***The Fellowship of Happiness - PH13-02  
  
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:5***

We're looking at Philippians 1:5, and we're considering the subject of happiness and our fellowship with God in happiness. We found that the Philippian Christians were a cause for gratitude to God on the part of the apostle Paul every time he thought of them. They were a fragrant memory to him. This indicates something to us about these Philippian Christians. It indicates, for one thing, that they were a spiritually stable group of believers. That, in turn, indicates to us that they were learning and responding to Bible doctrine. That, in turn, indicates that they were well advanced in building a spiritual maturity structure within their souls.

All of this tells us that the Philippian Christians were able to meet the problems of their lives as those problems arose. In other words, they had their counseling that they needed before the problems arose. It is always very difficult when a person comes up with some kind of a problem in his life, and then he goes to someone for counseling. That counseling, if it's going to give any answers, must deliver what God has said upon that problem. So the problem with counseling people is that there is so much that they need to know after they are in trouble, that it's almost impossible to give them the information. Sometimes, if a person is willing to sweat it out, you may be able to give him some audio recordings on the subject, and he can spend several hours getting himself briefed so that he can have the frame of reference of what to do for the situation he's in.

**Psychiatry**

Counseling is better done before the problem arises. In case you don't understand that, that's exactly what we are doing in every church service. Every service is a counseling session. We are preparing you for the problems of life by giving you the information well ahead of time. It takes us quite a while to give you the information on some subject that you will need to know. This is why psychiatry is such a disaster land today. If you are a person who is up on his reading on the field of psychiatry today, you will know that it is the psychiatrist (and I mean the *leading* psychiatrists), who themselves are decrying the condition of psychiatry today. That which Freud founded has been recognized as by and large a considerable fraud because it just doesn't work. It is embarrassing to the psychiatrists to have to admit that the people whom psychiatry seems to help are the people who would have gotten better anyhow if they hadn't had psychiatric care.

As a matter of fact, one psychiatrist says that many of the problems that people have are induced by the treatments they get from the psychiatrists. If they hadn't gone to psychiatrists to begin with, their problems would have worked out for them. If you have any confidence and esteem as far as psychiatry helping you, that is a delusion. Many a person has spent hours on the psychiatrists' couch in counseling, and has spent thousands and thousands of dollars, only to find that he isn't really helped. Why? Because Freud was a fraud in the information (the basis) upon which he structured the working of the immaterial part of the human being. He rejected, as an unbeliever, what God had to say. He rejected God in the picture. Therefore, he came up with completely wrong answers. If you do some reading in this area, you would wonder why any human being would go to a psychiatrist in the first place and spend the thousands of dollars.

There is a certain category called Christian psychiatrists which doesn't make any difference. They just happen to be Christians, and it might help a little more because as Christians they might know something about the Word of God so that they could give you some real advice in the counseling. However, any time the Freudian concepts are followed, you come out with all the disasters that our society has today. Remember that it was Freud who told you that you weren't responsible for what you are, and some of you have believed it. That's why you are what you are. Until you come to the place where you begin to take responsibility for what you are, which is the way the Word of God teaches us that reality exists, in our being responsible for what we are, you will not improve.

All this permissive attitude that we have in our society on every level is the direct result of this kind of counseling on the part of Freud and his followers: "You are not responsible. You are the result of your mother not changing your diaper often enough. You are developing those rashes. It's due to your bottle being cold," and everything else. All of psychiatry's efforts are to bring you one thing, and that is happiness. What I'm trying to tell you is that if you are going to pursue the world's basis for happiness, you're going to be disappointed. People have spent thousands of dollars trying to get happy on a psychiatrist's couch, all to no avail.

**The Solution for Depression**

It was refreshing to have a group of believers like these here at Philippi. Paul was able to pray for these Christians, he said, with a sense of great inner happiness and a great personal joy. The enemy of our happiness is depression. The question is what's the solution? The first solution is the company you keep. More depression is created directly because of the people you associate with than almost anything else. That means that you should associate, therefore, with people: one, who know Bible doctrine; and, secondly, with people who are positive to what they know. The number one way to remove depression and to come to happiness is, of course, through building the thing that contains happiness within your soul, and that is a structure of spiritual maturity.

**Happiness**

Colossians 1:9-14 describe for us a mature Christian. One of the features of this description of spiritual maturity in verse 11 is joyfulness. Christians who are spiritually mature are happy people. This is speaking about an inner happiness which is one of the facets of spiritual maturity. Therefore, now we're going to review what God has said in his Word concerning this matter of happiness. If you learn this, you will go much farther in finding a stable happy life than anything any psychiatrist can give you. It will be much more than a lot of so-called counselors can give you.

1. Happiness is related to **the character of God**. Therefore, it is older than the human race. In other words, God possesses perfect and eternal happiness. In Galatians 5:22-23, we have stated the fruit of the Spirit. This is a character picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the segments of the fruit of the Spirit described there is that of joy--happiness. It is part of the character of God to be happy. God's happiness is reflected by the very grace quality that governs His treatment of us. A quality of happiness enables a person to be relaxed and gracious. God has always been happy. He has never been unhappy. It is inherent in the character of God to be happy.
2. Happiness is part of **the divine decrees**; that is, the plan of God. In eternity past, God made happiness a part of His plan, and He determined that He was going to share His happiness with the human beings that He was going to create. In John 15:11, we read, "These things have I spoken unto you that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." This is saying that God's joy might remain in us, and to the degree that it is maximum. It is a full joy. God's happiness in eternity past was designed as part of His plan to be part of our lives. This happiness is made available at salvation. Then it flows through doctrine which God provides.

In Psalm 51:12, we read, "Restore unto me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit." Salvation begins with joy and then it proceeds with the Word of God. Ephesians 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. He has blessed us. He has made us happy with all spiritual blessings.

1. God's happiness is transferred to man via **grace**. Ephesians 2:8-9 tell us that salvation comes to us through grace, and salvation is the means of transferring happiness from God to us. Grace has solved the problem of the separation between us and God. Salvation and the perception of doctrine enables us to maintain this basis of happiness. We're talking about the grace system of developing our knowledge of the Word of God which develops our knowledge of happiness.

In 1 John, we again have that statement made that is repeated in such a variety of ways. 1 John 1:4: "And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full." God's happiness is transferred to man via grace. It's not something we deserve. It's something that God has, and something that He wants us to have, and he makes it possible.

1. Inner happiness can only be experienced **within the plan of God**. How do you enter the plan of God? John 20:31: "But these were written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you might have life through His name." A sinner enters this plan through faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation does not in itself provide you with continual happiness, but it makes happiness possible through the filling of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Acts 16:31-34 tell us about the Philippian jailer. After it describes how he and his family received Christ as Savior, the result was happiness. Salvation takes you into the plan of God. Faith in Christ takes you into the plan of God, and thus into the position of happiness. This becomes a reality then as you begin to develop spiritual maturity in your soul.
2. In **eternity**, perfect happiness will be automatic since ultimate sanctification produces exceeding joy. We learned that in Jude 24 which says, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Heaven will be one continual experience of joy. There'll be no more sorrows and no more tears there because you will be completely set apart to the plan of God.
3. Mere human happiness in time is **a false joy**. In Daniel 5:1-6, we read about Belshazzar's feast. They were really living it up that night. They were having a very wonderful party. While they were having that party, they didn't realize how false their happiness was, because at that moment, the Medo-Persian forces were digging under the wall of that city, diverting the Euphrates River in order to come under the wall of the city, and to enter Babylon, and to conquer that night. Yet, they were having a very wonderful time. Everybody in that banquet hall, from Belshazzar on down, would have said, "Yes, I'm happy."

There used to be a singer of a previous generation that used to keep repeating the phrase, and his running commentary was, "Is everybody happy?" You old-timers will remember that. That's what they were saying up at Belshazzar's feast. Belshazzar would stand up with his cup that had been taken out of the temple in Jerusalem, full of booze, and say, "Is everybody happy here?" They thought they were really really happy.

Well, in the devil's world, there is a pseudo happiness; it's temporary; and, it's superficial. This happiness depends upon the details of life. If you have the things you want, you're happy. If you don't have them, you're unhappy. It depends on compatibility with people. If people treat you nice, you're happy. If they don't, you're unhappy. It depends upon circumstances. In certain situations, you're happy. If the circumstances change, you're unhappy. However, details change, people change, and circumstances change. There's no way for you to maintain happiness on this basis. For most people, who do not have God's happiness, happiness is a matter of getting your own way. When you're crossed and when you're not free to indulge the lust patterns of the old sin nature, you're unhappy.

So, what happens? Well, you become bored. You become restless. You become frustrated. You become irritable, and then you seek some way out. You seek some substitute happiness of your own. You go in for immorality. You go in for drinking. You go in for eating. You go in for any number of things in order to make you happy. The pressures of life easily get you down. All of this is a form of slavery: the drugs; the immorality; the drinking; the eating; or, whatever it is, you're just a slave.

1. God has designed His provision of happiness to be **permanent and stable** through the spiritual maturity structure in the soul. John 17:13 reads, "And now come I to You (the Lord Jesus says to the Father), and these things I speak in the world that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves." He says, "That the joy might be fulfilled. That it might be stable and complete." Inner happiness enables a Christian to enjoy both God and life. This includes the details, the circumstances, and the people of life. It begins with the filling of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). It reaches the maximum when you have developed a spiritual maturity structure in your soul (Colossians 1:9-11). This will sustain you in the difficult circumstances of life, and it's dependent upon your being in the Word of God every day. Without your regular participation in the study of the Word, you cannot build spiritual maturity. That's what it's all about.
2. In Matthew 5, we have a list of statements called **the Beatitudes**. The word "blessed" in the Beatitudes means "happy." There it lists a series of characteristics (qualities) that characterize happy people. All of these are characteristics which you simply cannot produce except that God the Holy Spirit produces them through us in a spiritual maturity structure.
3. **The believer is to exercise his priesthood daily in the maintenance of inner happiness**. The spiritual maturity structure will deteriorate. It won't keep itself up. When it deteriorates, your inner happiness goes with it. Therefore, daily use of the grace system of learning the Word is the means of maintaining this happiness (Matthew 4:4, James 1:25, John 13:17).
4. Divine inner happiness **protects a Christian from disillusionment** with various factors in life so that you do not abandon doctrine. This is one of the greatest hazards of the Christian life. People who, because they become unhappy, desert the Word of God. It is not uncommon to have people tell me, and I've had them tell me, "Well, I've tried learning. It doesn't work for me." They have been unhappy so they abandoned doctrine. The reason for that is because: one, the circumstances of life have been such that they have not been able to relate themselves to that in the right way. Philippians 4:11-12 tell us that inner happiness, when it is developed, will protect us from these circumstances. Paul says, "Not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned in whatever state I am, in this to be content. I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

Inner happiness will protect you from the disillusionment relative to the details of life. Hebrews 13:5-6: "Let your manner of life be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. For He has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.'" Nobody is going to do that unless he has developed spiritual maturity. Nobody is going to be content with what he has unless he is a spiritually mature Christian. Nobody is going to say, "The Lord is going to take care of me if I take care of His business," unless he is spiritually mature. Verse 6: "So that we may boldly say, 'the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.'"

Then, in relation to other Christians, inner happiness will protect you from the disillusionment that other Christians will bring so that you may be tempted to abandon doctrine. Hebrews 12:2-3: "Looking after Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be wearied and faint in mind." The fact that some person is a Christian does not mean that he is nice; that he is honest; that he is truthful; that he is dependable; or, that he is loyal. You make a mistake if you think that that is the case. So, don't put your eyes on people, but keep your eyes on the Lord. Don't ever forget Jeremiah 17:5 which says, "Thus says the Lord, 'Cursed be the man that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord.'" If you get your eyes on people, you will be disillusioned, and you will abandon doctrine. Once you abandon the Word, there is no hope.

1. Inner happiness enhances one's **capacity for love**. It has fragrant memories that bestir new depths of love (Song of Solomon 3:1). Unhappiness will destroy our capacity to love (Song of Solomon 8:6).
2. **Inner happiness is commanded to the believer** on earth. That's rather startling. God is not asking you to be happy. He is telling us to be happy. Philippians 4:4 says, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." God never tells us to do something unless He gives us the enablement to do it. You cannot legislate feelings, but God can command us to do something that will create the right feelings, and that something is to stay in His Word. Therefore, happiness is what God has come to bring us. Happiness is part of His character. Happiness is what He wants us to share, and He has given us the means through the Word of God to share it. In other words, we're saying this: There is no way for you to be happy apart from the regular intake and response to the Word of God. Please notice that I did not say, "The regular intake of the Word of God. Period." I said the regular intake and positive response to the Word of God. There is no way for you to experience happiness apart from that.

If you are depressed, there are reasons for it. We may have mentioned them. If you're happy--really happy--then it is not because of some person; some circumstance; or some thing. It is something that God has that He is sharing with you, and the reason you are able to enter into it is because you have entered into the learning of the Word of God. Perhaps you can see how suddenly you're unhappy about something. You're depressed, so you come to somebody that you think knows something about the Bible, and you say, "I'm terribly depressed. I'm very unhappy. Would you counsel with me?" What are they going to give you? How are they going to help you? Well, if he's a fraud, he will con you by giving you a Scripture verse. He will even write it out on a piece of paper for you and say, "Now take this home and read it all the way home." So there you go home down the street, looking at this verse that he gave you, reading it over and over, and you run right into a lamppost and break your nose. Now you're really unhappy.

Obviously, there are no easy solutions. God says, "I'm happy." I've never known anything but happiness. I intend for you to be just as happy as I am, and a means to this I have provided in the Word of God. The more you know about the Bible, the happier you will be, providing you are responding to what you know. Oh, I know exactly what people mean when they come to me and they say, "Oh, I've gone into doctrine. I've been here learning the Word, and it hasn't made me happy." I know exactly what they're saying. They're telling me, "I've been listening, and I've had mental reservations. I've been sitting there and countering in my mind. I've been resisting what God has said." When you do that, you invite yourself to unhappiness, and there is no way around that.

Getting back to Philippians 1:5, the apostle Paul says, "For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now." Here is the basis of his happiness toward the Philippian Christians. Paul is sharing God's happiness about the Philippian Christians. Verse 4 has said that, in every prayer, he makes requests for them with joy as he remembers these Christians. Then verse 5 tells us why he has the joy. He says, "For." The word "for" here means "on the basis of." The basis of it is their "fellowship."

**Fellowship**

The Greek word for "fellowship" means "a partnership" or "a participation." However, here it has a special meaning. Here it means "contribution." What he is referring to is that, for the third time, the Philippian Christians have sent a money gift to the apostle Paul. Here he sits in prison in Rome. For the third time, the Philippian Christians have sent a messenger, Epaphroditus, in this case, with a gift. They have done this twice before. When he was in Corinth, they sent him a gift. Philippians 4:15 tells us about that. When he was in Thessalonica, they sent him a gift. Philippians 4:16 refers to that. Then Philippians 4:10 tells us about this third gift received here at Rome. In other words, Paul is thanking them for their contribution in the gospel from the first day until now. This same word for "fellowship" or "contribution" is used in 2 Corinthians 8:4 and in 2 Corinthians 9:13 for monetary gifts.

In other words, giving in the local church is a fellowship. When you give your money in that offering box today, you are in fellowship with God who gave you that money. When you give your money, you are in fellowship with all the other believers who are also putting their money in that box, who carry on the Lord's work with you. When you put money in that box, you are in fellowship. Your contribution is a fellowship with the pulpit which is teaching the Word of God. You are in fellowship in other ways. You are in fellowship when you listen to the Word. You are in fellowship when you concentrate on that Word. You are in fellowship with the pulpit when you are positive to what you are taught. You are in fellowship when you are in prayer in behalf of the communicator of the Word. You are in fellowship when you help pay the bills that make it all possible.

Paul thanks God for this fellowship (this contribution). Notice that Paul is grateful for the finances. Paul is grateful for people who have backed the work with their money. He is happy over the fact that they are doing this. This is not simply because it helps meet his need. That no doubt is a great relief. However, we already know that Paul had a mastery of the details of life, and that's why he could say, "I'm content in whatever state I find myself, whether I'm flush or I'm broke." He says, "But I am happy to see people giving money to the Lord's work because this signals something concerning themselves and their own spiritual maturity."

In churches that have to plaster up signs all over that say, "Every member of tither;" "Dig down till it hurts;" "Grin and bear it (but fork it over);" and, all these other slogans that come up at various seasons of the year and various times. You find these in churches, and some are very grotesque. The reason they are having to do that is because the people in that congregation are not spiritually mature. The people are not spiritually mature because they do not have the Word of God. Therefore, they are unhappy people, and unhappy people are stingy. You never found a happy Scrooge in your life. People who are greedy and stingy are always unhappy.

Here is the progression: I am a Christian; I have to take in the Word of God; the Word of God makes me happy; and, when I am happy, I give. There is no way around that. Unless you are happy, you will not give. If you're unhappy, you will give under a sense of pressure. If you are spiritually immature, you have to have pressures put against you. Therefore, people are squeezed in various ways. They're browbeaten. This is a favorite pastime of pastors--to bully their congregations relative to the money that the people of God have.

If you are a happy Christian, it will be an exciting, exhilarating, joyful experience for you to be able to say after the service, "I am a child of God. I am His son or I am His daughter, and I am absolutely free. I can walk up to this box in my freedom and I give something to God my Father, and it's a joy to my soul to do it. You can't do that if you are a Scrooge spiritually. You can't be happy when you are poverty struck in your soul relative to the Word of God.

Therefore, Paul is thanking these people for their fellowship. It was a joy to hear to see these people give because this again was one of the signals to him that here was a congregation who had gone on with the Lord. That's why they were giving, and they were giving in abundance. The thing for which he was joyful, of course, was that their fellowship was in the gospel. "In" here means "for the purpose of" the gospel--the communication of the gospel. This is the "euaggelion." Paul was joyful that their fellowship was in the gospel from the first day until now. "The first day" was when Lydia was converted in Philippi and took the missionary party under her care in her home while they were there (Acts 16:15). "Now" means until this moment when Paul is writing from prison in Rome, thanking them for the third gift sent by Pastor Epaphroditus. The Philippian Christians were great believers when it came to sharing with the things that the Lord's work needed in the way of financing.

Those were days when people had a spear at their throats as Christians. Because they had a spear at their throats, they knew that any day might be their last. Therefore, they weren't all tied up with finding a little beautiful place out on the lake that they could build a cabin and develop for their friends to come to and enjoy and praise the Lord in. Nor were they preoccupied with all the recreational things that they could collect so that they could have fun with their family. Every day they woke up they knew that, "God, my life may this day be in Your hands to be removed from this earth." Therefore, these Christians were spiritually mature because they had spiritual maturity built in their souls by doctrine. Because they were happy, it was very easy for them to have an idea of what to do with their money.

**Disappointing Christians**

Paul did have disappointments. The contrast to this, perhaps, will be seen if we'll just review briefly some of the kinds of Christians that Paul did have to deal with. There was the erratic type of worker represented by John Mark. In Acts 13:13 and Acts 15:36-38, you may read about how John Mark went with them on the missionary journey, and then turned back from the field after they were well under way. This is the church member who is not dependable in the ministry. There is a certain kind of church member who serves in spurts, or not at all if he doesn't feel up to it. This is the kind of church member who has a responsibility in the work, and he does it without preparation. This is despicable. This is the church member who comes up and he teaches a class off the top of his head so that he is going through the motions of religion.

There are some Christians upon whom we cannot count in the long haul. They serve in order to indulge certain lusts of their old sin nature. They serve as long as that particular project is useful to satisfying that internal desire. When it no longer satisfies, they find themselves something that's more interesting to do. This is a very trying person to have around, I'll guarantee you. It is very trying to have the person come up who is operating on his self-indulgence rather than the direction of the Holy Spirit, and then to cut out on you. The people who have to take up the slack are the people upon whom the burden falls that this person is a very trying character. The apostle Paul knew what it was to have Christians who cut out on him. He had his Christians like John Mark. We're happy to say that 2 Timothy 4:11 indicates to us that John Mark got back with it, and Paul found him a very valuable worker. But that's because John Mark got back into the Word and went positive, and realized that he had been a real fink when he had deserted in the midst of battle. Anybody who is serious about the Lord's work has very little respect for the deserter in battle, more so in the Lord's work.

Then there was the worldly Christian represented by Demas (Philemon 24, Colossians 4:14, 2 Timothy 4:10). You will find that Demas was once one of the associates of Paul. He was a prince among Paul's workers. He was highly esteemed. He was on the team. However, one day something happened to Demas. He wanted to get ahead in life. He wanted to possess some of the nice things that some of the other Christians had. He wanted to be esteemed in the community in which he lived and moved, and that calls for time and money. The time came when Demas couldn't handle the details of life, so he was overwhelmed. Demas decided that separation from the world was too much of a price to pay. So Paul said, "Demas has deserted me, having loved this world." What a sad commentary, and the apostle Paul spoke under the discernment of the Holy Spirit.

How many Christians are among us of whom this indeed could truly be said? "They have deserted us because they love this present world; the things; the esteem; the prestige; and, the commendation that the world could offer." It is sad when a Christian finds the world less offensive, and can be involved with its human viewpoint values. This is because they are propelled by pride, as 1 John 2:16 tells us is the basis of appeal of the world.

I'll tell you a cover phrase. I have to smile when people come to me and they have now become like Demas. One of the cover phrases they use to shield what they are doing is, "I have done this for so long, and I'm going to let someone else have a chance to do it now." When somebody uses the phrase, "I'm going to let someone else have a chance to do it now," you should say, "Thank you, Mr. Demas. Thank you Mrs. Demas. We'll see what the Lord has as a substitute." Now I'm telling you that so that you won't tell me that. Don't use the phrase with me, "I'm going to let someone else have a chance to do it," because I know what you're doing. I only look dumb, and that's not hard for me to do.

Then there's the man pleaser. Peter was an example of this. Galatians 2:11-14 tell how Paul, on one occasion, had to have a debate outright with Peter over the fact that Peter, in order to please the Jews, would not sit down and eat with gentile Christians. Paul said, "Peter, you're wrong." Paul said, "Peter, you don't even live like a Jew. You don't live according to the law. You're a believer. You're a Christian. You're in the body of Christ. Yet, you want these gentiles to live as if they were Jews?" This was the man pleaser. This is the Christian who centers on what people want. What do people want? They want all of these lusts of the old sin nature: power; pride; money; prestige; and, all these other things that go from within us. There is great personal gain if you will do that. This attitude is, "Let the people be hanged." Give the people what they want. This is how large churches are built. All you have to do is listen to some of these religious speakers in panel discussions on the radio when some hot subject comes up on which there needs to be a definitive statement, like the tongues issue.

One of the speakers on one of the recent panel programs was asked about the tongues issue. He hedged all over it. He was not going to displease anybody by declaring what it was. Somebody heard it, and wrote a letter to him, and sent him a catalog of our audio recordings from the Berean ministry, and we got a return request for the recordings on tongues. I hope it'll do some good to establish the fact that God has spoken on this subject. You can just see how many people want to be reassured that tongues is okay.

It is hard to find a preacher that will stand up and say, "Now look. I know what the Word of God teaches, and I'll give you an answer on the basis of the Word of God. I want to tell you that you are deluded." As a matter of fact, I happened to hear the end of that program, and the lady was explaining how she had more feeling. She felt better. She had more love for everybody. She felt closer to the Lord. She used all of her emotional overtone words. This very well-known preacher said, "Well, I'm for everything that draws us closer to the Lord." That's man pleasing. However, it sure draws in the money. He'll never have trouble paying his bills. This type will justify compromise as an act of love. If you're an important person, you will notice that here in Galatians, Barnabas was led off by Peter. The prestige of Peter enabled Barnabas, of all people, to be led off in this compromise.

There is the morally indifferent person. Paul was greeted by this kind of Christian in 1 Corinthians 5:1-2, 6-7. Evil is knowingly tolerated because people don't want to offend anybody. Indifference towards sin among believers justifies that sin for everybody. Only doctrine and the Holy Spirit will control the old sin nature. The willful sinner may be a very sincere person, but there is the morally indifferent type who is a destructive force in the work of the Lord.

Then there is the legalist in Galatians 1:6-7 and Galatians 3:1-3 who wants to deal with God on the merit system so that credit comes to man. Paul had a lot of problems with people who were legalists. They were constantly plaguing him. They were condemning Christians who can use the things of the world without abusing them. They were the mere modern-day Pharisees. They are humorless self-righteous people.

Then there were the untaught people that were a problem for Paul. They were no joy to him (Acts 19:1-7). Christians are responsible for their own spiritual lives. They are their own priests. They should find the right place of instruction, and they should avail themselves of that instruction. These are the people who are constant casualties in Satan's world.

Then there is the competitor (Philippians 1:15-18). The apostle Paul is sitting in prison. Here in this passage in Philippians, he tells us that some people were actually carrying on the Lord's work in competition in order to hurt him. They were not serving for the Lord's glory, but for their own glory. They were conniving how to outdo other believers. Did you ever run into some believer in the assembly who is a primadonna type who wants to connive and outdo somebody else in order to make a mark and make a splash? Those are tiresome little people. While what they may do may be turned to good by the Lord, as He often does, they will not receive rewards for what they do. They are ungracious, uncooperative, and mean in spirit.

The apostle Paul looked back over his own experience with Christians, and he had the erratic type like John Mark--on again, off again--trying to carry on the Lord's work with people who couldn't carry through and weren't prepared to carry through. He had the worldly Christian type, which means a mental attitude, which is what worldliness is. Demas's mind deviated from what doctrine taught him, and he became carried away with what the world had to offer, and he was out of the work. The man pleaser like Peter wasn't going to offend anybody no matter what God said under the delusion that the end justifies the means. Then the morally indifferent person was not concerned with the separation and the conformity to the standards of the Word of God. That was a burden to Paul. The legalists were forever trying to carry on some pseudo spirituality, and very self-righteously chewing everybody else down. He had the untaught Christian who didn't bother getting in with the Word, and who ignored what the pastor-teacher taught him. He thought that he was superior and above it all. Then there was the competitor who was just running around to make a mark for himself and to actually do injury to cut other Christians down in the process.

Those were the people for whom Paul also had to pray. However, they were not people for whom he could pray and say, "I pray with you with the happiness that God has toward you." When Paul said, "I pray with happiness toward the Philippians," what he was saying was, "I am sharing God's feelings toward you Philippians. God is happy with you, and therefore I'm happy with you." Can that be said of you and me today? Pray God that it would be.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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