***Securing Inner Happiness

Colossians 1:1-2

COL-094***

Our subject is "Prayer for the Colossians, number 28" in Colossians 1:9-14.

2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scriptures is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for proof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 2:15: "Be diligent to present yourselves proved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth."

Enslavement to the lust pattern of the sin nature; the morally corrupting influences of world society; and, the temptations of Satan combine to create enormous unhappiness for mankind. At the end of Colossians 1:11, we were told that we were to live our lives in the spirit of joy: "Meeting life joyously." And yet everything about us: the world; the sin nature; and, the devil conspire against our personal happiness. Consequently, people live today under the burden of the effects of sin on the spirit; on the soul; and, on the body.

Job 5:7, in that book that God the Spirit prepared for us, tells us that man is born into unhappiness: "For man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward." This is the nature of our existence – that we are born into a world geared to unhappiness, because it is a world that is out of sync with God. The unbeliever, at his most favorable moment, is on a collision course with the effects of sin, and so is destined for unhappiness, both in time and in eternity. The unbeliever doesn't have a chance at happiness, no matter how he struggles, or how he pursues it. Only the Christian has the possibility, through the Word of God, finding happiness in life, in spite of all the things that surround him.

Most people actually go through life with a pretense of happiness. For them, it's an act of hypocrisy: "I'm happy," when they're not happy. All is well when it's not well. Daily life for them is a drudgery of earning a livelihood, and then an empty existence with the earnings. Now, that's not happiness. How about that? Is that about what sums up your life? A drudgery of earning a livelihood, and then an existence. For what? A person with an empty, meaningless life goes about in public in his misery with a pretense of happiness. He puts on a happy face. Certainly, there is no unhappiness like that of a Christian, who is either uninformed of Bible doctrine truth, or he is negative to it. That person becomes so unhappy that he even dislikes the pastor-teacher, and starts beating up on him, because they realize that he causes their unhappiness, by pointing out to them what the Word of God has to say.

For the believer, there are certainly always factors attacking his personal happiness. The Christian is not immune from personal mistreatment. Often, he is mistreated for the fact that he is a godly person, and that makes him sad. A Christian has reason to be distressed when he is slandered; when he is cheated; when he is rejected; when he is ridiculed; or, when he is tricked into personal sin by the world. That's one of the greatest tragedies – when the world can trick a Christian into sinning. And all the world does is view such a Christian with contempt. Christians are under the pressures of persecution. They lack sometimes physical rest. They have concerns for others, and there are concerns for having the necessities of life. All these things are demands that undermine the happiness of a Christian if he is not oriented to the Word of God, and understanding what the principle of inner happiness is all about.

One of the great unhappiness of life is keeping up with one's possessions to the neglect of learning and practicing the Word of God; to the neglect of maintaining temporal fellowship through your personal integrity; and to the neglect of serving the Lord, because your possessions are in your way. That'll cause enormous depression, and unhappiness like you wouldn't believe. Mental attitude sins are certainly the road to misery for a believer: the believer who worries; the believer who is envious; the believer who hates; the believer who has bitterness; or, the believer who has self-righteousness, arrogance, ill will, covetousness, or jealousy. It just makes some Christians, I have discovered, hopping mad when you point out that they're guilty of these kinds of things in their minds where none of us can see them, because they like to think about sins only as outward things. Otherwise, if you recognize that you have these metal attitude sins, you're no better than anybody else. And the problem is that your unhappiness will be just as great.

When men and women step out of their biblical roles, there is conflict and self-destruction in society. And what do we have all around us: teaching our boys not to be men; and, teaching our girls not to be women. And everybody stands around like ninnies afraid to sound off, like they're going to be accused of being some kind of bigots, because they say that girls should act in certain ways, and boys should act in another way that's appropriate.

So, what do we have? We are creating enormous unhappiness in society, and for people. Men do not take charge in the family, and they do not set the example in the duties of a leader. Fathers walk around like ninnies, waiting for their children to call the plays for them, and to tell them how things will be. Women, on the other hand, do not respect their husbands by acting in subjection to their leadership authority as the Word of God requires. And this is ridiculed, and made fun of. And what does it produce? Misery and unhappiness. Parents do not lead their children to put God and His word, and serving Him above all else. There is no sin like the sinfulness of a job that you should not have, when it conflicts, especially as a young person, with some Christian service activity. Is there no end to the madness which can possess us – that we will teach our children the things that will bring misery into their lives, as if we did not know better, just because everybody else does it?

Parents don't even hang around the house, so that they can live with their growing children. But they will look back someday, when those children are gone, with considerable regret of what might have been. And I guarantee you there is no sorrow, and there is no unhappiness in life like the unhappiness of the memory of what might have been.

So, Christians, with all the advantages and all the possibilities of personal happiness, are not immune to the undermining of their own personal joy that should be their characteristic lifestyle. So, there's a depression upon believers. But there is a solution.

First of all, you can start getting out of that hole of unhappiness by fellowshipping with doctrinally oriented believers with whom you share a natural camaraderie. In 2 Corinthians 7:6, the apostle Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, puts it this way: "But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus." So, here Paul says, "I was down in the mouth. I was blue. I was depressed by the situation that I found myself in when we were in Macedonia. And along comes my friend Titus." Timothy was a kind of a timid person, but Titus was a gung-ho kind of guy who was able to go wherever Paul needed him, as a troubleshooter, and to shake up some heads, and to roll some heads, and to get some people stabilized in the churches that Paul had to leave behind. You could count on Titus. He could count on Titus to get people doctrinally straight. And when he came along, Paul said, "Boy, did it lift my depressed spirits?" So there's a clue. If you're down, get yourself around people who are walking with the Lord.

Drop down to 2 Corinthians 7:13-14: "For this reason we have been comforted. And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before Titus proved to be the truth." Paul said, "I told you ahead of time I'm sending Titus, and this is one good man. This guy is a fun guy. This guy has a sense of humor. This fellow is on target. He will not deceive you in the Word of God. He's not going to govern his words such that he's going to upset you, or that you're going to be disagreeing with him. He's going to make it very clear. He will speak the mind of God as he understands it, and he will also make it clear to you that you are your own priest, and you can do whatever you wish with it. But he will not be stifled or intimidated by you. Timothy – you can scare him. Titus you will not intimidate. And if you will be open to his instruction, you'll find that you spirits will be lifted, and you'll be in the great blessing – the blessing that you deserve."

So, Paul said that one way to get your depression out was to get around the people of God that are living with God. These are the few believers that you can trust, and that you can enjoy to lift your depressed spirits in a proper way. You must remember that most Christians, even your good Christian friends, are potentially fickle. They are as self-seeking as a day is long. You won't have very many like Peter, James, and John. There'll be a very handful of those people that you know – "These people, I can always trust. These people, I can always depend on. These people are not going to say something to my face, and something else behind my back. These people are not going to be disloyal. These people will go for the jugular vein of anybody who comes after me. They are your true friends.

Some Christians themselves are so emotionally unstable, and they're so emotionally charged up that they go up and down, so that it's exhausting to be with them. Those kinds of Christians are very depressing. You should avoid them. Go for the one who is stable in the Word of God, not the one who is up and down in zeal without reason.

Secondly, you can help your depression by association with believers who respond with positive volition to Bible doctrine. First: people who live by the Word of God. Secondly, people who are positive to the Word of God. They are the friends of the truth. Therefore, they will be your friends. To that end, this is why we encourage your regular attendance in our Bible study times at Sunday school and Training Union and in the church services. These are the people that you should support in your local church ministries. These are the people who will not be going around with a critical attitude because the pastor-teacher isn't perfect even though he is faithful to the Word of God. These are the people whose attitudes create a happy state of mind for us, because with them, it's the Word, and the Word, and the word. And when the Word of God has sounded forth, their spirits rise, and they will carry you along with it. It'll encourage you to do what's right.

**Securing Inner Happiness**

So, let's look now at the securing of genuine happiness through the Word of God. First of all, you need to have a spiritual maturity in your soul – that spiritual maturity structure with its five sides that we've spoken of so often. Here in the book of Colossians, in our passage in Colossians 1:9-14, these verses describe a mature Christian. And we have been going through that in some detail. Here's what it says: "For this reason also, since the day we heard of your love, we have not ceased to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the full "epignosis" knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the full knowledge of God; strengthened with all power according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience, joyously; giving thanks to the Father Who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His Beloved Son, in whom we have redemption – the forgiveness of sins."

One of the features of the spiritual maturity structure is that inner happiness that is described by this word "joyously" at the end of Colossians 1:11. Inner happiness is a key feature of spiritual maturity.

1. **The Character of God**

Inner happiness is related to the character of God, so it is older than the human race. Happiness is associated with the character of God. God possesses perfect and eternal happiness. Galatians 5:22-23 describe the elements of the "fruit of the spirit," and there, joy is one of them. It is a description of a characteristic of Jesus Christ. God's grace expresses His relaxed attitude, and his perfect happiness in what He is, and what He has done. That's why the grace of God flows to us: because he is happy.

1. **The Divine Decrees**

Happiness is part of the divine decrees; that is, the overall plan of God. In eternity past, the Godhead sat down together, and they discussed the plan that they were going to have for everything that was ever going to happen, and everything that was ever going to take place. And we call that theologically "the divine decree" or "the decrees" in the various single aspects of it. But it's the overall divine plan. And that's where everything is going. And that's where everything is unfolding, and that's where everything's going to end up.

Well, happiness is at the heart of the plan of God. That is not at the heart of the plan of pagan religions (of pagan gods). They are not making people happy. They make people miserable. They put people in fear. In Christianity, you're put at ease and at peace with God, but not in pagan religions. They want you to be scared stiff of the gods. And that is what is at the heart of the plan of pagan god's. God's plan is happiness. In eternity past, God made happiness a part of His plan, and He determined that, come the time to create man, He would share that happiness with man.

John 15:11: "These things (of the Word of God)," Jesus said, "I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full." What a great verse. He says, "I'm teaching you these doctrinal principles so that the joy that I have as God, from eternity past, at a maximum level, that cannot be surpassed, will be characteristic of you." A human being as happy as God? In time, to share His happiness was the objective of the divine decree (the divine plan). This happiness begins at salvation, and it continues to flow through us through the doctrines of Scripture which God has provided for us.

Psalm 51:12, in the Old Testament, points out: "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and sustain me with a willing spirit." Here's the cry of the person who is out of fellowship – the person who is out of sync with God because the spirit of God does not fill him and does not control him. He says, "Please restore me to the joy of Your salvation. Sustain me with a willing spirit." And you get restored by admitting the sin.

In the New Testament, this same concept is in Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." We already have every possible spiritual blessing available to us in the heavenlies. It's only a matter of our entering into them, and capitalizing upon them through the Word of God.

1. **Grace**

God's happiness is transferred to man via grace. Ephesians 2:8-9 tell us that that happiness, which begins at the point of salvation, comes to us through a grace salvation", "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that (referring to that salvation) not of yourselves. It is a gift of God, not as a result of works that no one should boast." Grace solved the unhappy separation between God and sinners. Salvation and the perception of doctrine, which are the bases of happiness, come through the grace of God. It's only the grace of God that enables us to understand the principles of doctrine. It's only the grace of God that have brought you to the point where you realize how important that Word is. The grace system of learning spiritual things is the method which God has provided for transferring His happiness to the believer.

1 John 1:4: "And these things we write so that our joy may be made complete." What things? The things of doctrinal principles. This is the concept of living in the Word. And God's happiness is transferred through the Word of God by the act of the grace of God.

So, all these famous people in our society have great notoriety. Everybody knows about them. People see them. They recognize them. They're in entertainment. They're in sports. They're in all kinds of business activity. They're prominent here and there. But they're not happy. Why not? Because happiness comes through the knowledge of doctrine. These people are empty heads. They're very high IQs, but they're ignorant of doctrine. They're ignorant intellectuals, because there is no happiness apart from the Word of God.

So, don't let your children grow up with the concept that happiness is getting a career; doing the things you want to do; demanding your rights; or, spending your time accumulating things. You will waste your life. And someday you will stand before God and wonder why you were so foolish in how you wasted the opportunities to have enriched your eternity.

1. **The Plan of God**

Inner happiness can only be experienced within the plan of God. A sinner enters the plan of God at the point of his faith in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. John 20:31: "But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His name." And when you have life (the life of Christ), you have a happiness of Christ. Salvation does not provide us with continual inner happiness. What salvation does is that it makes it possible. Then we are to proceed with maintaining the filling of the Holy Spirit, so that that happiness will become a stable, consistent part of our lives.

In Acts 16:31-34, the Philippian jailer says, "What must I do to be saved?" This man is in great misery. He's in horror now of spending eternity in the lake of fire. The Spirit of God suddenly has opened his understanding, and he has grasped the reality of his condition: "And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved – you and your household.' And they spoke the Word of the Lord to him, together with all who were in his house. And he took them that very hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and immediately, he was baptized – he and all his household (that is, those who believed), and he brought them into his house, and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household."

When was the last time the jailer took you to his house for a meal? When was the last time a jailer treated you kindly after having abused you? Well, some of you probably have never been in jail. I've been in jail. I have to visit in jail. And one time we had a very sad case. Some young man, who used to be in the circle of our association, got mad at an old lady, whose house he was painting, and she said something, and he killed her. Now, that's big bad business. And the family came to me in a panic, and said, "Please go downtown to the Dallas County Jail and visit him. See what the situation is. So, I go there, and the jailer looks me over, and decides: "This guy is no problem." They open the door; let me in; and, close the door. And then they bring me to this fella, and I have to talk to him through a barrier, and you are really closed in.

And when I was through with my visit with him, I went back to main door. And there was nobody in sight. I thought that I might have to pray for there to be an earthquake in downtown Dallas to break open this jail. But fortunately I had the presence of mind, because I am trained in these sort of things from my reading and viewing, I brought a tin cup with me. And I scraped it across the bars. That's how you do it. You scrape this across the bars. It makes a terrible lot of noise. And soon the guard appeared. And they opened it, and then I knew what the word "slammer" meant. Because when they slammed that door, it slams. And it was the craziest thing because I'm just there as an angel of mercy – on a mission of mercy. And yet, when I walked out the door back down to the streets in Dallas, I looked above, and I had a sense of relief.

Now, here was this man who was in charge of these prisoners, and all of a sudden, he is oppressed with the sense of doom upon him. And how does happiness come to him? Through the grace of God that began when he entered the plan of God at the point of salvation – when he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently, the potential inner happiness that is there for every one of us became a reality for him. You and I, as Christians, keep living under that grace system of learning the Word. There is no IQ involved here. It's just a matter of being here. How smart do you have to be, in heaven's name, to get up every Sunday and come to church? How dumb do you have to be to have these long gaps before you show up at church, and then you pop in again, and you wonder why you have misery in your life? It's because there's no consistent feeding of the soul upon the Word of God. So, you can't build a spiritual maturity structure in your soul. Can you imagine what this does to your children?

1. **Eternity**

In eternity, perfect happiness will be automatic, since ultimate sanctification, or setting aside to eternal life and to all that that constitutes, will become a reality. Jude 24: "Now to Him Who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless, with great joy." When we are in His presence, you will know joy unspeakable, and you will be full of glory. And we cannot begin to imagine it. But you should remember that you have a little preview of that joy. And you should remember it when the hard times come. You should remember it when the bad news comes. You should remember it when the disappointment in other people comes towards you – that ultimately your joy is going to be beyond anything you can imagine. For you as a believer, your best times are always ahead. Wherever you are, and whatever the situation is, you take it in stride at that point in time, and let Almighty God unravel it, because happiness is what it's all about for you.

1. **Human Happiness**

Mere human happiness in time is a false joy. That's what the whole world keeps getting mixed up on – that human happiness somehow on a human is real. It's not. It's very false. Here's a great example of that, in Daniel 5:1-6. Daniel was one of the captives which was taken from Jerusalem when Nebuchadnezzar made his final conquest of Jerusalem; burnt the city; tore down the walls; and, destroyed the temple. He took certain select young men of promise, and probably of royal heritage, in order to train them in Babylon to be governmental agents. One of the greatest of them was Daniel, along with his three friends: Shadrach; Meshach; and, Abednego. Nebuchadnezzar moved on off the scene even as the Bible had foretold, and that world empire went into oblivion. It was, as Scripture had revealed by the image on the plain, to be replaced by a second world empire, which would be the Medo-Persian Empire, represented by the arms and chest of silver.

Darius of the Meads is now the ruler of this second world empire. And he decides to reorganize the governmental structure of his empire so that he can control it better. Daniel 6:1: "It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they should be in charge of the whole kingdom; and over them, three commissioners of whom Daniel was one, that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss." So, here's the organization. The country is divided up into 120 provinces. Each of them is ruled by a satrap. And these provinces are divided into three groups of 40 provinces each. And over each one is placed a ruler. And Daniel is one of these. Now, that's getting pretty high up in the governmental operation of this world Empire.

Obviously, Daniel must have been very pleased with this kind of a promotion. The money was better. The lodging was better. This was a good time for Daniel. Obviously, things were had become considerably better. Daniel 6:3: "Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself." That's bad. When you're in government, you should not distinguish yourself from the herd. You should not show that you're a greater quality person. That was not allowed in ancient Medo-Persia any more than it is in the United States today. We don't want people who are superior. We want everybody to be equally nothing. However, Daniel didn't learn that lesson, so he began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and the satraps (he was one of the three commissioners), because he possessed an extraordinary spirit.

Now, what do you suppose made his spirit extraordinary? Doctrine that he had stored there. That's what made him different. That's what makes you different: "And the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom." The king said, "I need one more administrator. I need somebody who is just second in the kingdom right under me. I'm going to replace Daniel with another commissioner, and Daniel's going to go up. He will be sub-king. He will be my right hand man. He'll be over the whole empire. This guy's a foreigner. Things were really looking up for Daniel. All this, however, while God is behind it, yet the maneuverings are on the human level.

"Then the commissioners and the satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs. They probably set up all kinds of commissions, and they had this gate, and that gate. They had the prayer gate. That was one of the big things they were looking at Daniel for. This guy kept praying out the window three times a day. And they were seeing all kinds of things that they could probably trap him on, to accuse him, and to bring him down from his position: "But they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption in as much as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him.

"Then these men said, 'We shall not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God." What a great thing to be able to say. How many of us can people about us say, "We'll never find anything against this person in his character that we can accuse him of? We'll have to do something to him to get him to violate his doctrinal principles. We'll have to bring him down with his God." That's what they're saying: "We can't bring him down. Let's get him to do something so that his God will bring him down."

"Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king, and spoke to him as follows: 'King Darius, live forever." And then you know the rest of the story. They accused Daniel of being steadfast in prayer, which he was. They weren't supposed to pray to anybody but to the king. And the result was that the king, to his great grief, had to throw him in the lions’ den. Daniel was like a big mackerel – a powerful man. Fish were often symbols in those days. And the lions did not like holy mackerel. So, they didn't touch him. They would come up; take one sniff; and, they left him. They didn't want anything to do with him.

So, the king was quite happy that his top man was not eaten. But two sniffs of a lion's mouth, all of Daniel's happiness would've been gone. That's the point. Mere human happiness, in time, is always false. If it is not happiness that flows from the workings of the Word of God, and thus the will of God, it is a false happiness. That is because that kind of happiness on the human level depends on three things. It depends upon compatibility with people; it depends upon the money you have; and, it depends upon the circumstances of life. Those things change all the time. Human happiness is based on really getting your way in life, not being cross so that you're free to indulge the sin nature. That's what most people consider happiness, and that turns to ashes in their mouth.

I guarantee you that indulging your signature is a pleasure. Isn't that what Hebrew says, that Moses found? He found that he understood that sin was a pleasure, but it tells us that Moses said, "I don't want the pleasures of sin. I'm going to stay with the honor of my people Israel, and with my God. But the pleasures of sin were no real pleasures to Moses because he knew that they would turned to ashes in his mouth. Human happiness will deteriorate into boredom, restlessness, frustration, and instability. You'll be looking for the next happening. Human happiness will break down under the pressures of life, when suddenly you get some bad news, and then you're no longer happy. There's nothing to sustain you.

For happiness, the believer often gets into some form of slavery to take up the slack. So, he goes to alcohol; he goes to drugs; he goes to eating; he goes to all kinds of immorality; or, he goes to all kinds of false doctrine. Don't forget that. That's another way to take up the slack. When your happiness is only based on a human level of something you have, or some person, or some circumstance, you'll go to false doctrine to find some kind of happiness.

1. **Permanent and Stable**

God has designed his provision of happiness to be permanent and stable through the spiritual maturity structure which is in the soul. John 17:13: "But now I come to You," Jesus says to His Father. "And these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy made full in themselves." God has provided, through the learning of the Word of God, the basis for genuine happiness. This is the inner happiness of the spiritual maturity structure which enables you to enjoy all of your money; to enjoy your life; and, to enjoy your walk with God at the same time. Only the Word of God will enable you to do that. And please remember the principle that I taught you a couple of weeks ago. There's only one way that you can enjoy your money. You have to give it away in God's work. Jesus made that very clear: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And if you think that happiness is in getting money, then you're violating the Word of God, and you're playing a foolish game. If you want happiness, and if you want to have your spirits lifted, get rid of your money into God's work. And you're not going to impoverish yourself, because He's not going to let that happen. But you'll have enormous joy because you find yourself able to give away the funds that He's given you. Then there will be blessing, and He will replace it. He will replace it with rewards on this side of eternity or in eternity. You can count on that.

This happiness that God has provided through His Word begins with the filling of the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation (Galatians 5:22). And it reaches maturity in the spiritual maturity structure of the soul, which is what we just read of this morning in Colossians 1:9-12. This inner happiness of the spiritual maturity structure is what's going to sustain the believer in the most difficult circumstances of life. These are the bad news times when the Word of God's happiness will carry us through.

So, what are we talking about? The daily use of learning the Word; staying in the Word; and living in the Word – that's the key to inner happiness, since this is the means for building a spiritual maturity structure (1 John 1:4).

1. **Blessed**

In Matthew 5, we have the word "blessed." We call that passage the beatitudes. That word "blessed" means "happy." So, instead of "Blessed are the poor in spirit," you could say, "Happy are the poor in spirit." Just change it to that because this is a compilation of attitudes that provide happiness.

1. **Priesthood**

The believer is to exercise his priesthood daily in the maintenance of inner happiness. The spiritual maturity structure will always deteriorate, and the Christian will always go backwards spiritually if it is not maintained. You maintain it, first of all, with 1 John 1:9 – confessing those known sins and making correction. And don't be lying to yourself about the fact that you've got something to confess. If you do, you will come to the point where you won't know that you have something to confess. You'll be so jaded.

Isn't that what it says? Isn't that what Ephesians 4:18 says – that you'll have a hardness upon your soul? And you'll be completely out of it. And you'll be in a tailspin. The daily use of learning the Word of God is a way to maintain your inner happiness which you've developed.

This is what Matthew 4:4 says: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeded from the mouth of God."

James 1:25 says, "But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty (that is, the word of grace), and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer, but an effectual doer – this man shall be blessed in what he does." What does the word "blessed" mean? It means happy. The person who learns the Word and who does it, he's the one that finds happiness.

Then there's John 13:17: "If you know these things, you're blessed if you do them." This is the problem. If you know these things – maybe you do, and maybe you don't, but if you do, and you do them, you'll be blessed. So much of the grief is not doing what we know. When was the last time that you got slapped in the face by a trickery of Satan with some sin? It happened because you didn't do the Word of God at some point, or he wouldn't have brought you into it. He couldn't have tricked you. It's because you thought your peers; your friends; your surroundings; your society; or, American life was smarter than the Word of God. Please remember that we are all surrounded by enormous stupidity. And remember the fundamental principle that I enunciated a few weeks ago. Most people are ignorant because they think they have a knowledge of something. Those who think they really know, when they are not in the know, are those who miss the best that God has. It's knowing doctrine. Then you know something.

1. **Protection from Disillusionment**

Divine inner happiness protects a Christian from disillusionment so that he will abandon doctrine as his life. Christians say that it doesn't work. Here I've been trying to be obedient, and do the right thing, and look at my life. And it brings disillusion because they don't have inner happiness. They have not been staying in the Word, so they become disillusioned. Inner happiness will protect you from being disillusioned in the circumstances of your life. The things that come into your life – you can't control them. There they are. When they come, you have to cope with them.

In Philippians 4:11-12, Paul says, "Not that I speak from want, for I've learned to be content in whatever circumstance I am. 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 of suffering need." Whatever circumstances came upon Paul, he said, "I'm still happy. Things are hard. I'm still happy." And ultimately, of course, he was always happy because he knew the end of the story: "I'm going to heaven, where joy will be unspeakable, and full of glory forever."

Divine inner happiness will protect you from being disillusioned by the details of life. 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.'" The bread will always be on the table. The milk will always be in the jug: "So that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not be afraid: What shall man do to me?"

And divine inner happiness will protect you from the disillusionment in relationship to people. Hebrews 12:2-4: "Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, Who, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." He had great joy while He was suffering. He had great joy while He was dying: "For consider Him Who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart." Christ is our role model. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin." How many of you have bled as He did?

Hebrews 12:5-6: And have you forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons? My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him. For those whom the Lord loves, He disciplines. And He scourges every son whom He receives." He will beat you up, if you keep insisting on staying out of fellowship. If you keep insisting on letting the sin nature run your life, he will scourge you until you say, "That's it. I'm through being stupid. I'm going to let Him do it His way." The fact that a person is a Christian does not mean that he is nice, honest, truthful, dependable, or loyal. So, don't get your eyes on people, but keep them on the Lord.

I like it the way Jeremiah put it. Jeremiah 17:5: "Thus says the Lord, 'Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind, and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the Lord." That is dumb.

1. **Capacity for Love**

Inner happiness enhances one's capacity for love. In that lovely book on marital love, the Song of Solomon 3:1, inner happiness enhances one's capacity for love. The fragrant, happy memories bestir new depths of love toward the one we love: "On my bed, night after night, I sought him, whom my soul loves. I sought him but did not find him." The happiness that was there because there was genuine love was only expanded with new degrees of excitement.

Unhappiness, however, will also destroy your ability to express love. Song of Solomon 8:6: "Put me like a seal over your heart; like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death. Jealousy is as severe as Sheol, the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire – the very flame of the Lord." Unhappiness in marital love will destroy your capacity to express that love. We will learn more about that in time.

1. **An Admonition**

Finally, inner happiness is admonished to the believer on the earth. Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always. And again I say rejoice." This is clearly an admonition to the Christian. This is the way you are to live. Inner happiness is to be your lifestyle.

In the Greek language, it so happens that, at the ending of a verb that declares a statement, like, "Rejoice" – just a statement, is in one person the same as when it is a command. So, we can't say just from looking at the Greek, whether "rejoice" here is a command, or whether it is just a statement of fact. I'm inclined to think that it is a command. I think it is a divine command because of all that God has provided to make inner happiness possible. So, I think that probably what was meant there is that God is telling us: "You rejoice," because it says, "in the Lord." That's in the Word of God. Otherwise, you couldn't do this. He can't commend you to rejoice if he doesn't make it possible. But doctrine does do that.

Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say rejoice." God always supplies the enablement when He tells us to do something. You cannot legislate feelings. You cannot command how a person is going to feel. That is something that only doctrine can create.

So, here are 12 points for inner happiness to be the reality in the life of the believer. And it all gets back to being in church, and being taught the Word of God, and taking it to your heart with positive volition, and letting it grow and function in your life, so that constantly the spirit of God is reminding you of these things, so that this is how you live. And you will not be putting yourself under grief. You'll be letting God be God. And happiness will be the norm. That is to what we have been called. Anytime we are in misery, it's our fault, not His. He has made it possible for us to deal with people; to deal with circumstances; and, to deal with things. We are not drudges. We're the happiest people on the face of the earth when we enable ourselves to be what God has designed us to be. Why not you?

Our Father, we thank You for this time together in Your Word. We pray that You will help us to appreciate what we have learned, and to bring together once more to our own understanding that those of us who are fanatical for the Word of God, and who treat it as the holy, living, active, and powerful thing that it is are not going to be unrewarded by You. We pray that we are not going to be like the rest of the world. We will look with great suspicion upon everybody, and especially our young people, who move all day long sometimes through a sea of disorientation – that they would look with suspicion of all those about them who know not the deep things of the Word of God. That's what makes the difference. And we pray for victory that is appropriate for those of us who are in the royal family. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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