***The Steps to Inner Happiness

Colossians 1:1-2

COL-093***

Our subject is "Prayer for the Colossians," number 27 in Colossians 1:9-14.

Every Christian lives his life socially in a hostile territory of Satan, and of unsaved humanity. This is indicated to us several places in Scripture. For example, Hebrews 11:13, following the listing of some of the great heroes of faith of old, says: "All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them, and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth." That is not an easy thing to do. We Christians are not inclined to go through the territory of the United States of America and say, "I'm a stranger here. I'm an alien. I belong to another society and to another realm."

Let's go to Philippians 3:20: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." It is not easy for us to remind ourselves that we are not citizens of the realm in which we now live, but we are citizens of heaven. That does not mean that we do not have an allegiance, or that we do not have a responsibility to the governments under which we live, because indeed we do. And in fact, we are living in very exciting times. Our Christian nation is now on the verge of making a great decision. In just a few weeks hence, we'll drive the final nail in the coffin of the nation by choosing to go the future route of socialism with all the tyranny; the destruction; the poverty; the want; and, the misery that that brings, as Russia has demonstrated to us for 75 years; or, we will start pulling the nails out of the cover of the coffin, and we will let the fresh air and the light of the Word of God bring spiritual rejuvenation once more.

While we know where history is going to end up, we don't know when it will arrive at that point. And in the meantime, while we are here, we fight for that which is right. And we, who know the Word of God, resist that inclination to bring evil upon the nation because of violating biblical, spiritual, and economic principles.

However, this condition, of our living as aliens in the territory of Satan, subjects us to all kinds of spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental stresses and sufferings. The pressure upon us, of our alien world, may cause us to become depressed, discouraged, disoriented, and disengaged in God's service. It is always the purpose of Satan to cut you out of the herd of those who are moving along under the service of God. It is always his purpose to undermine you, so that you become an irrelevant element in the angelic conflict. That is a great deal of the depression; the discouragement; the disorientation; and, the suffering that is brought upon us to disengage us from His service.

**Steadfastness**

The apostle Paul, we have seen in Colossians 1:11, encourages the believers to remember that they have the strength of God's power to sustain them in the angelic conflict on earth. This all power is supplied us for the purpose of maintaining a steadfastness in life, he says, which bears up under the burdens of godliness and divine good service. It is not easy in our society to be a godly person, and to take the consequent suffering. It is not easy in our society today to have a life which is devoted to serving God, such that the focus of His will is the focus of our lives. There are consequences that we pay for that.

**Patience**

Also, there is supply to us this power for the purpose of maintaining a patience in life, for looking to God for victory. The Bible warns us that we do not fight against flesh and blood. It is very important for us to remember that. In moments of high tension, and of high emotional conflict over issues of right and wrong, we have to remember that we are speaking to human beings, but the human beings are not the issue. Behind those human beings is the mind of Satan or the mind of God – one or the other. And those are the forces that we are looking at. In Ephesians 6:12, the apostle Paul says that we do not fight flesh and blood. We fight spiritual forces from the highest realms of the Satan hierarchy of authority.

So, the believer has, through full knowledge "epignosis" of doctrine, the divine power to persevere and to exercise longsuffering in God's service – endurance, and holding out. In this way, and because of this power, Philippians 4:13 becomes a reality in each of our lives: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." This results then in the realization of Romans 8:28: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God; to those who are called according to His purpose." Because: "I can do all things through Christ strengthens me," in comes the great victory of all things working together for good that God brings into our lives.

**Joy**

So, steadfastness and patience are the lot of the Christian. But Paul has also pointed out that these are to be borne with joy. This is the same thing that Peter pointed out in 1 Peter 1:8, when he says, "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." This refers to what we call the inner happiness facet of the spiritual maturity structure of the soul of the believer. Inner happiness is part of the fruit of the spirit which is grown in the Christian who is taking in doctrine and living in temporal fellowship (Galatians 5:22).

Today, I direct your attention in this idea to Philippians 4:4, which says, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say rejoice." Now, that is a reiteration of what Paul has said here to the Colossian Christians, when he said, "Strengthen with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience joyously. The Christian life is to be characterized by joy. Therefore, we are told by God that we are to rejoice. The word looks like this: "chairo" (khah'-ee-ro), C H A I R O. This is the word again that you see is based on the Greek word "charis" (khar'-ece) for "grace." So, here is a grace gift from God: our personal happiness.

**Happiness**

Now, what this word is referring to is a stable metal attitude within the fluctuations of life. Our happiness is not dependent upon what that word means. The word happiness means "feeling good about a happening," but that is not the joy and the gladness that the Bible speaks of. Our happiness is not dependent upon some person, something, or some circumstance. This word connotes a sense of wellbeing no matter what. It is in the Greek present tense that indicates that this is the constant state of the believer. There is not a time when inner happiness should not be functioning in your life. It is in a grammatical voice that indicates that you choose to be happy.

Abraham Lincoln once said that people are just about as happy as they choose to be. Right on. That's on target. Happiness is something that God directs us toward, such that this is what He expects us to be. Now, right away we have a problem. That sounds a little goofy to come up and look in someone's eyes, and say, "You're going to be happy." But happiness is a condition that God gives us that overrides everything else, so that while there is turmoil, all hell breaking loose around you, there's a millennium of peace in your soul. That is the reality of the Christian life. Now, if you don't understand that, then you're going to go through a lot of misery in life, and a lot of chasing around to try to get something resolved.

A lady called me yesterday. Her son is going to be married shortly. And the lady gave him his ring back. She said that she doesn't want to marry him. And he's unhappy. And I said, "He's unhappy? He should recognize this – that here's a grace act of God. Better he should learn that this girl is not too fond of him now, before they're married, than after." What he should realize is that God has stepped in and done him a great favor; and, that his happiness and his joy is in the fact that God is running interference for him. And when you plan on getting married, you need a lot of interference run for you. That's why you have parents. If you are going to bring some wacko yo-yo home to marry, your parents should say, "Okay;" or, the parents should say, "Nope – not that one." Well, don't be so surprised at that. That's what courtship used to be. Courtship used to be where parents were selecting potential people for their youngsters to marry. And then they would arrange for them to begin spending time with them and getting acquainted with them. You're not just two dogs sniffing at each other on the street. You are two families being brought together. You are to be brought into a relationship that's going to have eternal consequences. Oh, you're not going to be married in heaven like the wacko Mormons say, but you are going to have memories of an association, and the associations of that life together will be there before your very eyes.

What we used to do in a better age was that people got acquainted with each other by stages. And they followed the Word of God, such that they went in the order of: spirit; soul; and, body. You got acquainted with a person spiritually before you ever touched them intimately. You got acquainted with a person personality-wise, in the soul, before you ever touched the person intimately. Then when marriage came, then in comes the body for the intimacy of two people. Now that's God's way. It's very clearly spelled out in Bible. It's the only way the Word of God works. And it's the only way it works in society. And because we don't follow that pattern, because we have turned our way upon the Word of God, there's no joy in marriage. There's a great deal of misery.

So, this lady recognized this. She said, "I know, I know." I said, "Well, tell your son what I often try to tell young people, that I have been their age, and they have not been mine. Few people have. Therefore, I'm a whole lot smarter. Now, I was very impressed by that creation video we had, where it showed Adam who lived almost 1,000 years. I'm beginning to look back now and discover how smart I am; how much I know; how many things I don't get balled up and stumbled up on that I did once. But I've got all that background; all that experience; and, all that insight. And anybody smart enough to listen to me will discover that I've got a lot of insight, and I've got a lot of experience, and I've got a lot of background. Because of what? Time of living.

These men who lived in those early ages – here was some young guy, a mere 100-year-old pip squeak, and he's talking to Adam who's 800. Can you imagine the difference of what the two of them knew, and what Adam could have done for him? And that's why he had these magnificent technological explosions and social developments in the early ages following the Garden of Eden. Man was at his best, and he had a long enough life to really capitalize on that.

So, it is not a small thing that there should be within us, an emotion of peace – an emotion such that whatever happens to us, and whatever is going around, we have a concept of personal joy and personal happiness in the Lord. Our lives are to be filled with joy like a room is flooded with sunshine.

Unhappiness, on the other hand, is a sign from the Holy Spirit that the believer is out of temporal fellowship. There can be no inner happiness, to begin with, with unconfessed sin in the life of the believer.

People come to me all the time with problems and questions. And sometimes these are coming up down the line. One of the problems with teaching the Word of God is how often people, who need a bit of information, skip that Sunday. And every time the devil tells you, "Skip the Sunday," that's the one you don't want to skip. When the devil says, "Go to church, then you can skip a Sunday," which he won't.

Psalm 66:18: This is the Old Testament territory: "If I regard (I tolerate) wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear." That's very simple. The Old Testament says that if you're out of temporal fellowship, you're out of walking under the guidance of God. Though they were not indwelt then by the Holy Spirit, they were guided by the Holy Spirit. If you tolerate wickedness in your heart (unconfessed sin), you're talking to a brick wall.

In 1 John 1:8-10, we have that Old Testament principle reiterated in the New Testament: "If we say that we have no sin (that is, a sin nature), we're deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned (actual acts of evil), we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." On one side, in verse 8 it says you do have a sin nature. On one side of verse 9 it says you do have a sin nature. On the other side of verse 9, in verse 10, it says that you do commit acts of personal sins: personal evil – let me put it that way. You do commit acts of personal evil: either sins; or, human good. In the middle, in verse 9, it tells you how to get yourself back into temporal fellowship, because if you don't, then all is lost when it comes to the Christian life, and particularly when it comes to the issue of happiness. When we are in temporal fellowship, that is the only place where you'll experience the perfect joy of God Himself through the Holy Spirit. It is when we are in temporal fellowship that the Holy Spirit protects us from a lot of unhappiness, not the least of which is the unhappiness of material things.

I am more and more amazed. I would think that, by this time, especially in this congregation, of the clarification we have made of the Christian's relationship to material things in his spiritual life, that people would understand how to deal with material things, and hold on to what they have lightly. The Scripture says that you're not taking it with you unless you sent it ahead as treasures in heaven. Money will not bring you happiness unless you give it away to God's work. Then it'll bring you enormous happiness, both in time and in eternity. And yet, I still see Christians who are grubby little misers, sitting there like Scrooge, piling up their little coins, and counting them, and looking furtively here and there with their eyes to see if somebody's trying to sneak up on them and grab one of the coins, because that is their life.

But do they have happiness? They could. The more that is piled on the table, the greater their happiness could be. And what does the Word of God say? Here's one of the great ways (your love of money) to destroy the real happiness that you have in your soul. 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 that we confidently say, 'The Lord is my Helper. I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?" Not many Christians can say that. Not many Christians can say, "That's it, God. I have the money. I have what I need for my existence. And I have this reserve. And I'm very happy to recognize that it belongs to you. And I am holding it in reserve, and I ask you to guide me not to use it foolishly, but to use it properly and freely.

There are people all over this country that understand this principle as the result of listening to Berean Memorial Church tapes, where some of us locally can't get hold of it yet. And those people, at a distance, know that, and they know what we're doing with the Word of God, and they understand the critical moment in time in which we live. I'm humbled when I open the mail and see what they send in. They can't even sit here. And periodically, when they visit here, one lady said to one of our members (she didn't say it to me, but she said – I was told that she said), "My goodness, you have so many wonderful things here. You not only have the explanation of the Word of God, but you get these handouts." People come all the way cross-country just to get the handouts. They don't care if they missed the sermon. The handouts are worth it all. And what she was saying is, "Boy, does this give me background? Does this give me insight? Does this give me orientation? Somebody had to pull this together." That's something of a great opportunity. And I wish I were there every Sunday to enjoy it. And because I'm not there, I want the tapes to come. And I want others to enjoy. And I'm sending all the money in that I can.

God protects us from the unhappiness of material things. God also protects us from the unhappiness of whatever may come up in your life – the circumstances of life; whatever the disappointments are; whatever the griefs; whatever the burden; whatever the physical problems; or, whatever the emotional tension. In Philippians 4:11-12, Paul is thanking these people for their concern for his missionary work, and the money which they had sent him from the churches in Philippi. Paul says: "Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstance I am. I know how to go 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." Why? Because Paul knew that God will never abandon him, and never forsake him. And what he needed for his personal survival and his service, and what he needed in order to execute the work of the missionary ministry to which he'd been called, God was going to provide it. Sometimes it was in the hardest way when he had to go back to work and earn the money himself.

So, God protects us from the unhappiness of loving material things. He protects us from the circumstances, hard or good, in which we may find ourselves because of that. He also protects us from the disappointment that inevitably comes over people. In Colossians 3:1, Paul gives us the advice as to where we should be looking – not at people: "If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is seat at the right hand of God." When people disappoint us, and when people fail, keep looking up. You are to have a self-contained joy from God, which is not dependent on people, circumstances, or things.

1 John 1:3-4: "What we have seen, heard, we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us (that's doctrine). And indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things (of doctrine) we write, so that our joy may be made complete." The lack of the quality of inner happiness has some very grim effects on our lives when it's not there. The world of Satan sees happiness as an external matter, but external happiness of that kind is very short-lived. Part of the Christian's heritage is to share God's happiness, not Satan's depression. People who are in conflict, and people who are suffering from some root of bitterness are very unhappy people.

Hebrews 12:15 points that out to us: "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it may be defile." I am amazed of the arrogance of Christians who are bitter in their life over one thing or another, as if to blame God for what has transpired with them. We sometimes see the arrogance among us, of people who get indignant, and get upset, and who are so arrogant as to, in effect, be telling God that they wish He'd get His omnipotence back on track, so that He could get things straight. If something is out of whack and out of order, who are you to be standing up and getting all unglued about it, instead of taking it to the Lord and saying, "Father, this is what I think about it. If I'm right, please correct it. Please resolve it. Please remove the person that's a problem. Please correct the person that's a problem. Please bring the circumstances about that this will be resolved, and you betcha He will.

So, you see this business of losing your happiness because of the root of bitterness is absolutely inexcusable, and it is the worst kind of self-righteous, pharisaic arrogance to do something like that. If you think that somebody doesn't have something straight, from the pastor on down, committed to the Lord. You do what you can, but you don't get all vibrating, so you get yourself unglued, and out you go. Because of that root of bitterness and indignation, you're completely out of touch with God. Then you are in serious problems. These are the kind of people who are in conflict. They're grim; they're mean; and, they're miserable. The peace that Jesus gives is not some humanly contrived emotion which fluctuates wildly. Inner happiness is a stable quality.

Now, you cannot solve inner happiness, as John has indicated in his epistle, apart from the light of the Word of God. That is self-evident. Happiness in the Lord means in conformity to the mind of Christ. This means conformity to the Word of God, and that's the Bible. Any mental attitude or overt action in conflict with doctrinal principles is not living in the Lord. So, it's not productive of happiness. When people live in the Lord, Christ is made Lord of their lives, and they do all kinds of things that are right.

You may have been struck by the fact that I pointed out in my letter this week to you that our well-attended prayer meetings reflected to me that a lot of people were finding it desirable to make Christ their Lord, because I know what he said to do. He said to be there, praying with the believers, to join forces with them, in this – the most effective thing of all. Yes, we run the club; we run a school; we run Sunday school; and, we run training unions, but none of that accomplishes anything if we're not there praying. Your prayers are significant to that area that you're in. But the impact of all the prayers of the believers is enormous. That is the principle of the Word of God. It's a simple slogan. Prayer changes things.

Get a three by five card; write the words on it; paste it on your refrigerator; put it inside your refrigerator; and, hang it all over your house. Prayer changes things. And then in very little print, "~God, I don't want to upset – especially on Wednesday nights."

I'm always amazed when we have an impact prayer meeting, what follows in the week after that. And now, I'm standing, waiting, kind of eagerly, anticipating, because I know something's going to happen. When that place fills out with believers, big things happen. And not everybody prays. Not everybody speaks. Some of them sit there. Others do the praying. But they're there, and they have reinforced us.

**Rejoice Always**

Rejoice in the Lord. In temporal fellowship, be happy. This is it all the time. It is not a sometime operation. And do this, therefore, always. In Philippians 4:4, he uses the word "always." It looks like this in the Greek Bible: "pantote" (pan'-tot-eh), P A N T O T E. "Pantote:" at all times. Happiness in the soul of the believer is to be constant – a relaxed attitude. This inner happiness is the major objective of the Christian life. This is what makes a normal person. People who do not have the peace that Jesus gives of inner happiness are not normal people. And they act in all kinds of abnormal ways.

**Reversionism**

Well, how many times this week were you uptight or ugly over something that came into your life that doesn't amount to anything. God does not command us to do something that He does not enable us to do. And here He is telling us to have an inner capacity of peace and of joy that is constant. It's always there, no matter what happens. And the thing that interrupts this is reversionism. Reversionism interrupts rejoicing always in the Lord. Reversionism is the result of the neglect of feeding upon the Word of God. It is the result of being negative to the instruction of the Word of God of your pastor-teacher. I guarantee you that if you arch your back against the instruction of your pastor-teacher, you will have misery in your soul; your stomach will churn; and, in time, you will be brought down. God will not tolerate those who step out of the authority of His word. And if you think you know better, then you just know better in whatever area you know better, but you do not undermine the supportive role that you should be playing in that congregation, to encourage people to gather up to the Word of God in these services. And if you are negative to the Word of God, you should notice that it is a dangerous game that you are playing, for some people.

I watched a debate by Dave Hunt [(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave\_Hunt\_(Christian\_apologist)] and a man who is prominent in the Roman Catholic Church. And it was a debate on the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church and its claim to be the church that existed in the New Testament. The Roman Catholic person said that if he walked the streets of Jerusalem, he'd know exactly what the liturgy meant. He'd know what the ceremonies meant in the church. He would know exactly what was going on among the Christians. He would understand what they were talking about, because the Roman Catholic Church walked the streets of Jerusalem in the times of the apostles. But he said that if Mr. Dave Hunt, over here, were to walk the streets of New Testaments Jerusalem, he wouldn't understand anything. He'd be running around trying to find a little evangelical Bible study someplace. It was very contemptuous.

As the debate went forward, it made one thing very clear – that the Roman Catholic representative was quoting the church fathers; the early writers; the traditions of the church; and, the declarations of the Pope. And Mr. Hunt would come and say, "I don't care what the church fathers said, and I don't care what the Pope said, and I don't care what any of those writers of the early church said. They were not infallible. All I care about is what the Bible says. And I speak from the Scripture. And he would keep coming back to the Scripture. And when he laid out from the Scripture, obviously what is in Scripture is not out there in Roman Catholicism. Well, Roman Catholicism is negative to the doctrines of the Word of God. Therefore, Roman Catholics as a whole do not have inner happiness in their soul, because anybody who thinks he's going to end up in the flames of hell is not a happy person.

That is not a happy lot. And I was amazed how the representative of the Roman Church talked about purgatory, and defense of it, and the selling of dispensations to pay your way out of purgatory. At least he should have stayed with things that you could find in the Bible. Here is something totally alien to Scripture, but it so made the difference. I've often wondered what would compel people to take so seriously Roman Catholicism when it was so alien, in so many fundamental ways, to the Bible. And Hunt's point was that anybody who follows the principle that you have to pay for your sins through Christ, Who did the eternal paying, and you do the earthly paying, and that both your works and Christ works must are required for salvation (that's the Counsel of Trent), and anybody doesn't believe that is anathema – Hunt said that you'll never get to heaven that way.

So, here you have millions of people who think they're going to heaven who are not. Why? Because they were negative to true doctrine when it was brought to their attention. That's the horrendous consequences of that. And the same thing happens to any of us as believers. If you're going to be negative to the Word of God, you better be sure that you're right, because the payment can be very very costly.

Consequently, those who do not have the guidance of the Word of God, they're simply left out of it. They lack the mind of Christ. So what do they do? They revert to the natural human viewpoint, and unhappiness, therefore, is inevitable. If you stand by the bedside of a Catholic who's dying, I guarantee you that he will be desperately looking into the eyes of that priest who has come to give him extreme unction at the last possible moment, so that he goes with his few sins, that need to be paid for in temporal punishment, as possible, so as to have as little time out in purgatory as he can.

You cannot get happiness unless it is based upon the truth of the authority of the Word of God. And you will not maintain your happiness with emotional kicks. Some of you are more the emotional type, so you like to get high on praising the Lord. So, you have a service where you're praising the Lord.

I remember when my daughter Heidi was little, we were sitting and watching one of the all-time great TV evangelists, a paragon of biblical wisdom and spiritual insight named Jimmy Swaggart. And he was standing up there, and he called the whole auditorium there. There were hundreds and hundreds of people. And he was saying, "Let's all stand, and praise the Lord." And they were all saying, "Oh, hallelujah. Praise the Lord." And he would stand up there crying, and he'd blow his nose occasionally. And I said, "Heidi, I want you to watch him. Watch the screen. In a moment, he's going to look, and he's going to see that it's time to shut this off. He's got the emotional kick, and he's going to go right for the offering." No sooner were those words of divine wisdom out of my mouth than Jimmy says, "Alright folks let's all be seated. Let's all be seated. We're going to have a word of prayer, and take the offering."

So, don't tell me I'm not a prophet. I know more about the future than Dennis Williams does. So, there he was, getting all these people high on praising the Lord, and they thought they were having a lot of fun. I watched the interview by Barbara Walters of one of the TV evangelists who had come upon hard times. And in it he said that he was just so wrong that he was teaching people to seek prosperity as the evidence of having a spiritual relationship with God – that the Christian life was prosperity. And he said, "There were no limits to the prosperity I had." He said, "I was able every other day to raise a million dollars." Now that's an unending pizza party with a million dollars a day. And he said, "There I was, and it was wrong. But this was all I was doing."

Now, Barbara Walters, because she does not know anything spiritually, she's not biblically educated, she didn't come through with the question that should have been: "Well, how is it that you did that? How is it that people would give you that?" And they had it up there. They had the people there in his group at the time there. They had these cubby-holes, like mailboxes, and they're throwing in the $10, or $20, and all the checks, and they're going through it as fast as they can, handling the money every day. She said, "Why would people give you that kind of money?" He said, "Because in the TV services, we gave them a good time. We entertained them."

I've told you there's two kinds of preaching: edification preaching; and, entertainment preaching. And I don't care whether somebody doesn't like it, I'm going to tell you that hardly any place in this town is there any edification preaching. Mostly it is entertainment preaching this morning. And the bigger the churches are, the more the entertainment is. It is when they get lower and lower, and smaller that they can afford to be edification preaching, because they have people who understand what's going on, and they are there because the Word of God is there. They're not there to be entertained. But the greater and the bigger they are, the more you'll find that those people there are there for entertainment, and that'll kill you. That'll destroy any adult or any youth, and in time it will be great misery into your life.

So, you can't get happiness by these gimmicks – trying to get high on praising the Lord; trying to get the exhilaration of saying how much you love other people; getting into a real loving mood; or, trying to sing with a beat. That's all a lot of fun. You get to singing with the beat, and you get that in your soul, and you're really feeling that you're having a wonderful time with the Lord. Or try clapping hands and getting into the beat, if you're not too spastic, and you have a capacity to stay on the beat, but it doesn't matter. Or you stand in a circle, holding hands. That's always fun. I always like that. And you sing a song. Or you pray together. Or you just bow your head, and you sing, and you sway back and forth. You just put your hands together, maybe, and singing, and just sway back and forth, trying to find something deep within you. Or you pretend that you're surrounded by miracles of healing and of speaking in tongues. That's very exhilarating. You're in the presence of a work of God. All of this is the confusion of Satan to deny Christians their right to inner happiness. You don't get inner happiness that way.

Inner happiness only comes through those who are trained in the Word of God; they're positive to it; and, they have "epignosis" full knowledge stored in their human spirits. And the greater the spiritual IQ you have built there, the greater will be your spiritual maturity, and the stronger will be the spiritual maturity structure of your soul, of which inner happiness is a part, and the stronger will be your inner happiness.

**The Steps to Inner Happiness**

Spiritual stability is required for happiness. That grows out of functioning under this grace system of perception, which is what we're doing right now – to being illuminated in our souls concerning a part of the mind of God, so that you can have the materials to build this maturity within yourself. You're well acquainted with these steps. If you're going to find inner happiness, you have to follow this route:

1. **A Pastor-Teacher**

You have to get a pastor-teacher communicator of doctrine (Ephesians 4:11).

1. **Doctrine**

You have to be able to grasp and understand the doctrine that is taught in your perceptive thinking capacity (Ephesians 3:18). He teaches; you sit there; you pay attention; and, you learn.

1. **Say "Amen" to What You've Learned**

You make a decision about what you've just learned. You say "Amen" to it or you say "No" to it. You are positive to it, or you're negative. And if you are positive, this doctrine will be stored in your human spirit (Romans 8:16).

1. **A Frame of Reference of Doctrine in your Human Spirit**

You will now have, in the directive capacity of your mind, a frame of reference of doctrine which is cycled up from your human spirit to guide you in your thinking, and thus to guide your emotions, because it's your mind that decides your emotions, and to guide you in your will, because it's your mind that guides your will (Ephesians 3:19).

1. **Apply Doctrine**

In this way, you'll be able to apply the principles of doctrine toward God and man in your conduct and in your thinking (Ephesians 4:23-24).

1. **A Spiritual Maturity Structure in Your Soul**

The building of the spiritual stability in the soul with Bible doctrine is the call of our life. That's what it's all about. And when you do that, you'll build a spiritual maturity structure. One side will be grace orientation. You'll know what it is to be a grace person, and live under grace (1 Corinthians 15:10, Ephesians 4:29). You'll have a mastery of the details of life. You'll be able to handle financial matters. You'll not be enslaved to them (Matthew 6:33, Luke 12:15). You'll have a relaxed mental attitude. You'll have a capacity of having an emotional rapport with people. Whether they go up; or, whether they go down, you'll have an emotional rapport with them. This word refers to the emotion of love. It'll still be there for them (Galatians 5:22-23). You'll have the facet of the capacity for love, the "agape" type love – mental-attitude goodwill toward God (1 Corinthians 16:22). You'll have mental attitude goodwill toward the person you're married to (Titus 2:4). You'll have mental attitude goodwill toward all people (Romans 12:13). And the final facet is the one we're talking about: inner happiness (Philippians 1:4, Philippians 4:4). Inner happiness is part of that five-sided Pentagon that you build in your soul that we call the spiritual maturity structure of the soul.

Well, the result of this spiritual maturity structure in your soul is that you're an adult level Christian now. You find that the word of truth is applied in your experience, and divine good flows from your life (Ephesians 4:24, Matthew 5:13-16). You find that the glory of God is reflected in your life (Philippians 2:13). You find that you have a spiritual stability (Colossians 2:7). Your spiritual stability is there when the doctor looks you in the eye and says, "You have five days to live. What do you want to do? What has hit you is deadly. Put your affairs in order."

Is your happiness still going to be there? Will it be there when that child is born, and doesn't live? Is your inner happiness going to still be there while the tears of sorrow are there? If you have spiritual stability, and you have this facet of the spiritual maturity structure in your soul, you betcha you will. You'll take it in stride. Other people are going to look, and wonder why you're not breaking up. How can you do this? What's wrong with you? It's not what's wrong with you. It's what's right with you. That's inner happiness. And most Christians never come to it because they're in entertainment preaching instead of edification preaching that informs them.

You'll have a full knowledge stored in your human spirit of the Word of God (Ephesians 3:19). Your spiritual life will be the mind of Christ. You will fulfill God's purpose for your life on earth. Judgment will be exercised by you in dealing with people when you do have to judge people. Without mental attitude sins, you'll have discernment on how to apply the Word of God to other people (Ephesians 4:26).

And one of the main things you'll do is you will reject the doctrines of Satan (Ephesians 4:27). You will not be trapped by all these things that Satan likes to propose as new ideas in spiritual things.

You'll have integrity (Ephesians 4:28). How many people no longer sit in this auditorium? I look back over four decades, and I see their ghosts sitting there, and there, and there, and there, because they lacked financial integrity. They were cheats; deadbeats; and, con artists, even while they were sitting here under the sound of the Word of God, and nobody knew. That's the problem of falling in love with money. Eventually, you love it so much, you lose your personal integrity. And when you do, your inner happiness is gone. But when you have it, you're not a cheat.

When you have inner happiness, you have freedom from sins of the tongue (Ephesians 4:29). People are not perfect, but you're not all that hot either.

You maintain a status fellowship with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30-31). That filling of the spirit is maintained by confession of known sins.

Finally, you function in all of your life on a grace principle. You live and you let live. And you butt out of the business of other believers. And if you think they need something corrected, you hand them over to the Lord (Ephesians 4:32). And if they ask you, then you tell them.

Spiritual instability (no inner happiness) is the result of not having a spiritual maturity structure that's functioning in your soul. If you have a spiritual maturity structure, you will have inner happiness. The greater the structure, the greater the happiness. The greatest threat to your spiritual stability is mental attitude sins. Then you'll swing from ecstatic joy to morbid depression. Mental attitude sins are no fun. And yet, mental attitude sins are the kind that the self-righteous have, who have no bases of spiritual maturity in Christ, and who then wonder why they can't enjoy life.

Are you having a good time? Christ is our hope of glory and of eternal joy in His presence.

Our Father, we thank You for this Your Word, and we pray that You will help us to have a great appreciation for what the apostle is speaking about to these Colossians.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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