***Inner Happiness

RV172-01***

We are studying the subject of "The Antichrist." This is segment number 19 in Revelation 13:1-10.

**Pay Attention**

We have indicated that believers who are living during the tribulation period will have to pay special attention to what God has revealed in the Bible about that era. So, in Revelation 13:9, we have read this (in sort of military terms): to pay attention – now hear this: "If anyone has an ear, let him hear." It will be very important for Christians to be alerted to what is going on. The only source for perspective on the events of that day will be the Bible itself. It will also be a source of comfort in the midst of great personal suffering for believers. As we looked at verse 10, we have seen that some of these believers are destined for captivity and imprisonment. Others are destined to even be martyred. But the one who does the killing, in the form of the antichrist, will himself, in time, suffer the same consequence. This should give us perseverance as believers, knowing that God is on the throne and running things. It should also maintain, as John points out, our faithfulness to God.

**The Bible**

With the Word of God to guide a person we know how to be saved, and we know what God expects of us in our conduct and in our personal service. The anchor in every life must be Bible doctrine, because it is the living eternal Word of God. So, tribulation believers are told that they will face both captivity and imprisonment. The point that the Holy Spirit is making is that, if that is God's plan for them – one: it will come to pass. Secondly, if there is no escape, it should be taken in stride with perseverance and faithfulness. Believers should accept their lot with steadfastness and with devotion to God, into whose hands they commit themselves.

If you've got some problems with your lot in life, and the circumstances that come about, and you haven't attended the previous session, you missed something enormously important. We're going to go on that perspective. Hopefully, you paid attention. You don't need it now, because life is good. Everything you heard in the previous session is the only thing that will carry you through the first time you come up against a real crisis in life.

**The Antichrist**

The antichrist is going to make that kind of a crisis for Christians in his time. He will kill many of the true children of God. They will face the suffering of the full confidence of the justice of God, and in the resurrection in a new body. The antichrist himself, after the last three-and-a-half years of the tribulation, will himself be killed, in God's law of retribution, as enunciated in Galatians 6:7. That will lock into place, and he will receive the just retribution for his acts. God is going to settle all accounts at the end of the tribulation.

**Suffering**

The suffering of believers, of course, is the norm in Satan's world. Now, having said that, I want to stress immediately that suffering does not mean that unhappiness is the norm for the Christians. When we use the word "suffering," we automatically connected with unhappiness, and we'll look a little more at that a little later. But I want to stress that when we say that suffering; hard times; crises; and, difficulties in the devil's world are the norm for believers, that that does not mean lack of joy and lack of happiness. Suffering for the believer always ends up as blessing. Even if it had begun as discipline from God, the suffering when is accepted, and the discipline is accepted, and the confession made, even the consequences of your evil may not be removed. Yet, the discipline will change to blessing.

**Super Grace**

The believer's ultimate resource to carry him through, as we looked at in some detail in the previous session, is the same as that which Paul, who delineated for us some of the worst kind of sufferings that anybody has ever experienced. How did he do it? In 2 Corinthians 12:9, the apostle Paul said, "He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you. For power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I would rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me." God our Father carries His suffering child through the hard times. The greater one is oriented to God's grace, through the Word of God, the greater is the sustaining power of the grace of God. Not all Christians have the same sustaining level of God's grace. All of us have a level of grace that comes from God – that common grace to all of us. But there is a level of divine power and of care that God cannot extend except to certain Christians. The ultimate level of God's support is for the believer who has matured to what James calls super grace level.

**The Spiritual Maturity Structure**

This is a fully developed spiritual maturity structure in the soul. This is a Christian who has so learned the Word of God, and has been so positive, and so stored it in his human spirit that he knows what's going on. He knows the score. He has developed an orientation to the grace of God. He has a relaxed mental attitude. He has a capacity to live and let live. He has a mastery of material things – all these details that we deal with materially. He knows how to handle his money, whether he is prosperous or not so prosperous. He has a great capacity for love that is the product of God the Holy Spirit. And he has an inner happiness that is sustained apart from people; from circumstances; and, from things.

You find your unsaved friends, and see if they have anything like that – a happiness that doesn't depend upon some person; upon some possession; or, upon some circumstance in life. The ultimate level of the Christian life is the super grace maturity. It is doctrine that builds that in our souls, and this is what carries us through in a time of crisis. This is what's going to carry the believers in the antichrist's day through their time. The spiritual maturity structure in the believers actually to be viewed as a container, and it is into this container that God pours His blessing.

**James 4:4**

If you'll turn for a moment to James 4, we'll look a little more specifically at this great promise that God gives to carry the believer through the sufferings in Satan's world; and along with it, to maintain a level of great happiness. In James 4:4, we read, "You adulteresses: do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

A lot of Christians don't seem to know that this verse is even in the Bible. What is James saying here? James is saying that a Christian who is a friend of Satan's world system is the enemy of God. The world scoffs at God our Father. It ignores His Word in Scripture. The world tolerates the believer. The world practices evil, the very evil that God forbids, and then dismisses the moral laws of God as irrelevant today. The name of God's Son, Jesus Christ, is used as a curse word in our world. The world is a hostile place toward God and toward Christians. Christians who are on friendly terms with this world system are the enemies of God. That's why He begins this verse with, "You adulteresses." It is spiritual adultery to be a friend of the world.

**Spiritual Adultery**

Then in verse 5, James go goes on and says, "Or do you think that the Scriptures speak to no purpose? He jealously desires the spirit which he has made to dwell in us." James says, "That God is jealous for the Christians loyalty. This happens to be one of those very difficult verses in the Bible to translate, but the spirit here probably refers not so much to God the Holy Spirit as to our human spirits. He is talking about our human spirits, which, of course, is our point of contact with God. As the soul contacts people; and, as our senses contact the material world, so our spirit contacts God. That's the point of our God-consciousness. So, here he says, "In our spirit (the point of our contact with Him), God the Holy Spirit is very jealous of your loyalty to Him." The believer's human spirit may be so filled with the Word of God that you are totally compatible with the will of your Father in heaven. The Christian's human spirit, on the other hand, may also be so devoid of doctrinal viewpoint that you are unable to respond to God's will. And when that happens, it grieves the Holy Spirit. Why? Because your loyalty and your devotion is not to Him, but is to some element of the world system, and ultimately that means to Satan. Now, that is spiritual adultery. It is God the Holy Spirit who is your true husband. ... He is the One with whom you have your true intimacies. Where do you come off, as a Christian, sharing that devotion and intimacy with some alien element out in Satan's world system? It is spiritual adultery.

God the Holy Spirit dwells in the believer. What He wants to do is to control the Christian's life for God's glory, and for our eternal blessing. So, God the Holy Spirit, this verse says, is very envious. He's jealous of the old sin nature when the old sin nature is controlling a child of God.

All of you with children can certainly understand that. How would it make you feel if your child rejected you, and found someone else that they held in greater esteem, and greater devotion, and greater loyalty? How would you feel if what you said was trivialized and ignored, while what somebody else (some outside stranger) would say to you, your child would reject?

I remember a few years ago, we had a little girl who was in the Vacation Bible School, and she was brand new in the nursery department. She was one of those kids who just took to it wonderfully. As you know, in Bible school, we end up with a little puppet show at the end that kind of summarizes the lesson for the day. We were well into our end of our first week, or at the start of the second week, and this mother (as mothers do) came in to pick up her children. We were all in the auditorium, and I saw this mother walk up to this little youngster in the nursery group to take her, and the child looked at the mother, and just shook her hands at the mother, and walked away. The mother looked dumbfounded. And the little girl went and sat down by her teacher in her group. The mother was probably hurt by this rejection. So, I went up and I said, "She probably thinks you're going to take her home before we've had our puppet show." Oh, now the mother was relieved. She hadn't really been rejected. The child just love the puppet more than the mother at that moment, and did not want to miss the show. So, in her mind, she immediately saw the mother, and the mother was the instrument to remove her, so she shook her little hands at her mother, and rushed off to sit with her little group.

This is what God the Holy Spirit is saying. He's grieved. He's wounded: "You're my child, and you want to walk around with the world system – these scum balls.

I had a man come up to me this morning, and wanted an interpretation of what a scum ball is. He had inquired at work with some engineers what that was, and they gave them definitions that he said he was sure that isn't what I meant. But it's low-life. It is really low-life. It's Satan in his grossest expression. Yet we Christians are there. We're smiling. We're grinning. We're like a bunch of hogs enjoying our slop and our dirt in the world system. Yet we are wearing our badges: "Call me Christian."

Well, the Holy Spirit is grieved. He is envious for your devotion when you are a really intimate friend of the world. It is not that you don't get along with the world, and not that you don't deal with the world.

On another occasion, Paul says, "The only way we could not deal with the world is to leave the world. We have to deal with the world. Therefore, we are in the world, but we are not part of it.

So, James 4:5 says, "God the Holy Spirit is grieved when you are not loyal to Him on the basis of your personal righteousness; your personal investment of your life; and, your devotion.

I have no doubt that if the Judgment Seat of Christ, many Christians are going to have a great regret as they look back on how they spent the time of their lives, when they had great opportunities to make it count for eternity. It was fun along the way. If you are in that kind of a position, you better enjoy your fun because when you get up there, you'll have all eternity to regret not having stored your treasures in a better way.

**Super Grace**

Now we come to the crucial 6th verse. James 4:6: "But He gives." God gives. He does this on a regular basis. He gives something greater. This is the Greek word "meizon." The word "meizon" is more; greater; and, most, in that order. This is in the middle voice. It is called a comparative degree. It is greater. The idea is a greater degree, or it can be translated as "super," because it means something extra. What does He give us? Grace ("charis"). And what God gives certain Christians (not all, but certain Christians) super favor from God. That is an exciting thought: "But He gives greater grace." He gives super grace.

And you can see the line of discussion that started off in verse 4 with spiritual adultery; friendship with the world; buddying up with the world; and, turning your back on God. Then, verse 5 says that God the Holy Spirit is extremely grieved when you do that. He does not take that kindly – His child being loyal to someone else. And in verse 6, the disaster of that is that it loses you a status that you cannot afford to miss out on – the status of being a super grace Christian. God the Holy Spirit gives certain Christians a level of grace that is above that of the normal believer. This is directed to believers who are qualified in some way to receive such an abundance of grace. Super grace does not go to a certain type of believer.

So, he goes on in verse 6 and says, "God is opposed to the proud." This is the Christian who is quite arrogant; who operates on the carnality of his sin nature; who operates out of temporal fellowship; and, who is lacking in Bible doctrine. Therefore, he does not have a spiritual maturity structure in his soul. He is arrogant. He is self-diligent. He is self-confident. He has no container built into his soul by which to receive super grace blessings. He just has no means for it, because the container is the spiritual maturity structure. That is those five basic qualities that constitute spiritual maturity. This is a Christian who muddles through his spiritual life, and he's downright proud of it. He's extremely arrogant, but he is nothing. God opposes him.

**The Spiritual Maturity Structure**

On the other hand, there is the Christian to whom God gives super grace. He is called the humble: "But gives grace to the humble." This is the Christian who knows that he's got a deficiency in his soul. This is the Christian that perceives, and take seriously, the feeling of that divine viewpoint deficiency with doctrine on a regular basis. This is the person who's willing to be taught God's viewpoint. This is the person who's willing to come to church, and who's willing to come and sit, and be instructed, and to pay attention. This is the person who's willing to read a few verses of Scripture on a day-by-day basis, and give some thought to what God has said. This is the person who receives with enthusiasm what God says, and stores doctrine in his human spirit because of his positive volition. This is the person which James Elsworth says is not only hearer, but also a doer of the word. It is this person who builds spiritual maturity in his soul which will act as a container for God's super grace. That's the first responsibility of every believer – to come to God, and to build in your soul a cup (a container) called the spiritual maturity structure.

**"My Cup Overflows"**

You do not have this by nature. You have it when you develop it. Along comes the grace of God to that believer, and God start to pour in His grace. And eventually, the cup gets filled up. Then it gets to the point where it cannot hold anymore, and then it starts flowing over. And that's what happens to super grace as it comes pouring out on all sides. This is what Psalm 23 refers to. David understood this principle very well indeed. In Psalm 23:5, David said, "You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies. You have anointed my head with oil. All of these are expressions of blessing, and the result is: "My cup overflows." That is the overflowing of the container in our souls.

At this point in your life, the power of God is functioning at a maximum level, and you are at the prime of your spiritual life. Some Christians never get to the prime. Some Christians always muddle along at a lower level. I'll tell you something – that once you hit the prime, you'll never be satisfied again. It's like people who come from a church which is ritual and ceremonial and religious, and that sort of thing, and they have a yearning in their soul, and they pick up a Berean tape, and they learn something about the Word of God that is revolutionary in their lives. They can never again stomach a liturgical church service. They'll never be able to be satisfied again. Once you hit the prime of your spiritual life, and discover that prayer without ceasing does not mean prayer at stated times. But I mean, you are about to bake something, and you pray over it. You are about to go out and buy something, and you pray over it. You're about to perform whatever business you're about in your day, and you pray. That's what it means to pray without ceasing.

Do you ever stop to realize the impact that that would have on your life – the impact of having God brought in to every aspect of what you're doing? Can you imagine, if you're at super grace prime of life level, the power of God that would be turned loose? Have you ever had the experience that you can't find something that you put down somewhere in the house? Have you ever had the experience that you just need this thing, and you don't know where it is, and you search everywhere, and then you pray about it? "Lord, I need this. I'd appreciate if you would direct Me to where it is." And you look, and there it is. And you have the strange feeling that He just put it there.

A charismatic would go crazy with an answer to prayer like that, and I've had that weird feeling: I know I looked at that table, and that book wasn't there. And you know that a miracle has taken place. The only miracle has been that your dull brain has been alerted by the power of God, and you have been moved in the right direction. And pretty soon you find that this subtlety works all the time. There's that temptation to evil that was so attractive. Now, it's a dull bore. Here is some famous personality in the entertainment world, and now they are a dull bore to listen to, where other people think that is so wonderful, and they're so excited. And you did too at one time. Then, suddenly, the things of Satan's world turned to ashes in your mouth. That's what I'm saying. You lose your taste for the attractive things of the world system. The things that once you sat and watched in a movie that was ugly, unrefined, degrading, crude, and vile, and you just passed it off – now you sit there and you just can't stomach it. You just don't care. You have no attraction to it.

What has happened? You've come to this prime of your spiritual life, and suddenly, you're a little Lord Jesus Christ walking around, in effect, so to speak. You've been transformed so much into His image, that now indeed you do walk in His steps. You do think His thoughts and His emotions. You have His attitudes of response.

The super grace capacity is God's provision for us to meet the sufferings in Satan's world. When we are at super grace level of maturity, we are reaping what God has sown in us through His Word. The super grace, humble Christian has capacities for living which are denied the proud and immature believer.

Those of you who have grown up in a religious context, in a church context, or who have grown up in this church, are going to be very much prone to be tempted to think that you really know the story, and that you really know the score. You don't. You don't know anything. You just have an opportunity to know something better. You may think you possess something, but you don't. You have to build it like anybody else? The Lord Jesus Christ had to build the Word of God in His soul and His humanity like anyone else. By the time he was 12 years old, He was a wonder to all the adults around Him. But when you have this capacity, do you know what happens? Suddenly, you can enjoy life. Suddenly, you've got discernment. You listen to people, and you peg them. Suddenly, your values are worthy. You're pursuing significant things in your life. Suddenly, you have good taste. You don't think it's funny to tell things that are crude; to talk in a crude way; or, to tell things that are off color, and you don't laugh at that.

This can be very burdensome. We used to have a man in this church years ago that used to tell jokes in mixed company that always brought a silence, because they were so off color, and they were in such bad taste, that everybody was embarrassed for him. He doesn't do that anymore. He's gone to that great theater in the sky, and he now knows how to act. He should have known that here. When you're at this prime of your spiritual life and super grace, your Christian service would be significant. It will not be some trivial plain church operation. You'll have a spirit of sharing. You'll have a spirit of kindness. You'll have a spirit of trusting God. You'll be a person whose integrity we can count on, and you'll be a great lover of freedom. Yes, God will probably not only give you your basic needs of life, but He will probably prosper you with some extra wealth beyond your immediate means. You'll have a capacity of genuine love. You'll be able to pay attention to your family instead of floating in your life around them like they were an irritation. You will have a devotion to the Lord. You'll be the friend of Jesus Christ.

**Good Health and Good Mental Attitudes**

The results will also be blessings upon you. You will reach the goals that are compatible with the will of God. You will enjoy success. You will enjoy sex. You will enjoy social relationships. You will enjoy promotion. And I'll tell you something big that you'll enjoy at super grace: You'll enjoy good health. There is a great connection between living at super grace, and having physical good health and vitality – a great connection. And even the medical world knows that certain diseases are more easily triggered in people who have bad mental attitudes. We're talking about good mental attitudes. You'll have health; you'll have stability; you'll have satisfaction in marriage; and, you'll have the fulfillment of maximum divine good production with your life.

**Joy**

What's the purpose of super grace status? The ultimate purpose is found in 1 John 1:4. John said, "And these things we write (the things of doctrine that build super grace in the believer), that our joy may be complete." It is basic to the Christian life to find personal happiness. That's why I said earlier that when we say it is the lot of Christians to suffer, I do not mean by that, that it is a lot that life is grim and unhappy. It means that, in the midst of your suffering, there's a joy unspeakable. God our Father, in effect, acts as our host in our lives. As you know, if somebody invites you to their home for entertainment and for hospitality, your hostess is glorified when the guests are happy. It is a credit and an honor to you when they are pleased to have been there. You know the difference.

Sometimes people invite you out, and you go to things that they have prepared for you, and it's just a very relaxing, happy evening. It's just terrific fun. Other times it's a terrible chore. It can be something that is not a credit to the people who've invited you out, for whatever reasons. In super grace, He wants us to be happy, and be successful by divine viewpoint standards.

Forget this idea of eating worms for Jesus' sake. That is not our calling in the Christian life. We are called to be happy. In fact, it is put in such emphatic words that it is nearly a command. And in some places it is.

The Christian, of course, is totally helpless. He's disoriented until the Word of God comes in to give him perspective, and on that, he builds his super grace standing.

**Will Believers be able to be Happy during the Tribulation?**

So, in the tribulation era, believers are going to be faced with some very, very hard times, and who are under pressure in a variety of ways, and even under the threat of their very lives. And now they are confronted with something that is so hazardous that they don't know from day-to-day what is going to happen. Is it possible to be happy in a situation like that?

Let's turn back for a moment to Colossians 1:9-14 that we looked at in some detail. Here, the apostle Paul is praying that the Christians would be filled with that full "epignosis" of the knowledge of God – that upon which super grace is built. And he is praying for them to have all the good things that God has for them in life, to be experienced by them, as the result of their building doctrine in their souls. Notice in verse 11 that one of the things that he calls for them in their spiritual maturity is their joy: "Patience, joyously giving thanks" – that they are to be a happy people.

**Inner Happiness**

We're talking about inner happiness. Let's go over a few ideas now about inner happiness.

1. **We Should be Happy Like God is Happy**

Happiness in a time of crisis, in a time of suffering, is related to the character of God. So, the quality of happiness is indeed older than the human race itself. God has always been happy. God possesses eternal happiness. What God wants us to do is to be transformed into His character. Galatians 5:22-23 give us give us the list of the fruit of the Spirit – the things the Holy Spirit produces in us. As you know, one of those qualities is joy. God's grace expresses His relaxed, perfect happiness in all that He does. If we are to be transformed into the image of God, then we're going to have to be a happy people. It is super grace that gives maximum level of happiness.

1. **Happiness is Part of God's Divine Plan**

Secondly, happiness is part of the divine plan of God. We call it the divine decrees. In eternity past, God made happiness a part of His plan, and He determined to share His happiness with us in our time in life. In John 15:11, Jesus said, "These things (the Word of doctrine) I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full." Here, Jesus says, "I've taught you to the things of the Word of God so that you can move on up to that super grace level so that you can be as happy as I am." The Lord Jesus Christ never knew greater happiness than when He was on the cross, in the midst of his most intense suffering. The writer to Hebrew says, "He looked forward to the joy that would be accomplished following His payment on that cross." When you know doctrine, you have the basis for happiness. This divine happiness becomes available at the point of our salvation, and then it flows through the Word of God, which He provides. Psalm 51:12 and Ephesians 1:3 point that out.

1. **God's Happiness is Transferred to Man via Grace**

God's happiness is transferred to man via grace. Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us how we come into the Christian life by an act of God's grace. Grace solved the separation between us and God. Salvation and our understanding of doctrine are the basis of happiness. That comes to us through the grace of God. The grace system of perception is the method that God has provided for transferring His happiness to us as believers. In 1 John 1:4, John points that out to us. It is the Word of God that is the means for transferring God's happiness to us: "These things we write so that our joy may be complete." Again, he is referring to the things of doctrine so that our joy is complete.

1. **Inner Happiness Comes only within the Plan of God**

Inner happiness can only be experienced within the plan of God. John 20:31 tells us that at the point of our salvation (our trust in Christ the Savior), we enter the plan of God. Salvation does not provide us automatically with happiness, but it does make it possible, through the filling of the Holy Spirit, for us to find that happiness. This potential inner happiness becomes a reality when the Christian is functioning under the grace system of perception and building spiritual maturity in his soul.

**Eternity**

In eternity, perfect happiness will be automatic. You'll never know anything but happiness. Jude 24 says to us, "To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time, now and forevermore." Our ultimate goal is to be with our God. What is leading us to that great eternal relationship? Verse 24: "Now to Him, who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless and with great joy." Did you get that? Blameless and with great joy. In heaven, it's all going to be perfect happiness.

1. **Mere Happiness in time is a False Joy**

Mere happiness in time is a false joy. Daniel 5:1-6 is a good illustration of false joy. In those verses, you have described the feast of Belshazzar. It was a drunken orgy. They were having a wild time with the girls there that night. All the lords and ladies were there. All the wives and all the concubines were there, and they were getting drunk, of all things, out of the vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple that once were the sacred vessels in the service of God. They were using this in their contemptuous expression. The nobles drank from it; the wives drank from it; the kings drank from it; and, the concubines drank from it. And verse 4 says, "They drank the wine while they were praising the gods of gold; of silver; of bronze; and, of iron, wood and stone." This was one of the all-time great New Year's Eve office parties. Did they have fun? Was it a lasting great joy?

Verse 5: "Suddenly, the fingers of a man's hand emerged, and began writing opposite the lamp stand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing." As you know, his face grew pale, and he was horrified in what he saw, because what he saw there was an inscription that he had been weighed in the balance of God's justice, and found wanting. This king had everything, and thought he was having a wonderful time that night. Human happiness in time is a false joy. In the devil's world, there are pseudo happiness which is temporary and superficial. This is the kind of happiness that depends on whether you have money; whether you have compatible people around you; and, whether you have circumstances in life that you enjoy, and all those things change. Human happiness is based on the fact that you get your way. You're not being crossed. You're free to indulge your sin nature lust patterns. Human happiness eventually deteriorates into boredom, restlessness, frustration, and instability. It breaks down under the pressures of life. For happiness, the unbeliever simply finds himself in a form of slavery to drugs; to alcohol; to immorality; to eating; and, to all kinds of things.

1. **God's Happiness is Permanent and Stable**

God has designed His provision of happiness to be permanent and stable through the spiritual maturity structure in the soul. In John 17:13, Jesus says, "But now I come to You (speaking to the Father), and these things I speak in a world that they may have My joy made full in themselves." Jesus says, "I'm leaving them. I'm coming back to heaven. But what I'm leaving behind is the means for their happiness – that inner happiness that they can build by constructing a super grace container in their souls through the principles of doctrine. This happiness begins with the filling of the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation. It reaches its maximum maturity when the spiritual maturity structure is built. It sustains the believer through the worst circumstances of life. As you work on this structure day-by-day, you keep it in good repair. It is interesting that in Matthew 5, you have the Beatitudes. They all begin with the word "blessed." In the Greek, that word means "happy." And what do the Beatitudes tell you? The principles of godly living.

1. **Exercise your Priesthood Daily**

The believer is to exercise his priesthood daily in maintaining his inner happiness. If you neglect your spiritual maturity, it will deteriorate. You will go into retrogression. You'll go into reversionism if you do not stay consistent in the Word of God, the daily use of building yourself up spiritually is your means for maintaining the inner happiness which is developed. Matthew 4:4: "You live by every Word proceeding from the mouth of God" (James 1:25, John 13:17). Without the Word of God, you will go backward.

So, those of you who have grown up in Berean church, and you know it all; and, you who grew up in Berean Church, and you can't hear anything new, and you understand the functioning, you better at least learn this. If you do not feed upon the Word of God, you have subtly deceived yourself, and you're going backwards.

1. **Inner Happiness Protects the Christian**

Divine inner happiness protects the Christian from disillusionment such that he abandons his faithfulness to God. In the circumstances of life, no circumstance will come that will cause you to be disillusioned toward God. That is no small thing to say. That's the person who comes to you and bemoans his lot in life: "Why is God doing this to me?" And his circumstances of life, if he is not a Christian who has developed spiritual maturity in his soul, will crack up and break down.

Philippians 4:11-12 refers to this, when Paul says, "Not that I speak from want, for I've learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means. I also know how to live in prosperity. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of being filled, and going hungry; and, both of having abundance, and suffering need." This also applies to the principle of the details of life. This too will be a cause for disillusionment in some Christians. Christians who are not prosperous can become disillusioned.

Hebrews 13:5-6 says, "Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have. For He Himself has said, "I'll never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you, so that we confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?" None of us has to repeat these verses to ourselves as we sit at our table, with our family around, and we're ready for supper, and there's no food to serve. That's the time when the test of your super grace status, and your capability of taking that suffering in stride without being bitter and resentful toward God, and being disillusioned, will come into play. The circumstances of life can bring you down; the lack of the material details of life can bring you down; and, your relationship to other Christians can bring you down.

Hebrews 12:2-4 point that out: "Fixing our eyes on Jesus." Did you get that? Fixing our eyes on that cute blond? Fixing our eyes on that handsome devil? "Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross." You got it? While He's suffering on that cross, He is filled with inner happiness because of what's coming: "Despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of God the Father. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart." You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin. He had to shed blood. How many of you have had to shed blood because of your faithfulness to Him?

You must be aware of the fact that even if a person is a Christian, you want to remember that that Christian has clay feet. A lot of Christians are not nice people. Many Christians are not honest people. They're not truthful. I can certainly assure you that a lot of Christians are not dependable. You can't count on them. Many of them are not loyal. So, don't get your eyes on people, but keep your eyes on the Lord. Jeremiah 17:5 gives you good advice on that.

1. **Inner Happiness Enhances your Capacity to Love**

Inner happiness enhances your capacity for love. When you have an inner happiness, you have a great personal capacity for love. In the Song of Solomon 3:1, we read, "On my bed night-after-night, I sought him who my soul loves. I sought him, but I did not find him." What is this woman saying concerning her absent lover? She had fragrant memories of him because with him, she was happy. If you are married to your right woman, or to your right husband, you can have the most miserable circumstances in life; you can have the most tragic circumstances; and, you can have the most intense kind of suffering, and you will be happy – if you married to the right person. If you're not, nothing is going to make you happy. When you have this happiness, as you think about this person, it enhances your love. People who are so deeply in love sometimes say to each other, "I think of you all the time." If anybody ever says that to you, that is love that has been enhanced because of the happiness that you bring to that person.

Unhappiness does the other. It destroys your capacity 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. Seal me over your heart. Put a seal on your arm, because my love is as strong and as ultimate in its impact as death is."

**Jealousy**

But jealousy? What is jealousy? Jealousy is unhappiness. That's like flashes of fire, and it will burn up your love.

1. **Inner Happiness is Admonished to the Believer on Earth**

Finally, inner happiness is admonished to the believer on earth. This admonition is tantamount to a command which is about as crazy a thing as you could imagine. Philippians 4:4 says, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say rejoice." "Now hear this: you will be happy." Now, how does that strike you? "You will be happy." You see that that is a senseless remark unless you understand everything we've told you this day. But if you understand that, and you operate on that basis, you will have happiness that will blow you out of the water with excitement and the thrill to the end of your brain cells. It will not depend on whether people around you are treating you nice; whether they're happy or not; whether you have something or don't have something; whether you've achieved something that you've wanted or not wanted; and, regardless of your circumstance at the moment. God supplies that happiness, and He will give you, with super grace capacity, the ability to be happy. Obviously, you cannot legislate feelings. To tell people that they are to be happy would make no sense unless God had provided a method by which that can be done.

So, in the tribulation era, these great believers will suffer a great deal. They are told to expect the worst, and to stand up and face it as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, knowing that the law of retribution will come into play: they will be resurrected in a new body; the antichrist will get what he deserves; and, and they will enter maximum ultimate happiness. Those who enter that era should have the Word of God in their hearts.

You must remember that that's not going to be easy to do, because everybody that comes into the tribulation comes in dead (unsaved) – spiritually dead. The whole world starts off after the rapture with nothing but unsaved people. It is people who get hold of the Bible; who get hold of books; who get hold of tapes; and, who listen, and God the Holy Spirit uses that message to bring them to a knowledge of the Word of God. The 144,000 Jewish evangelists will be raised up. They'll be saved. They'll have information. But those who listen and those who learn are going to be capable of doing exactly what John has been told to record: Pay attention to this information. Stand by for the worst of all times. But you will also find that they will be the best of all times when God has executed His justice and His vengeance.

The Christian is not a wimp. And when we are, it is an enormous insult to the God who has given us this kind of capacity for happiness and satisfaction. And as we read in the previous session: "Without grumbling, and without complaining, and without attacking. Thank God for the spiritual maturity structure of the soul.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1991

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