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"EVERYBODY WANTS HAPPINESS"

John 10:10

Our Lord said, I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly.

I never met anyone who was willing to live in the state of frustration and misery. (Everybody wants to be happy.) It is only natural for a man to desire happiness. The dictionary defines happiness as the state of well being and pleasureable satisfaction.

Happiness, in (some ways) is only short lived. It might burst forth and bloom for a short time.

A (criminal) may feel a sudden surge of happiness when one of his under-world enemies falls under the cruel blow of death. The (robber) may feel breeze of happiness when he successfully carries out a plan to take something that he has no right too.

In the slums of the great cities like New York and Chicago - you may be stopped by a man who is begging. He is an (alcoholic) You give him a piece of money and his face lights up. It is the price of a drink. He hurries away to the nearest bar to escape himself and the problems of the world.

BurtAn Russell once wrote in a book - (is happiness still possible?) Well, you think about that. It is kind of absurd because happiness is always possible. Yet many people never find the road and the way that leads to it. Think about the suicides in the United States. These unfortunate, confused individuals - you would say from your first reaction that they are down-trodden people. Some of them live in lovely mansions and some of them control great wealth. Some of them are mentally

deranged. Some of them face other problems.

The young people in this country have lived in a world that has been at war, constant threats of global disaster, and there has been ceaseless stress. Can young people in an era such as this find happiness. Yes, there is only one answer to that question - is happiness possible. Jesus gave it to us. John 16:33 - I have overcome the world. What did Jesus mean. Did he not learn to live the happy confident life, in spite of the world. And that he had learned to live above the evils of the world.

The large cities are now building more prisons. To take care of criminals. People are moving to the cities at a rare rate. And crime increase in porportion and the newspapers tell us of a young man who left a trail of crime from the East Coast to the West. And asked why he did it - he said, "I was just trying to put a little fun in my life."

There are at least two levels that people may seek happiness -- one is in the divine things and the other is in the mundane things.

As you consider the mundane things - it is short-lived, temporary, and many times superficial type of happiness. A man may get a promotion or an increase in salary, that is a short-lived type of happiness.

A woman may be thrilled with the joy when she unwraps what she guesses is a pair of pajamas and a house coat - only to find a mink stole. Did you ever look in a little child's face on Christmas morning. His eyes, his smile, and his actions express the gladness that his heart knows. Did you ever see a young girl who gains the attention of the young man in her life and she becomes quickly happy.

Now there is nothing to happiness on this level or this kind of happiness. A form of delight. But it is easily lost among the memories of yesterday.

It is a beautiful sight to see a morning glory - sparkling in the dew. Shining, each blossom perfect. Yet a florist never uses this flower in a corsage. It is not because the morning glory lacks color and beauty. The reason is that the blossom will not last. When the sun evaporates the dew drops, the freshness is gone, and the flower loses its luster. The same thing in the circumstances of the world.

Divine happiness, however, is more difficult to achieve. God is the great inexhaustable source of divine happiness. Our Master found it. The happiness which God puts in a heart - it will shine in every dark night, in every storm of life. When sickness blows over you. The peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled - neither let it be afraid. John 14:27. The black clouds of sorrow will inevitably come. The rains of temptation will come.

A lady in a nursing home wrote - I am an old woman. I shall be 90 years old the 17th of June. I am in the sunset of life and soon my stay on earth will be over. But don't think I'm here with a long face and complaining, because I am not. And I know as soon as my stay is over here, I'll go home and live forever. Now that letter expresses genuine Christian happiness.

Catherine McKinsey took a scholastic opinion poll among some high school students. And asked them to consider some long range goals. Only 4% of them wanted to make a lot of money. The great majority stated they wanted to live a simple, secure, and happy life. Without making a lot of money and becoming famous. Now this is encouraging that many of our youth can lift their sights above the material things.

The old Greek philosopher said God made all men to be happy. And a happy worker produces more and better work - just like someone who is an accomplished musician. Quite often you ask them how they achieved this - practice, practice, practice.

Yes, someday people will learn that the material things do not bring happiness. And are of little use in making men and women useful.

The big trouble we have today is, we look for happiness in the wrong places. We are traveling down the wrong roads in quest of happiness.

Now lots of people go down the road with some desired goal in life. They say if I can accomplish this goal, I am going to be happy.

What about the young person who leaves high school. He achieves his goal. The problems of daily study are a task. But he finds himself depressed and unhappy.

What about many young people who think that marriage is really the place of happiness. And therefore, before they finish high school, they want to be married. Yes, a young girl wrote a letter and said, I was so stubborn that I failed to listen to the wisdom of my parents. I married at 16 thinking I would find happiness. But I have been miserable and unhappy ever since. I wish I had my life to live over again.

There are other people who go down the wrong road of (possessions.) And they say, the riches of this country will make me happy. I suppose 98% of all the homes in America have one or more radios. And maybe numerous T. V. sets. Expensive appliances. A real estate man was talking to a buyer about a fabulous house. He described it - 2 acres of beautiful lawn. Perfect in architectural design, 4 bedrooms, 4 baths. And 3 garages, servant quarters, fireplace. And then the buyer asked, why are these people selling. And the real estate man said, they are getting a divorce. Now if happiness is the result of things - surely these people would have been the most happy

people in the community.

I think back in my memory - so many places that I have been. Where the houses and the homes have been very humble. Maybe some cane bottom chairs. And I have had people tell me, we are very poor, but we are happy and you are welcome to come in. How different it is with the wealthy man who was near his death and he called the preacher. He managed to create a financial fortune. But now his death was coming and in his late hour, he said to the preacher - I want to know about God. // The preacher told the man about the love of God expressed on Calvary and about God's forgiveness. And then he wanted to know - will God accept me. Now here was a man that had neglected God for several decades and he wanted to know, would God accept him.

A five year old boy said, I always know when I am unhappy. How does a person know when he really is happy. If we knew in advance what we were looking for, happiness would be easy to find. And if we would study some of the happy men and women that we know, for a guideline, I wonder if that would be a help to us.

A business man in Florida was talking one day to a minister. He said, I wish I could be as happy as I believe you are. You can be, the minister assured him. And then he asked him to tell him about himself. So they began to talk. He was well educated. His health was good. He was extremely successful and he had a lovely wife and three children. He owned his company and his home. But he was hunting for genuine happiness.

The minister's final question was this - what is your relationship to God? The man said I was afraid that you were going to ask me that. I have not been to church since I was in high school and I have become skeptical about God and religion.

And the minister told him that he had better be thankful for God had never become

skeptical about him. He still believes in you and you will never find spiritual peace until God gets into your life.

Yes, happiness is reflected in unceasing love of God and his forgiveness. Some people feel that good health, pleasant circumstances, will produce divine happiness. Fannie Crosby became blind when she was very young. She had a great physical handicap. She produced many wonderful hymns. She has pointed the way to God for many confused and lost people. On one occasion she wrote, "I am the happiest soul living. If I had not been deprived of my sight, I never would have received so good an education nor cultivated so fine a memory. Nor been able to do good to so many people.

William Booth losing his eye sight, would soon be totally blind. Said to his son, I have done what I could for God and people with two eyes - I will do what I can for God and his people without eyes.

Robert Lewis Stephenson went through life with a weak body but he continued to write. A very wealthy woman noted in happiness and rest in her life because of her financial fortune. In spite of it, she told her maid, that she felt that a change of scenery was all that she needed. She even suggested the places she might go of beauty and pleasant surroundings. And could there find happiness. The maid who had no former education at all said, no - you surely would not be happy there. You have to take yourself with you wherever you went.

Now let me see if we can't point out two or three things that would be helpful to us to get us on the road to happiness.

I. First, take the road of appreciation. The wonderful capacity to appreciate again

and again is one of the basic good things in life.

We need to have gratitude for the very gifts of the moments of life that we have today. Reading the newspaper, getting to work, puttering around the yard, visiting friends. Watching a sunset - all are sources of continually pleasure for us.

Once a boy was playing with only one roller skate. He was having quite a grand time. A man watching him said, sonny, you ought to have two skates. The little boy grinned. Sure mister, I know I ought to have two skates - but you can have an awful good time on one skate, if that is all you got.

Kenneth Hybrand told a story about a little girl who had lost both of her parents by death. She was living her life in the country but was brought to the crowded city to live with a large family. The adjustment was difficult. She was seated on the steps of the home and a kindly lady noticed her depression. The woman patted her on the head saying, life is not all that you want. But it is all that you've got it. So stick a daisy in your hat and be happy. These words from this kind old lady put fresh hope in that little girl's life and she sought to find her a job and to begin a new life.

A man in the Midwest wrote about his suffering - his sleepless nights. He had lost his legs, he might never walk again even with artificial limbs. I thank God everyday for his love and his goodness. God has been my strength and my source of happiness, through the journey. Now it is hard to defeat a man with that spirit of gratitude and appreciation in his heart. If you want to find divine happiness - then do as the Psalmist 100:4 - enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise. Be thankful unto him and bless his name.

A young mother wrote I was hurrying around the kitchen getting breakfast, for my husband and three children. The sun was streaming in. The sound of frying eggs and

bacon mingled with the casual chatter of my husband and children. As I looked at them, I was so overwhelmed by their beauty. That tears sprang to my eyes and I was all joy. Yes, such moments of appreciation for even the family and loved ones.

II Second, learn to master your thoughts. Prov. 23:7 - For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. We set the mood for each day. By our attitudes, by our thoughts.

I am well aware of the fact that I cannot simply think away things - but on the other hand, I can create many problems for myself by negative thinking. We must face reality, and at the same time - we do not need to manufacture problems.

A little girl after a wonderful day reminded her mother at bedtime, I have had such a happy time today. I am glad, the mother said, but tell me - what made this day different from yesterday. She said, well, yesterday, I let (my thoughts push) me around and today I pushed my thoughts around.

Now that is the story of many of you. You let unChristian thoughts push you around. And it is harder.

Psa 144:15 "yea, Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord!"

I know that positive thinking will not cause all of your problems to disappear. But it will change your attitude toward life in general. Ask God to make this a good day. And have Him show you how you can help to make it one. And then believe that things will go right for you. You have to see faith. We have to look at life - not with a rose colored glasses but we have to see here - people as they really are. Rather than as we wish them to be. And people need to do this even in marriage - husband and wife. One woman said, I knew when I married my husband that nothing but an act of God would interfere with his work. Of course that increased her happiness when she realized he was very devoted to the calling that he had entered.

Do something for others. God did not make us to live in this world as selfish individuals. We must reach out and help others. The man that lives only for himself hates nothing so much as being alone with himself, Pascal once wrote.

Jesus was never idle. He was busy continually helping others. In fact, the son of man came not to be ministered to but to minister. And to give his life a ransom for many. And Jesus said, I am among you as he that serveth. Many other wonderful things can be said about our Lord. As he instructs us in the way of serving other people.

Now I have never met a happy person who was not committed to a job or task. The person who has a mission in life is a person who is not self-centered. For them happiness is just a by-product of work and duty. This is one of the facts of why mothers with babies seldom get sick as other people do in the family.

Remember the man that bound up the wounds of the man who had been robbed and found happiness in that soul.

Third, place your trust in God. This is the way to happiness. Prov. 16:20.

Whosoever trusteth in the Lord, happy is he. This is the clue. In the Psalms he warns us not to put our trust in princess - happy is he wrote the Psalmist, that hath the God of Jacob for his help. Whose hope is in the Lord, his God. Now everyone has his possessions - and in his possession, a generous supply of faith. Quite often we find people who will say, I just don't have enough faith. This is not an accurate statement. What they ought to say is, I am just afraid to use my faith.

Net. 8:17 - People of Ashdod, Egypt read Script. - "and there was great gladness"

Charles Allen in his healing words said - faith is like a boomer-rang. You begin using what you have and it comes back to you in great measure.

And faith in God will help you to be able to tolerate even the uncertain. You will be able to live even though you cannot understand and know what may be tomorrow. Columbus assumed that the world was flat. He set out to get to the East Indies by a new route. All was uncertain.

The famous University of Cambridge - G. H. Harvey a man of math. Once received a bulky letter from India. It was written by a poor untutored clerk who asked for his comments on some strange looking theorems. Many people would have returned the letter un-read. In fact, several professors had done so. But Harvey ignored the cheap paper, the bad English, and gave it his attention. An hour of study revealed to him that the writer was a natural mathematical genius. Harvey persuaded Cambridge to bring that man to England. And soon that man was put on the faculty and elected - and turned out five masterpieces of modern mathematics. Faith is something like Harvey had.

God can be trusted - everything I see points to this truth. The universe, that God does not waste anything.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Jesus who had compassion upon the sick, restored sight to the blind, forgiveness to the sinful. Is here to bind up wounds and to put a new song in our hearts.

William White, on his 70th Birthday said, I am not afraid of tomorrow. I have seen yesterday and I love today. Now with this kind of happiness, you can trust God.

And you'll find happiness.

Job 5:17 "Happy is the man whom God correcteth, therefore despise not the chastening of the Almighty" →

between the root and the leaf. Dry rot - soon brings the dry rot into the leaf. Men cannot see the roots of Christian character. But they can see the leaf. And what is hidden in the roots will come to the appearance. The outward life will flourish or else we will see the withered leaves.

The happy man is success - and whatsoever he doeth, he shall prosper. The bud, the blossom, produces fruit.

If this is the way your life has been--or is it in contrast with the ungodly that shall perish. Bring your life in perfect harmony with his will. Albert Sweitzer, an accomplished musician could no longer be happy living as he was. He wrote about himself. He said I settled with myself - that I would consider myself justified in living until I was 30 years old. I lived for science and for art. On that 30th birthday, he resolved to spend his life in service in Africa. His friends discouraged him - some of them thought he was losing his mind. But that experience was one of divine happiness. By doing anything else he would have been miserable. Divine happiness is within reach. And it can be mine inspite of all the surrounding circumstances. If we give unreserveably to God. If you turn your life completely over to God - not just half way!

2 Chro. 15:15 "And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: For they had sworn with all their heart & sought him with their whole desire; & he was found of them, & they gave them rest round about."

Philip Doddridge wrote:

O Happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee my Saviour & my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all a-broad.

Happy Day, Happy Day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!
He taught me how to watch & pray,
And live rejoicing every day;
Happy Day, Happy Day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!

'Tis done - The great Transactions done;
I am my Lord's, & he is mine;
He drew me & I followed on,
Rejoiced to own The call divine -

Not all people seek it. Not all people know the way. There is a difference in pleasure and in happiness. Pleasure belongs to something that is fleeting. Happiness belongs to the soul and that is abiding. True happiness comes from nearness to God. It is in the heart. Blessed are the pure in heart. For they shall see God.

Happiness is in the opportunity as Mary anointed the body of Jesus. It was an opportunity. And she was blessed. And if you cease the opportunity - it will bless you.

Yes, faith in God will come through obedience in His word. John 13:17 it says, if you know these things - happy are ye if you do them. Joy is obedience to the call of Christ. It is being ready.

In faith, John 20:29 - attempt great things for God and we know that God will fulfill this promise. So everybody wants happiness but not everybody knows the way to happiness.

We may have the knowledge of God's Word on how to be happy.

And that brings us to the closing thought - fifth, you must live your life in perfect harmony with his being. Live in his will and he wants you to live. Most of us want to be happy. But most people insist on living according to their own wishes. Of course that is impossible. The choice is always ours. Place ourselves in God's hands - or we can refuse it.

Now God has never put a person in a place where it is too small for him to grow. But it is that we refuse to grow.

In the first Psalm he begins to tell about the happy man. He says he is joyful because he delights in the law of the Lord. The Christian life and happiness is not

merely one of giving up something. But it is entering in at a new and happy inheritance at the word of God.

The prodigal son had to give up some things - so he could possess the best robe and enter into the joys of the happy home.

But what were they - the swine's troft, his rags.

The word of God says - the land flowing with milk and honey. And the flowers never wither there. It delights them.

Another thing is - that man is thoughtful. He meditates. Day and night.

Now if you are going to find happiness you have to do the same in prosperity as well as in adversity. Make the word of God your council, your meditation, a word of truth for you.

Like Elijah, his servant, went out and looked again and again before he could see a cloud the size of a man's hand. When we think of Jesus Christ and the blessings that he is able to bring to us, are we ready to meditate upon it day and night.

That happy man was also hopeful, V. 3. He was like a tree planted by the streams of water. He is full of expectation. And that tree is not just something that you see upon the surface. That tree puts down deep roots where it can be fed. Now while other trees may be starving, that tree is not stunted by drought. It is satisfied because it has buried its roots in the streams and so the happy man gets his strength from God. The happy man is fruitful - he brings forth his fruit in season. Now men do not gather grapes from thorns. But being filled with the fruit of the spirit - it is manifested. Gal. 5:22. Another thing about this happy man is that he is that it is beautiful. His leaf also shall not wither. There is a vital connection