***Praying with Joy - PH13-01  
  
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:4***

Berean Memorial church is sometimes accused of being a church for an elite group--an elite kind of thinking person. The only kind of elite group that we are designed for in this ministry is the elite group which is positive to the Word of God.

I've had occasions where people felt they had to go someplace that was more at their level. A lady, who had recently married, on one occasion told me after she and her husband attended for a while, that her husband was very uninformed in the Word of God. She made one of those unfortunate mistakes of marrying somebody beneath her spiritually. People that you marry who are beneath you spiritually have a way of never catching up even after you're married. She married a man like that, so it was already a grief to her. She thought that her solution would be to take him someplace where there was a little more jump and jive and emotionalism, and less instruction in the Word of God.

However, you may find that if you will apply yourself, and open your heart to what God has to teach you, that you too can be one of those elite. If you are not informed on the Word of God, then the last thing on earth you need to do is to go someplace that is not going to inform you. Satan has a way of distorting our thinking and enabling us to come out with just the opposite. The speaker is not perfect. The presentation will not be perfect. However, that's beside the point. The issue is that God is perfect. In a military parade, when the troops march by the reviewing stand, the command is, "Eyes right," and everybody snaps the head to the right, looking at the reviewing officer. The command for us as believers is, "Eyes up," on Jesus Christ before whom we are passing in review. The fact that the troops are not perfect and the formation is something less than perfect is beside the point. The issue is that we are on parade. We are engaged in an angelic warfare, and God is able to override every problem and every burden.

Therefore, we do confess to you that we will not try to put the cookies on a lower shelf where the people can reach them. We're going to put the cookies up on the shelf where they belong so that you can stretch out and become the Christian you ought to be to be, reaching for what God has prepared for you on the level that He has prepared it. So now our advice to you is to confess; relax; pay attention; and, join the elite.

**Grace**

We are studying the book of Philippians as we look now at Philippians 1:4-5. Paul, in his greeting to the Philippians, bids them the blessings of grace and peace in Verse 2. "Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ." The grace of God is the most magnificent thing that any human being has ever experienced. It is God's way of dealing with us in this age. It is one of the things that man is most prone to reject. One of the things that human pride and arrogance causes man to do is to reject the grace of God in certain areas.

**Pride**

One of the areas in which we reject the grace of God because of pride is the pride of the believer who rejects eternal security which God's grace has provided. This is the believer who thinks that his salvation depends on something that he does or something that he does not do, rather than on what God is and what God alone has done. Anyone who ever questions that once you are saved you are forever always saved, is only questioning that out of pure unadulterated human pride and arrogance which causes him to reject the grace of God which has ensured your eternal safety.

There is also the pride of the believer who cuts out under pressure of adversity in his life--an adversity which grace has been provided to sustain him in. This is the believer whose arrogance leads him to think that his suffering is more than he can bear, and it's more than the grace of God can uphold him in.

Then there is the pride of the believer with a false spirituality rather than the grace provision of the filling of the Spirit. This is the believer who thinks that his human good is the work of God the Holy Spirit rather than something that God totally rejects. Then there is the pride of the believer who is under emotional domination of the soul rather than having a mind which is controlled and filled with the doctrine of the Word of God. This is the believer who thinks that how he feels about things is more important than what the Word of God has to say. His feelings are more important than doctrine. So human pride and human arrogance rejects this magnificent thing that Paul did in the way of blessing to these Philippian Christians.

Remember that grace is not something that God divides up to us. Grace is something that is multiplied to us. It is something that is without limits. The grace of God is not a given amount that He divides up among all of us, and then when it's gone, it's gone, and it's used up. He multiplies it so that there is no end to it. It is this grace which has provided us with a plan of salvation that satisfies the righteousness and the justice of God so that a sinner can go to heaven. It is grace which gives us freedom to live our lives without being slaves to the sin nature so that we can really serve the Lord. It is grace which has provided us with a means for learning doctrine. This is the grace system of perceiving spiritual things which bypasses our human IQ; it bypasses our ability; it bypasses being inspired by human persuasion; and, so on.

For that reason, you can be an elite in the Word of God. It matters not who you are or what your background is. You should never be treated as a child of God as someone who is less than fully capable of understanding 100% of the Word of God that's your heritage.

Therefore, it is the grace of God that provides for us all these magnificent things, and out of this grace also comes this peace that Paul bids to the Philippian Christians. Paul, we found, remembers the Philippian Christians with thanksgiving. These memories can be fragrant, or these memories can be a source of sadness. In our own experience, as we take doctrine and we mix it with our experiences, we create fragrant memories. These are memories that we look back upon with blessings. On the other hand, we can create memories in our life which we look back upon with regret. Every day of your life you are building memories. These are memories that are going to produce happiness, or memories that are going to produce sadness.

**Philippians 1:4**

So we now look at verse 4: "Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy." The word "always" is the Greek word "pantote." It simply means "at all times." What the apostle Paul is saying here is that every time he thinks about these Philippian Christians, he makes requests for them in prayer, and it is under a condition of happiness. In other words, it indicates that there was a certain consistency in the spiritual life and service of the Philippians that enabled him always to remember them in the spirit of happiness. The Philippian church had reached a certain level of spiritual stability which is rare among churches. The Philippian church members were stable, not only when things were going well, but they were stable in the midst of injustices; in the midst of uncertainties; in the midst of privations; in the midst of tragedies; and, even in the midst of the amenities of other Christians. Spiritual stability is at the heart of inner happiness. If you are going to be a happy person, there is no way that you can experience that unless you come to spiritual stability.

**Spiritual Stability**

Therefore, the first thing you have to know is how to become a spiritually stable Christian. You want to be somebody who is not on a roller coaster up and down. It is impossible to get real happiness unless you have spiritual stability. It is impossible for people around you to be happy if you are spiritually unstable. The people who make us unhappy are the people who are not set in their spiritual lives so that they have a stable platform from which to operate. Where do we get spiritual stability? Well, it grows out of our functioning under the grace system of perception, which is God's provision for learning doctrine, out of which we build a spiritual maturity structure in our souls.

**The Grace System of Perception**

Let's review for just a moment the steps in the functioning of the grace system of perception. When we talk about the grace system of perception, we're talking about why you can be one of the (so-called) spiritual elites. You can be one of the people who is positive to doctrine. You can be one of the people who is functioning on the principles of the Word of God. Here are certain steps. We're going to use words. When we say "a grace system of perception," you can call it any number of other things, but it is obvious that you cannot learn the Word of God without vocabulary. You have to have certain words that describe certain things so that you understand what it is that you're referring to. You're taking a foreign language, the Greek language, and you're converting it into our language, and you're taking concepts from the Word of God, and you're trying to find words to summarize them. The grace system of perception is such a summary. It has these steps:

1. There is **the communicator of Bible doctrine** (Ephesians 4:11). God has provided someone to teach. It is the pastor-teacher in the local church. It is the Sunday school teacher in the Sunday school class. It is the individual believer out there on the job, as he is performing the job as his ambassadorship in witnessing and informing people about the Word of God. There is a communicator of the Word.
2. There is **the comprehension of Bible doctrine** in the perceptive mind (Ephesians 3:18). There is a part of our mentality with which we learn things, and God has provided us a way to learn doctrine. He does this when we are filled with the spirit (that is that we have all known sin confessed) so that we can listen to instruction and we can understand it.
3. Then the third step is the **storage of doctrine in the human spirit** (Romans 8:16). When we receive by faith (believe) what we have been taught from the Word of God, then God the Holy Spirit is able to teach our spirits, and we enter into a reception of that particular truth. It becomes part of our being. It becomes part of the storage of our human spirit.
4. From this Bible doctrine, we develop **a frame of reference in the directive mind** (Ephesians 3:19). Now we have another function of our mentality which is to make decisions. Doctrine gives us the guidance for the making of all of the many decisions of life that you and I are faced with.
5. Next is **the application of doctrine toward God and man** (Ephesians 4:23-24). This is where we take the Word of God and we apply it now. On the one side, because we know doctrine, we can apply the Word toward God. We know how to pray. We know how to faith rest. We know how to cast our burdens upon Him. We know how to deal with God. On the other side, because we have this frame of reference, we know how to deal with people. We know how to move with people and still keep our eyes on the Lord. We know how to deal with the problems of people. We know how to deal with the problems that arise because of what people do to us, and so on.
6. Then we have **the building of the spiritual maturity structure in the soul with Bible doctrine**  (Ephesians 4:12-13). The point of learning doctrine is to build spiritual maturity in your soul. You should grow up as a Christian. The Bible compares this to erecting a building in your soul. You erect this building on the basis of doctrine that you learn. This building may be divided into 5 basic facets. You may think of this in terms of a pentagon because this spiritual maturity structure is the base of your defense against Satan and the angelic demons who have joined him, who are constantly attacking you. It is also the base of your attack upon the forces of darkness. Therefore, it is well compared to a pentagon with these 5 sides:
   * First of all, it has grace orientation (1 Corinthians 15:10, Ephesians 4:29). That is, you understand how to function on the grace principles.
   * It has a mastery of the details of life as a second side (Matthew 6:33, Luke 12:15). You are able to control your attitude and your treatment of prosperity and poverty.
   * A third side is a relaxed mental attitude (Galatians 5:22-23). This is an "agape" love, a mental attitude free of bitterness so that you have a relaxed mental outlook.
   * Next is the capacity to love. In 1 Corinthians 16:22, this capacity is toward God. In Titus 2:4, this is capacity towards your husband or wife. In Romans 12:13, this is capacity toward other people and your friends. This is a "phileo" love. This is an emotional quality expression.
   * Then the fifth side of the pentagon is inner happiness which this book of Philippians is all about (Philippians 1:4, Philippians 4:4).

If you want to know more about this in detail, you can get the series of audio recordings on this. This is just a summary. I'm trying to show you how, out of functioning under the grace system of perception that God has provided for you to learn doctrine, you may erect spiritual maturity in your soul. What we are driving toward here is that you, out of this spiritual maturity, will experience happiness--real, genuine, inner happiness for which people spend thousands and millions of dollars going to psychiatrists trying to secure.

**Spiritual Maturity**

If you are this kind of a mature Christian with these facets fully developed in your soul, there will be certain things that will be true of you. You will find that you will be able to take the Word of God and apply it in your experience, and that your service will be divine good production (Ephesians 4:24, Matthew 5:13-16). The glory of God will be reflected in your life (Philippians 2:15). This spiritual maturity *is* the glory of God being reflected in you. You possess a spiritual stability (Colossians 2:7), which is the necessary base for happiness.

You will have full knowledge stored up in your human spirit (Ephesians 3:19). In other words, you will have a spiritual IQ. Because you have been receptive to the Word, you will develop a spiritual IQ. Please remember that when you are born again as a believer, you do not have a spiritual IQ. As a matter of fact, the spiritual IQ that you have is exactly zero, and you go up from that point. There are some Christians that hardly get past five-and-a-half in their IQ spiritually, and that's about the extent of what they can do. Some of them never have a chance to develop a spiritual IQ because nobody is ever teaching them the real significant things about the Word of God. If you are a mature believer, you'll have an IQ in your spiritual life.

Also a mature believer will fulfill God's purpose for his life on Earth. A mature believer will have a judgment which he'll be able to exercise toward people. This will be a judgment free of mental sins. Therefore, it will be a judgment which gives discernment (Ephesians 4:26). We're going to talk a little more about this kind of judgment in the future--how you can exercise judgment toward people as discernment, and not fall into the trap of the condemnation of God for judging which the Bible forbids.

A mature Christian will reject doctrines of Satan (Ephesians 4:27). A mature Christian will have financial integrity (Ephesians 4:28). A mature Christian will have freedom from the sins of the tongue (Ephesians 4:29). A mature Christian will maintain the status of fellowship with God the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30-31). A mature Christian will function in life on the grace principle (Ephesians 4:32). All of these will flow out of the fact that this Christian has developed spiritual maturity.

**Happiness**

With spiritual maturity, comes spiritual stability. Spiritual instability, that is no spiritual maturity structure or a weak one, means unhappiness, but a strong spiritual maturity structure means happiness. There is no way for you to go out in life and say, "I want to be happy." There is no way for you to rear your children and teach them how they are going to be happy in life unless you teach them that God has provided them a way by grace to learn doctrine. Doctrine bring spiritual maturity in these various facets. These facets give them the stability so that they have an inner happiness, and therefore they have what they are seeking.

If you or your children do not come to this kind of happiness, then you will sublimate. You will seek to make yourself happy with substitutes. There are all kinds of substitutes, none of which will provide you real happiness. They will give you a certain excitement at the moment. You may decide that the way you are going to be happy is to earn a million dollars. You are going to learn how to invest your money so as to come into a position of great financial power. You will find that when you make your first million, you're still unhappy, after the excitement and the thrill is over. You're still just as shallow and just as distressed in your soul as you were before. The greatest threat to spiritual stability, and this maturity which we need, is mental attitude sins. You will swing from joy to morbid depression. Even your fun will become depressive just because of mental sins. Therefore, that's the pattern. Do you want to be happy? God has given you a system for taking in the Word. This Word builds a spiritual maturity structure. This gives you spiritual stability, and from there God can share with you His happiness.

**Prayer**

The apostle Paul says in verse 4, "Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy." "In every prayer" is "enpasdeesis." This is prayer in terms of a specific petition for a definitive need. This word "deesis" means a specific petition of prayer. Paul, as a prayer warrior, is making specific requests in behalf of the Philippians. It says, "Prayer of mine." Paul was one of the great prayer warriors of all times. He was extremely effective. One of the reasons he was so effective was that he was happy. Happy people make good prayer warriors. Unhappy people are unstable, and therefore, prayer with them goes in binges. They also participate in grotesque practices in their prayers in order to get God's attention. They will come up with certain inventions and ways of praying in order to get God's attention.

So they're going to pray. How are they going to pray effectively? How will we pray fervently? They will say, "Well, I'll tell you. We'll pray all night. That's one way we'll really get God's attention, if we pray all night. We'll need to get enough coffee, and maybe put something in it. Keep awake. I'll pray all night. Wonderful. God will surely pay attention to that."

Perhaps if we go into our walk-in closet, God will pay more attention to us. Lie down on the floor on your face, close the door, and pray. What could be better? Certainly God will pay attention to anybody who would lie on his face in the closet praying. People come up with all of these devices in order to get God's attention. This is because they are unstable.

The apostle Paul was a happy person who didn't have to go through that kind of prayer binging and inventing and grotesque practices. I think we will have to admit that there are few Christians today who are exploiting the great potential of prayer. Prayer is an unexplored frontier. The only people who have a vision for prayer are the people who have that spiritual maturity structure developed. When they have a spiritual maturity structure developed, they are stable Christians. One of the things that goes along with spiritual stability is interest in prayer. Because most of us are so weak in our spiritual maturity, our prayer consequently is also erratic. We pray as a sometimes thing. We are actually not under the oppressive sense of need to pray. Therefore, we are rushing off to do all the things in life that have to be done that day, and the last thing we get around to, if we do it at all, is prayer.

So there's a certain coolness and an indifference toward prayer. As a matter of fact, we even resent people who are promoting prayer meeting and making a big thing over gathering together in prayer or maintaining a personal prayer life. There is a resentment toward that kind of stress. However, prayer warriors are that because they function under the grace system of learning the Word of God. Therefore, they have developed stability, and they have developed a vision for the practice and the power of prayer.

If you are not married, you are probably in the position to be a better prayer warrior than somebody who is married. The Word of God indicates that your unmarried status enables you (as in the case of widows, for example) to have freedom and time for engaging in prayer. Women, consequently, in their normal situation, can be particularly outstanding in the area of prayer. Their situation lends itself for women to be outstanding prayer warriors. Those of us who are in the ministry know how important it is for people to be praying for us. Here and there, around the country, one of the things I value most is people who have come up to me (and some of them from years ago--as far back as my seminary days) and said, "Every day, we pray for you, John." Every now and then I run across them, and I check, and they say, "Yes, every day your name is on our lips in prayer." Prayer warriors make all the difference in the world as far as the kind of spiritual accomplishment that we experience. I'll tell you that it makes all the difference in the world, under satanic attack--when you're being fired upon by Satan and his human agents.

Please remember we never deal with human beings. Any human being is simply an agent of Satan. Human beings simply carry things out. You don't want to get confused and mixed up by any human being. Always keep your eyes on the Lord, and recognize that it's an agent behind that human being who is doing the firing, and that it's not that individual. In any case, when you're under that kind of fire, that's when prayer is the only shield that you have.

Therefore, the apostle Paul was not doing a small thing for these Philippian Christians whom he loved and esteemed highly, and who were a joy to his heart, when he prayed for them. Every time he went to prayer for them, it was a very wonderful happy experience. When it says, "For you," that's the Greek preposition "huper" which means "on behalf of." "On behalf of you all (that is, the Philippian Christians), making request." The word "making" is "poieo" which means "to do." Paul was doing something for them, and what he was doing was making a request. There is our word "deesis" again. This is a specific petition for a specific need. The Philippian Christians were not perfect. Therefore, they had certain specific needs in their spiritual lives, and the apostle Paul, as a believer priest, was engaged in the sacrifice of prayer in their behalf.

He did this "with joy." The Greek word "with" is "meta," which is a word of association. "Joy" refers to inner happiness which is part of the spiritual maturity structure. The apostle Paul was able to pray for these people with a certain inner happiness within his being because he had a spiritual maturity structure.

His was not the unhappy kind of praying that you have to do for Christians sometimes, such as praying for their correction; praying for their deliverance; or, when somebody is firing at you, and you have to go to the Lord and say, "Lord, I am placing Mr. so-and-so in Your care for Your dealing with, relative to this matter. That's a very frightful thing to do to a person. You deliver a person into the Lord's hands for His dealing with them concerning some action. You want to remember that you may have just enriched the undertaker, because God moves in with a prayer like that (prayed under the condition of a believer who's filled with the Spirit). You commit somebody into God's hands for discipline, for an action in which they are engaged, and they will begin to crack up in various ways. One of the first signs will be illness--a constant eroding illness that will become progressively worse. A second sign will be emotional distress of various kinds. Ultimately, this can lead to that person's physical death if they do not respond to the discipline under which God places them.

The apostle Paul didn't have to pray like he did for the Corinthians. He had to commit them to that very thing. As a matter of fact, he told the whole church, "I want you to commit Mr. so-and-so, within the congregation, who has violated a principle of morals. He has to be committed now to God so that Satan would be free to attack him physically and possibly to take his life. That man was committed into the hands of Satan. In his case, he responded, and he did not die.

Paul did not have to pray for the Philippians here from grief over their lack of vision over their reverting from spiritual maturity, or because they had fallen into spiritual insanity that the Bible calls great delusion.

**Depression**

However, it is true that Christians experience depression. Before we look at happiness, let's look at some of the reasons that Christians go into depression. Everybody, someplace along the line, faces the problem of being unhappy. Depression is the opposite of happiness. It's an unpleasant psycho-physiological state of feeling empty, sad, moody, and oppressed.

**Reasons for Depression**

There are some general reasons for depression.

1. **People** make you depressed (2 Corinthians 7:1-2). In these verses, the apostle Paul is listing certain things which he tells the Corinthians are not the things that he did to them. However, these are the kind of things that will cause you to be depressed, when people do these things to you. He says that he "wronged no man." When people abuse us, they slander us; or, they misrepresent us, we tend to get depressed unless we have spiritual stability. When people misrepresent you, it gets very discouraging. Paul also says that he corrupted no man. That is, he did not lead people into moral compromise. So they were not depressed because they were victims of his misguidance. Then it says he did not defraud any man. People cheat us and people are unscrupulous, and this tends to make us depressed.
2. Then there was a second reason we get depressed, and that's **pressure**. In 2 Corinthians 7:3-6, we have several words that reflect pressures. In verse 4, we have the word "tribulation" which in the Greek is "thlipsis." This word refers to pressures, to oppressions, and to afflictions which are brought on by your outward circumstance. They cause a spirit of depression. This is the same word which is used of the great tribulation--that period of seven years which is the end of the dispensation of the Jews, but which will be a time of great pressures on the people who live in it. In Colossians 1:24, we have the sufferings of Christ bearing our sins represented by this word.

It is used of mental anguish in 2 Corinthians 2:4. Matthew 24:21 uses it of the calamities of war. John 16:21 uses it of the pressures of a woman in childbirth. Acts 11:19 uses the word as pressure under persecution. However, you will notice in 2 Corinthians 7:4, "Great is my boldness of speech toward you. Great is my glorying of you. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation" (in all our "thlipsis"). Paul says that he is exceedingly happy in this tribulation. You wonder how he can be so happy when he is suffering the kind of tribulation and the pressures represented by this word.

Why could he be happy? Because he had a spiritual maturity structure and an inner happiness that came from that spiritual stability. In verse 5, we have the word "no rest." This is the Greek word "anesis." This means "no relief from suffering." When you have no relief from suffering, if you are not spiritually stable, it will depress you. 2 Corinthians 2:13 uses this word as relief from anxiety. 2 Thessalonians 1:7 uses this word as relief from the pressure of persecution. In verse 5 he also uses the word "troubled." "We are troubled on every side." This is the Greek word "thlibo." This means suffering from circumstances or from the antagonisms of other people. Actually, it means "to be hemmed." This is to find yourself caught in a squeeze. It's used in that sense in Matthew 7:14. It means to be pressed upon like a crowd moving in on you, as in Mark 3:9.

Therefore, the idea is something that compresses your soul, and it causes you to be depressed. Then in verse 6, he uses another word "tapeinos." It's translated as "cast down," and it means to be in a low position of power and esteem. Here it is used of an abject state--an abject depressed condition. Paul was under constant pressure from demons; from Jews; from gentiles; and, from Christians. So verse 5 tells us that Paul had battles on the outside, and he had fears on the inside. He was cast down.

These words signify to us some of the experiences that Christians can go through, and we can be depressed by these pressures.

1. We can also be depressed by **the details of life**. These are the necessities as well as the luxuries. These become enemies of our happiness. These details cause us to stay home from church services; to keep us from studying the Word by listening to audio recordings; and, to keep us from being preoccupied with the Lord because we have to be preoccupied with our possessions. Therefore, we neglect the learning of the Word; we neglect our fellowship with the Father; and, we become depressed.
2. Then there are **physiological factors**. This may be disease; it may be a hormone imbalance; or, it may be fatigue. All of these can cause depression. I hope you have the good sense never to review your day at the end of the day. Don't ever sit down when it is dark outside and review your day. You are so fatigued that you cannot intelligently, and in an emotionally stable way, evaluate your day. Don't ever go to bed and lie there thinking over all of the events of the day. Do you know there are people who do that? There are people who sit down and think over their day just before they go to bed, and man, everything looks terrible then. The same things the next morning have a totally different perspective.

When I was a teenager we had an elderly deacon in our church, a little church on the corner in Chicago. One of the things he told me was to never make a decision when you're tired. When you are ready to go to bed, you are tired. That is no time for you to be reviewing your status. Yet, it is amazing how many people just cannot control themselves. They don't have the spiritual maturity to be able to say, "No, at this point, I don't think about the events of the day. When I go to bed, I don't think about all the things that I need to do tomorrow or that I should have done better today.

We may be unhappy because we lack physical vitality. We may suffering from malnutrition. These are all physiological factors. Mental illness can cause depression. You wake up in the morning and you're singing like a bird, and you're just as chirpy and nice as can be. Then you get the mail, and that depresses you a little bit. Then you meet some of your friends, and that depresses you more. Then as soon as sundown comes, like the werewolf, you begin to transform right before everybody's eyes, and a nocturnal depression settles in upon you.

A mental imbalance that you don't straighten out with the Lord will cause you to go into a depressive state. Loneliness can cause depression. 2 Timothy 4:10-18 tells about Paul's happiness in contact with his workers in the ministry. Carnality can cause depression through worry; fear; frustration; envy; or, competition. You may have an anger that you've repressed, and when you repress anger, it sinks into your subconscious. Every time you become aware of it, it depresses you that you are so angry. You may have something very painful that happened to you, and you've blotted it out to your thinking. You sink it in the subconscious, and every now and then, it starts creeping up, and that causes you to be depressed. It may be that there is the threat or the experience of the loss of something important: someone dies; your job; your money; or, your prestige. These can cause you to be depressed.

You can see immediately that we're all faced with these things. You're not just going to say, "OK, don't do that." That's as stupid as telling your children, "Don't go out and be sexually immoral." That won't help one bit. It is how much doctrine they have that will determine that issue. It will determine all the other things that they're going to do--not your advice to them. Therefore, the problem of depression is there, and it's a problem that we have to deal with.

**How to Solve Depression**

How do you solve it? There are several solutions:

1. Number one is fellowship with doctrinally oriented believers with whom you share a natural camaraderie (2 Corinthians 7:6, 2 Corinthians 7:13-14). For example, in 2 Corinthians 7:13-14, Paul says, "Therefore were we comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by all. For if I boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found to be true." Titus was a man that was a joy to Paul's heart. When he got together with Titus, it was a time of great fellowship. There are a certain kind of believers who have a relaxed attitude of mind. These are the few believers within the circle of your acquaintance who you can trust, and to whom you can open up. You enjoy them, so they lift your spirits when you feel blue.

Most of your Christian friends will be so fickle and self-seeking in time that they will not aid much in your depression. Some Christians are so emotionally charged up that it's exhausting to be with them. Actually, they depress you. However, there is a circle of friends who ennoble your soul. One of the ways to handle depression is to find that camaraderie group, and associate with them. This is because they are oriented to the Word. If you are a believer who is oriented to the Word, you will never enjoy people who are not. Also, you may help depression by association with believers who just have a positive attitude toward doctrine. This can be even if they don't know too much, but they have a positive responsive attitude toward the Word of God. These are the people who are the regular attenders at church services and the Bible classes. They are loyal to the local church ministries, and they are free of a critical attitude. Their attitude creates a happy state of mind.

Every local church, sooner or later, is plagued (usually by a female) who spots new people who come into the place. She considers it her divine call and duty to sidle up and to get next to those new people in order to start orienting you to all the people she doesn't like within that congregation. If you are a new person in a church, just watch for that character. If you just hang around long enough, that character is going to come up: always smiling; always very gracious; and, always sweetness-and-light, and pretty soon you discover, "I'm being informed. I'm being oriented." You're being disoriented. Furthermore, you're being invited to a triple whammy discipline from God because of it. Therefore, remember those two wonderful biblical words that God has given you for that kind of slander gossip--those two great words from the Word of God--"Get lost." You will save yourself a lot of grief if you use them.

The apostle Paul found himself with a group of Christians that were a delight to his heart. Therefore, they helped his depressed state. Get with people who are responsive; who are doctrinally oriented; or, get with people who are positive to the Word.

1. Another way to remove your depression--the most magnificent way--is to build a spiritual maturity structure in your soul. Colossians 1:9-14 describes that process--the mature life of a Christian who moves on a victory plane. One of the facets, as you have already seen, of the spiritual maturity structure in the soul is the facet of inner happiness. If you have this really functioning in your soul, you will not be a depressed believer. When people come against you, you'll handle it in stride. When the pressures and trials of life come upon you, you'll handle it in stride. As a matter of fact, you will look at yourself and say, "Now why am I not all cracked up about this?"

Well the trouble with you, dear friend, is that you have joined the elite--those who are positive toward the Word of God. The result was that, in spite of yourself, you developed an inner happiness. God has a great deal to say in the Word about happiness. What is happiness? How does happiness develop within the life of the believer?

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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