***Steadfastness, Patience, and Joy

Colossians 1:1-2

COL-091***

Our subject is "Prayer for the Colossians, number 25 in Colossians 1:9-14.

We have seen in what we have studied thus far that God's power and grace are essential for bringing a lost sinner into salvation. Nobody is saved unless the grace of God brings that person under the conviction of sin and the acceptance of Christ, apart from any works for salvation. But it is also important to remember that it is the power of God and the grace of God that is essential after you're saved, for a believer to go on to spiritual maturity, and for divine good service for God. And here's where the rub comes. Many people who do become saved are baby Christians all their lives. They are not instructed in the Word of God. They don't have a fig Newton of a chance of coming to spiritual maturity. So, all they go through are motions, and they have never known what it is to have the power of the infinite Almighty God working in their lives.

We have talked about full knowledge, which the Greek word describes as "epignosis." That's more than just knowing the Word of God. It is doctrine that you have listened to, and you've said "Amen" to. Now it becomes a special kind of knowledge. It becomes usable doctrine for enabling you to live a life that fulfills the will of God for you and your mission. Such a Christian is able to walk with a high level of integrity to please God the Father in all respects.

There's a great deal of problem and concern on the part of many Christians who see people who are born-again, but they don't act like it. Now, it is true that you cannot tell that you're a Christian just because you're a moral person. Hell is full of moral persons today. And, of course, nobody can beat the Mormons when it comes to personal morality and integrity. But Mormons do not accept Christ as the Son of God. They accept Him as the spirit brother of Satan. And they are all going to themselves, sometime, become gods. So, no Mormon goes to heaven. Yet, they're extremely moral. You couldn't tell by how they act that they are not the children of God.

Nevertheless, once you are a child of God, and if you're functioning on the Word of God, you'll never be comfortable with sin again. You just won't be comfortable once you are a regenerated child of God. And when sin comes in, the Spirit of God will come in with a gentle hand of conviction. And if you ignore it, he will use the sledgehammer of discipline on you until you turn around and pay attention. So, it is important that a Christian lives up, indeed, to his place in the royal family of God.

When we say that you cannot tell that a person is born-again by how he acts, that does not mean that we are suggesting that it doesn't make any difference. And you would say, "Well, of course, that's true." Well, a lady not too long ago told me that that's what I teach: that it doesn't make any difference. And then she was shocked, and her eyes got opened, because I was talking to someone else at the time, and I said, "Whoops, wait a minute. I'm not going to let you get away with that. And she was really taken aback, because usually I'm the epitome of sweetness and light, as all of you know. But that made me downright mad for her to say, "Well, that's what you teach – that it doesn't matter how people live after they're saved." Well, what she was mixing up was the fact was that all I was saying is that you can become a prodigal, but you're still going to heaven.

But the norm is that we indeed reflect the image of Christ. And a person who is a genuine born-again Christian is never comfortable walking around in the habits and the nature of the world system.

So, a Christian is able to walk at a high level of integrity to please God the Father in all respects. The apostle has pointed out to us pleasing God involves two primary functions of the Christian life.

Number one, God is pleased when we are fruitful in producing divine good service for God in fulfilling His will. That is the mission of the Spirit of God in you when you are in fellowship with Him. He leads you in all kinds of activities and Christian service that are the will of God for you, and for which He will reward you in heaven.

Secondly, we please God by increasing steadily in the grasp of the full knowledge of doctrine – the "epignosis" knowledge of doctrine. One of the great ways that God is going to bless you now is because you walked into this room tonight, and have sat here where His words have impacted upon the mentality of your soul. And to the degree that you are receptive to that truth, you will be transformed. Your mind will become more like the mind of Christ. And you'll be pleased that you invested the end of this Lord's Day in this way. And you'll be happy for it, I guarantee you, through all eternity.

We also learned in the previous session that the God-pleasing life is made possible by the empowerment of the believer with the power characterized by the essence of God. God in all of His perfections has a great power. That's why he's surrounded with a glory light. And the apostle refers to this as the power of the glory of God.

A believer is made strong spiritually, first of all, with the potential power of God. It's like a stick of dynamite. It has no power, but it has great potential power. But once you put a detonating cap in it, and you explode the thing, then it becomes a different kind of power – a power in action. And both these words, we showed you, were used here. We have the potential power of God which goes at a certain point into explosive action according to the glorious perfection of God's character when you need that power. It is not given to you to the degree of your need. It is given to you to the degree of the omnipotence of God. It's more than enough. The sky is the limit with the power that God will place upon you. This is the heritage of every Christian.

So, if we're going to please God, what do we do? There are two things right off the bat. We pursue a life of Christian service – a service that is the product of the Spirit of God's leading in our life. Secondly, we see to it that we feed upon the Word of God. We learn doctrine. The Greek word means teaching. We learn what God has said. In the Scriptures, we have the mind of God, and that's how it becomes our mind – the potential power of God into an explosive form in your life.

So, when the need arises, in living the Christian life and in serving out your mission, the necessary enablement of every kind will be there from the Holy Spirit. I don't know how that makes you feel, but it makes me feel very comfortable. I don't have to try to make it in life on my own human capacities, nor am I trying to serve God with my own human wisdom. It doesn't work that way. It took the grace of God and the power of God to save me, and it takes the grace of God and the power of God to bring me to maturity, and to use me for a glory for which He, in turn, rewards me.

So, now in Colossians 1:11, we come to the expression of the divine power: "Strengthened with all power (potential power) according to His glorious might." This is power in explosive status – the glorious of the character of God: "For." This word means "unto" a certain goal: "For the attaining of all." This is one Greek word. It's three words in English, but the "attaining of all" means to indicate the attaining of all kinds of facets of something, and the first of two words that suggest what happens when a Christian is strengthened with the power of God, and is operating on the system of confessed sins, and walking according to the principles of doctrine. He says, first of all: "According to attaining all steadfastness." The Greek word is "hupomone" (hoop-om-on-ay' looks like this, H U P O M O N E. We put this word up on a screen for you so that you understand that I'm not giving you any of my personal opinions. I'm not telling you what I'm guessing that the Word of God means. I'm giving you simple explanations of the Greek words which are frozen in time, whose meanings have come down to us, and we know exactly what God is talking about. Don't ever listen to that nonsense that somebody says: "You can read the Bible, and it comes out meaning different things to different people, and you can prove anything by the Bible." That is not true if you interpret it by what the words mean.

**Steadfastness**

What this word means is endurance in the battle. It connotes actually remaining under something – bearing under some load. It means, in other words, steadfast in God's service; steadfast in personal godliness; or, steadfast in your loyalty to Jesus Christ. Under what kind of a load? Well, as a Christian, you will have loads of frustrations. You'll have the load of lack of money – great vision, but restricted finances. You'll have the load of the indifference of people. All you people who work with the young people, or who work with adults in various facets of our ministry, we know what it is to have adults and youth who are indifferent. We are offering them the greatest thing in their lives, and they cannot grasp it. They are indifferent toward it. And what do you want to do? You want to tell them to go fly a kite. You want to chuck it.

You must carry yourselves under the load of being physically tired. I watch these people who come out and work on our campuses, or work in the various agencies of our work, long after school is out, and teachers over there in our classrooms preparing for the next day. People are on our staff are always thinking and figuring out how to do things better. And all that is tiring and demanding. Whatever needs to be done, they are there. If we honor them, I guarantee you that God is going to be even more greatly eager to honor them. All of these befall a Christian in Satan's world, but "hupomone" means that God has given you, because of the power of God, the capacity of steadfastness. You endure in the battle.

**Abortion**

Now, you cannot escape these things if you are determined to fulfill your mission in life. From the moment of your conception, you are a human being. We have a violent, horrible, ugly American society today that murders children left and right every day. And it is all done by a group of men who are now receiving their hell who were once on the Supreme Court, and who have entered the presence of almighty God for the holocaust that they turned loose upon this nation. We even have, at the highest echelons of government, the gross practice of partial birth abortions vetoed, when Congress said, "You can't do that horrible thing in this country anymore." It was vetoed by the president. The house has overridden. Pray for the Senate. That's going to be a tough problem to solve, to get enough votes there to override the brutality of that act.

However, if you are going to fulfill your mission in life for which you were born, you're not going to escape being under something that Satan puts upon you. For some of you, it'll be a lingering burden. It'll be something that you can't just take a pill for. It may be a physical thing. It may be a wound of the heart. It may be a sorrow for how some people close to you are acting. It may be a disappointment in people that you have ministered to, and who have failed to live up to their great potential. But I guarantee you that a doctrinally oriented believer who is functioning on God's glorious power will bear up in the battle, and he does not lose heart. He does not lose courage. And he is of good cheer.

Here's the way the apostle Paul put it in Romans 5:3: "And not only this, but we also exalt in our tribulations, knowing that tribulations bring about perseverance." Now, that's an interesting approach. The apostle Paul knew trouble, and he knew how to be loaded down with all kinds of difficulties in the process of his missionary work. He said, "That's fine. I know what it is to suffer tribulation, and it's okay with me, because what does it do? It brings about "hupomone." It brings about perseverance. It brings about in me the demonstration that I don't collapse in the battle. God's power makes us brave to persevere in His service. In spite of every trial and every hardship, we refuse to succumb to despair or to cowardice.

What this connotes is a perseverance which enables us to hold a position won in the battle against the enemy's counterattack. Whatever you may have won and achieved in the Christian life, I'll guarantee you that Satan will always use the military tactic of counter attacking. You will wait until you have lowered your defenses, and then he will sock it to you.

However, when you have from God this marvelous quality of endurance (steadfastness) he will not be able to bring you down. The glorious power of God, working through a believer who has grown a super grace status, enables the Christian to hold out against any temptation to do evil, and anything to undermine his testimony.

This is not a mere determination of human will. You're not going to be able to hold out because you grit your teeth. You won't do it that way. It takes the power of God's marvelous essence that enables the believer to resist the attack successfully. In Romans 15:5, the apostle Paul says, "Now may the God who gives perseverance (there's our word) and encouragement, grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus." And, of course, there's the factor that's important. That's why we're having rally day next Sunday – to remind ourselves that we do have a common viewpoint. We do, in this ministry, share a common mind. There are certain fundamental things that we operate upon. We accept the Bible as the Word of God. We accept it as inerrant without mistakes. We accept it as meaning literally what it says. And we accept it in its division as to what belongs to Israel, and what belongs to the church. We don't mix it into a hodgepodge, which is Satan's favorite trick so that the Word of God is ineffective, and he cuts you out of being an effective Christian in personal service.

Can you imagine what it's going to be like standing at the Judgment Seat of Christ for the evaluation of our lives as Christians for the rewards? And some of these people who are so legalistically devoted and zealous are going to find that they got zilch, when they thought that God was so pleased with them? That is why the Scripture says that God is going to come up, and Christ is going to wipe away tears. Don't think that that means tears of those who are going to hell. These are tears of Christians who are standing there, and say, "My pastor-teacher deceived me. The people who were my teachers led me astray, and I was stupid enough not to search the Scriptures like a good Berean myself, and see if these things were so. And the sobs will be there, and they'll be shaking. And the Lord's going to come up and comfort them, and wipe away those tears. And because the sin nature will be gone, they'll say, "I know, Lord, that this is fair. I don't deserve a ruling throne. I don't deserve a domain of authority. But I thank You for saving me, and I thank You for the eternity I will have," while they look across at other Christians who are going to have such an enriched and powerful, wonderful eternity.

Because of what? Because they held out with steadfastness. They went to the Word of God. They weren't someplace else on the Lord's Day beside this room. They learned what God had to teach them, and then they said, "Amen. That's for me." And they didn't like the world. They didn't pretend that there was no difference between us and the world.

**The End Times**

The Roman Empire is now in its status of being brought back to life – a revival of the Roman Empire. It's in full bloom. And the ultimate objective of the revival of the Roman Empire predicted Daniel is one thing: world government. And when that world government clicks into place, we're out of here. The rapture is going to kick us right off together into the air to meet Christ. And we're gone. And the year 2000 is a very critical year because it'll be the end of 6,000 years since Adam was created. And God works in series of sevens. And the seventh millennium will be the Millennial Kingdom of the rule of Jesus Christ on this earth from the city of Jerusalem. You live in the most wonderful time of all of human history.

I would be very seriously mistaken if I did not think that most of the people in the circle of our acquaintance, as believers, are going to kick off into heaven without dying. They're never going to call the funeral director in for most of you. You're going to be off in that rapture. And you're going to be off to the glory land. That is the reality.

Now, with that kind of a realization that that's our future, that's a great encouragement for our personal endurance on that alone. And God gives us the capacity to do just exactly that.

"Now, may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement, grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus." We have a unity of our understanding of the Word of God, and what's important. And we treat people with respect. People come into our congregation, and I know that I toss out terms such that they don't know what they mean. That's because they don't have the frame of reference of the vocabulary. But these little kids sitting over here, they know. They understand it exactly. And in time, the rest of the people will learn. But that's what it takes – the learning of the Word of God.

We Christians are called to this kind of steadfast perseverance. Romans 8:25: "But if we hope for what we do not see with perseverance ('hupomone'), we wait eagerly for it." We don't see Christ. And we don't see the rapture, but we know it's true. We have the information from Scripture, and with perseverance; that is, under the load of the burden of whatever we carry in life, we're waiting for it.

Then near the end of the book of Romans, in Romans 15:4: "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction; that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope." Now those of you who've been instructed here for some time, you know that every time you hear the word hope ("elpizo") (el-pid'-zo)' in the Bible, it is not the kind of word that we use in English. When we say, "I hope so" for something in English, that means it might happen, but it might not. Anytime the Bible speaks about a hope, it's going to happen. And our hope of that eternal life is a sure thing.

**Patience**

There's a second quality that is the result of the power of God functioning in the life of a believer. Along with "hupomone" steadfastness, in Colossians 1:11, is the word patience. It looks like this. It's a long word: "makrothumia" (mak-roth-oo-meh'-o), M A K R O T H U M I A. This refers to the spirit of longsuffering, which Galatians 5:22 tells us is a product of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is always growing in the life of a Christian who is in temporal fellowship. You have your known sins confessed, so that you're walking with the Heavenly Father. And this is part of the fruit. Please don't ever say, "Fruits of the spirit." You'll be really fruity sounding if you say that. It is a single fruit with several elements, and this is one of them – this longsuffering. What does this mean? "Hupomone" means perseverance under the burden. You don't collapse. "Hupomone" means that you hold out against discouraging forces which want to provoke us to quit and give up serving the Lord our God.

Have any of you people ever been hit by a "makrothumia," where you want to chuck it all because of the response of the people to whom you are bringing a good thing? This is a quality that all of us most certainly need. There is no question about it. This is the spirit of waiting on God to enable us to carry out successfully the mission which He has given us with His provision of the means that He will provide in His good and right time.

This is like when you are turned down for something that you need – something that you could use, like maybe funds. It's very disappointing to be turned down. You know where the future lies. You know how to get there. You know what needs to be done. You're turned down for the funds. This is the time, I guarantee you, that you need this kind of patience – to say, "In God's good time. I stand by and wait upon Him." All forms of patient longsuffering are provided by God's glorious power, so that the believer stands firm, and he stays the course.

Patience is a state of an emotional calm in the face of provocation and misfortune without complaining or without being irritated. It's a state of emotional calm. There are problems that you bear. There are difficult choices to make. There are solutions that you just don't have, when you know that something has to be done. And when you find that out of that patience, that power of God and that loving Heavenly Father comes through, it is very awesome.

That happened to me this past week. As I sat in the kitchen, just awed, Mrs. Danish comes in; she looks at me; and, she sees right away that something big has happened. And I just hand her the letter that had come. And then she's taken aback. And a problem was solved, because an almighty God is up there, enabling us to have the patience to wait upon His good time and His good power in our behalf.

Those who are not Christians know nothing about this. Those who are not Christians who understand the principle of confession of known sins and staying in temporal fellowship – they don't know a fig Newton about this. But those of you who are here should know everything that there is to know about the power of God giving you steadfastness under the load, and to give you patience – waiting when the problem is so intense that you are tempted to get out and try something on your own. The Christian who walks by the glorious power of God will not be upset by people; by circumstances; or, by things. You'll not be upset when they don't do what they should do. You wait with patience – that glorious power that God has given you. And you don't retaliate, and you don't become bitter. Ephesians 4:2 says, "With all humility and gentleness, with patience (there's the word – with great 'makrothumia'), showing forbearance to one another in love."

Sometimes the people who disappoint you are Christians who ought to certainly know better, but they cannot rise to that which they cannot rise to. And they must be treated with consideration and the great patience that God gives us. The glorious might of God in action enables a believer who is in temporal fellowship to exercise every kind of steadfastness and of patience in God's service.

So, there's a lot revealed in Colossians 1:11. First, we are strengthened with all potential power. And we are strengthened with this potential power according to the explosive power of the glory of God. And we have this for the purpose so that we would be steadfast (we bear up under the load), and so that we would be patient (we would wait upon the Lord, and we would stay the course).

**Joy**

Then he throws something else in that is simply unthinkable to the natural man. It's impossible. He kicks in one more word. Steadfastness and patience are words that deal with fighting the battle, and you do it with joy: joyously. The word "joy" looks like this: "chara" (khar-ah'), C H A R A. And immediately some of you may recognize that that is related to our Greek word "charis" (khar'-ece) for "grace." The great grace of God is a point of great joy. What this is referring to is not some emotional equality as such, but an inner happiness. It's part of the spiritual maturity structure of the soul. And it is produced by the power of God. And what it is, is a matter of peace. It's not affected by people; circumstances; or, things. It is only something that is so deep and so marvelous, created by God Himself, in the soul of a believer. It's a spirit of happiness while you're maintaining all the steadfastness and patience in God's service. It means that you do not serve or go around with a long face. You do not go around with self-pity. You don't whine. And you don't complain about your lot in life, whatever it is. You are, after all, dealing with a God of enormous love. You have a joy which finds it an honor, in fact, to suffer in the angelic conflict for Christ – for doing and for thinking what is right.

The apostle Peter was led by the Spirit of God to write a book about suffering. And he has several things, naturally, to say upon this: a suffering, with joy; a perseverance, – that burden, with joy; and, a patience – hard to wait, with joy. Notice 1 Peter 2:20: "For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience. But if when you do what is right, and suffer for it, you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God." And there a lot of times when that is exactly what we do. We have done the right thing, and others have done the wrong thing, but it doesn't affect our inner happiness.

1 Peter 3:1: "But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation and do not be troubled." If there's anything that is being beaten against Christians today, it's intimidation. And until this current election is over, you're going to be beaten black and blue as a Christians for your stands for righteousness; for your antagonism to socialism; for your antagonism to the encroachments upon personal freedom; for the debased moral status of this country; and, for all the things that we are ashamed of, as those who stand in the presence of a holy God. But instead of your being complimented, the burden is being put upon us as being people who are out of line. We are the ignorant ones. And that is suffering for righteousness.

Notice 1 Peter 3:17, "For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

Then in 1 Peter 4:16, again, Peter says, "But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let them not feel ashamed, but in that name, let him glorify God." That's in the finest tradition of the early church. The apostles were glad when they were beaten up because of their faithfulness to Christ.

Then 1 Peter 4:19: "Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right." We can have great joy in entrusting ourselves to the hand of God when we are experiencing undeserved suffering. There is nothing too hard; too long; or, too costly for us to do for God our Father, when we love Him and we operate on the principle of joy. We're happy to do it.

Paul and Silas were a great example of this, as you know. When they were in Philippi, they were thrown into prison for doing nothing. And here they had a chance to demonstrate their steadfastness: standing up under the burden piled up on them; and, with their patience, waiting upon this abuse of their civil rights as Roman citizens. And what do they have while they're doing it? Personal joy. Forget it. You can't go being a Pollyanna; you can't go grinning; and, you can't go saying that you're just going to be happy. You won't do that. Nobody can produce this. But suddenly, because the power of Spirit of God was flooding through them, they looked at one another and said, "This is terrible, but I feel okay. Are you okay, Silas?" And Silas says, "Yeah, I'm okay. How about you?" And Paul says, "Yeah, I'm okay." Then one of them leans back against the wall, and he starts singing a hymn. And the rest of the prisoners in the place perk up their ears. Right away they know that they have a couple of weird ones down the corridor in one of those cells.

Acts 16:25: "But about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them." What should they do? Their perseverance enables them to stand under the burden. Their patience waits upon God. And throughout their system there is inner happiness. There is turmoil around him. This are life-threatening conditions around them, but God is in charge. That's not just talk. That's reality in the battle. And these men pray to God. They use the doctrine of faith rest. They've done everything they can. Now they rest their faith with God to handle the matter from that point on. So, they turn from praying to praise and singing. And the other people who are listening have been caused to start thinking. Some of those people may be executed for being in prison. When the earthquake takes place a little later, the jailer was going to kill himself because he knew that these prisoners had fled. But Paul says, "No. God has broken down this prison to make a statement to you, but you may put your heart at ease. We are all here. Nobody has run off." And this person probably, listening to this praising and singing, and praying himself – the jailer falls to his knees and says, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Aren't you glad that Paul and Silas didn't say some stupid thing like, "Invite Jesus into your heart," or, "Give your life to Jesus" – all that pop-Christianity baloney that has come into Christian speech that confuses the issue. Instead, they told him, "Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved. You'll be justified. You'll go to heaven." Paul's contentment in life is no secret. In God's service, He had his terrifically tough times. But everything was the power of God working through him, because he had "epignosis" full knowledge understanding in his human spirit.

This is so clear in the book of Philippians 4:10-13. Paul says, "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, and now at last you have received your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity." What he is referring to here is that the people in the church at Philippi (while Paul is in prison here in Rome) – they have sent Epaphroditus with a great substantial financial gift. Paul says, "I've been up against hard times. I've been strapped. I've been trying to earn the money by my own efforts as a tent maker, which has sidetracked me from the efforts of the work." But he says, "My means that I lacked you have now made up. And the thing about it is," he says, "that I knew you were concerned when you couldn't give it, and when you yourselves were in hard times, but your concern was there for me. At least you prayed. Now things are better. You lacked opportunity before, but now that you have things straightened out, the money is back there supporting me." And he said, "And I'm not oblivious that this is an act of God."

However, he says, "Not that I speak from want. I don't want you to misunderstand me. For I've learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am in." Now that has to be the power of God: "When I'm flush with money, that's great. When I'm low in poverty, that's great. I am God's child. It is my business to go about His business, and it is His responsibility to give me the logistical means to do the job. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry – both of having abundance, and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

Now, if you want a life verse, that's a good one to anchor your soul to. Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." The apostle Paul had contentment. And because he had contentment, he had great inner happiness. Paul's inner happiness was permanent because it was not dependent on what people did; on the circumstances that he found himself in; or, on the things that he had or didn't have. It was based on doctrine, and doctrine, and doctrine, and his subjection to temporal fellowship with God the Holy Spirit Who lived within him.

One of the hardest places to have peace, I'm sure you'll agree, is when it comes to your money. The book of Hebrews very appropriately puts that in perspective: to be under perseverance of the burden; and, to be patient when you don't have the money. Hebrews 13:5-6: "Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.' So, we confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?'"

Now, people do some terrible things to you. There are always con men. There are always slithering snakes out there, ready to encroach upon the sincere; the innocent; and, the unguarded. But you have the promise of the God who doesn't lie, such that you can take joy and peace in your hardest financial condition. At the time when the need is so intense, and the time when so much could be done if the means were in your hand: "Let your character be free from the love of money." You don't ever love things: "Being content with what you have. For He himself has said, I will never desert you. I'll never forsake you.' What shall man do to me?" Now that is inner happiness in its finest expression.

Our country is filled with people who are so unhappy – homes which are so unhappy over money matters. And very often it's just because they're not satisfied with what God has given to them, so that they live on what God has given to them, while they try to do better. The buoyant sense of mastery through longsuffering and patience, producing joy unspeakable and full of glory.

1 Peter 1:8 expresses that so beautifully – a buoyant sense of being under control through longsuffering and patience: "And though you have not seen Him, you love Him. And though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory." God has given us, as Christians, a tremendous power. It's not a human power. It's a power that God himself produces, and gives to those who play the game by the biblical pattern. Learn to be a student of the Word of God. Learn to accept doctrinal principles. Learn to wait upon Him by confessing your known sins when things are out of line. And wait upon Him. You'll find that you'll bear up under the worst circumstances like you didn't think you could bear up. Steadfastness will become part of your character. You'll discover that there will be an enormous patience. You'll be standing by. You'll be waiting upon God with longsuffering to deal with people who need dealing with, and circumstances that need resolving. That is the way of God. And you'll find that along with that steadfastness and patient longsuffering, you'll be overwhelmed with an enormous joy – the peace that Jesus gives.

Our Heavenly Father, we want to thank You for the instruction of Your Word, and for the realities that we have considered tonight. We thank You for this revelation, and for the principles of life conduct that we have learned. We pray that we will indeed never be satisfied with anything less than being readers of Scripture, and building a framework of doctrinal understanding.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)