She comes up from the Arabian Peninsula (as) a pagan and goes back a believer.

And this is the man that goes down. It was Solomon who experienced above all Matthew 6:33, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you. And God added great wealth. He added power. He added great glory to this man. Now what happened? Eventually he came to the point where he could write a book that said, “It’s all nothing.” Everything that he had ever had was squandered. There was no way that he could find happiness. He didn’t confess. He didn’t return to a grace system for learning. And in his old age he realized what a mistake he had made.

So in the book of Ecclesiastes, (at the) very end of the book, he says, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man (for this is the whole of man). For God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing whether it be good or whether it be evil.”

(He says), “Let us hear the conclusion of the matter after he writes this book that says, “Here’s what it’s all about—keeping God’s commandments. When I did that, I was the happiest person in the world. I had an inner happiness, and people and things and circumstances didn’t affect me. But once I lost that, I lost everything.” He had sorrow and self-induced misery. His mind was away from the Lord. He had mental attitude sins. Everything was vanity, and it was feeding on air.

What Solomon is saying is that believers are designed to run on a track—the plan of God. And when you get off the track, you’re going to be miserable. “Vanity of vanities saith the preacher. Vanity of vanities. All is vanity.” Are you on the track? If you’re not on the track, your inner happiness will elude you. If you are on this track, you will have a magnificent sense of joy and gladness which is what God Himself experiences. (It is) nothing you have created, nothing you have pursued, but it’s something He gives you.

But I have to tell you that unless the whole maturity structure is there, all five facets of this pentagon, your happiness is going to be minimal. It’s tied into with your moving ahead with god all the way. Now that’s inner happiness, and that’s a facet that is another gift for you at this Christmas season. You may reject it or you may accept it. It depends (on) what you do with the Word.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971