

Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The TREE OF LIFE weekly teaching summary from THE WEEK ENDING: October 26, 1997

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The Doctrine of Happiness

There are three Biblical categories of happiness:

- 1) Pseudo happiness
- 2) Establishment happiness
- 3) God's perfect happiness

Pseudo happiness is used by Satan to deceive the human race, establishment happiness is basically for unbelievers, and God's perfect happiness, hereafter noted as +H, is sharing the unchangeable happiness of God in all circumstances.

First let us note exactly what pseudo happiness is. Pseudo happiness is Satan's attempt to counterfeit the happiness, contentment and blessings which God has provided for every church age believer. Satan is the god of this world as documented in, 2Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; John 12:31; Luke 4:5-7; John 14:30; John 16:11. And, it is Satan's goal to keep his citizens deceived by way of false happiness based on the "world's" temporal blessings. Satan keeps people deceived by providing stimulation, ambition, and self indulgence which will either counterfeit or cancel out the +H God provides. What Satan does is provides a system which gets people so wrapped up that they haven't time to learn what God's perfect happiness is all about. This is why we are commanded in 1John 2:15-17 NOT to love the world (system), the world's lifestyle, the world's thinking, things of the world, etc. The cosmos diabolicus (devil's world) is filled with illusions, delusions, fallacies, and misconceptions about what happiness is. Satan's propaganda tells us happiness is based on money, or success, pleasure, social life, sexual life, public approbation, fame, material things, travel, health and pleasant circumstances and though these things can bring a measure of happiness it is not God's plan for us to

depend on these things for happiness. True happiness comes through the inculcation of the word of God which strengthens the soul with divine viewpoint. What God has provided for us in +H is a permanent factor and is a great problem solving device. Anything that is worthwhile is so in both adversity and prosperity. If you can pass through a tragedy and still remain calm, peaceful, and content you know you have the happiness of God. But, if you fall apart and lose your contentment and peace then you know your happiness was based on circumstances and that is pseudo happiness! If you are dependent on any person or set of circumstances for your happiness you are weak to the degree you are dependent.

The presence of arrogance in our soul is a guarantee of unhappiness perpetuated for the rest of your life. And, it is your arrogance which allows Satan to administer the pseudo happiness which only exists in one who decides to be involved in the cosmic system. The arrogant complex of sins is very deceptive because it deludes, distracts, and deceives man into false notions about what constitutes happiness. Pseudo happiness promises much but beyond that good moment in time arise many bad moments, in time routine and dull times. It is not "good times" which sustain us. Pseudo happiness is temporary while God's +H is present all the time! Freedom to indulge in all one desires is not that which secures happiness. Capacity for happiness must precede the experience or function of happiness and that capacity can only be developed through a consistent relationship with the word of God. Happiness or unhappiness depends on how we respond to any given situation, not the situation itself. Happiness is the harmony between one's thoughts and one's lifestyle.

An example of pseudo happiness is, when the pseudo happy single person is lonely and wishes to be married and the married person is miserable and wishes to be single. God's +H depends on what the believer thinks in his soul, it does not depend on any given divine institution, set of circumstances, nor one's environment! A happy marriage therefore, is two +H people who retain their +H in matrimony. One does not enter into matrimony to obtain +H!!! Marriage brings with it many distractions and so the believer must have soul stability based on a devoted relationship to God first. Pseudo happiness is based on illusions, an illusion being an erroneous concept of reality. If you harbor illusions when it comes to happiness you will end up with an empty, aimless, and meaningless life and it all starts with rejection of truth.

There are five basic illusions people hold to in reference to happiness:

- 1) Building happiness on the details of life such as money, success, pleasure, social life, friends, relatives, health, sex, or status symbols.
- 2) Building happiness on a pleasant environment.
- 3) Building happiness on people, romance, marriage, friendship, children, or social activity.
- 4) Building happiness by way of changing the devil's world via reform crusades, social engineering, violence, civil disobedience, or revolution.
- 5) Building happiness on someone else's unhappiness, i.e., revenge.

Pseudo happiness depends on involvement in the evil of the cosmic system of Satan and can only be related to momentary pleasure. And, anything you have in a moment which cannot be perpetuated is not related to +H but rather is related to emotion. Pseudo happiness is superficial, vain, subject to change, unstable, frustrating, and temporary and is therefore the source of self induced misery under the law of volitional responsibility. Pseudo happiness is

...limited to this life, Psalms 17:14; Luke 16:25

...a short happiness, Job 20:5

...uncertain, Luke 12:20

...vain, Ecc 2:1; 7:6

...derived from wealth, Psalms 52:7

...derived from power, Psalms 37:35

...from worldly prosperity, Psalms 17:14

...from gluttony, Isaiah 22:13

...from drunkenness, Isaiah 56:12

...from vain pleasure, Isaiah 5:12

...from oppression of others, Hab 1:15

Unhappy people complain since their desires have not been met. Why? Because in pseudo happiness they have no capacity to appreciate what they have and they want more and more and so are implacable. In reality, if you want to experience happiness you need to have certain desires removed, not to have things added to your life. Your thinking is the problem. Unhappy thinking is arrogant thinking and is minus humility. Humility is the beginning of having God's +H and apart from humility there is only pseudo happiness. Only God's provisions can make you truly happy and that demands the function of reception, retention, and recall of Bible doctrine.

Look at Satan himself, he was the most beautiful, successful, attractive, genius creature to come from the hand of God! But he was miserable

because he couldn't appreciate all that he had... instead he wanted more, Isaiah 14:12-14, he wanted to be like the Most High! And so he set about reeling in all that he wanted, hence, we have the angelic conflict! True happiness realizes that if God does not open the doors, it's not a part of His plan for your life. God does not need to use the devil's method of promotion to advance His cause! All the believer needs to do is prepare himself and leave the rest to God. If God wants "it" to happen - then it will happen. But pseudo happiness becomes consumed in what it is lacking. Jer 25:10 informs us that once the word of God is rejected, happiness is taken from you and your lust pattern becomes saturated. Sure Satan has the ability to provide (pseudo) happiness, but... he does not have the ability to sustain or maintain his blessings and happiness.

People erroneously think that a life with no problems is what happiness is all about. In reality, problems are what offer us the opportunity to strengthen our faith and solidify our relationship with God. The unhappy person seeks to control his environment including the people therein either by use of guilt or self-pity. Self pity is the flattery that people who are failures crave so they can preserve their excuses to be losers and then develop a pseudo self-esteem. No matter what the unhappy person endeavors, nothing works for the believer apart from God's perfect plan and provisions, Solomon can second that fact.

What about the unbeliever? Well this is where Establishment happiness comes in. Establishment happiness comes from submitting to the laws of divine establishment which are designed to remove arrogance and fear from the life of the unbeliever and to replace it with genuine humility which results in a capacity for life. Note, this is not the case for the believer in Christ! To whom much is given much is required and once the individual is a believer, there is more to life than the keeping of establishment principles. The believer who honors divine establishment principles yet rejects the plan of God enters into arrogance and divine discipline. Establishment happiness is the temporal happiness of the unbeliever who lives by establishment principles. Under establishment happiness the unbeliever moves beyond morality to a place of limited virtue, becoming a person of honor. This type of person is very different from the unbeliever who is alone moral and quite self-righteous about his morality. Being faithful to the principles of establishment is not morality, though it includes it, it goes beyond morality for the unbeliever to genuine humility.

The unbeliever under establishment happiness and true humility can enjoy such God given temporal blessings as being married to the right one for one's life, and the blessing of occupation as noted in Ecc 9:9 cf Pro 18:22. This two-fold reward noted in Ecc 9:9 is not due to the unbeliever's morality but to his humility. But the tragedy here is that such blessings in the unbeliever's life come to a screeching halt at the grave. Establishment happiness is a restricted and temporal happiness tied into the laws of divine establishment and so these blessings are vulnerable to one's environment and circumstances. Unlike God's +H, in establishment happiness there are adverse circumstances which are stronger than establishment happiness and can negate this happiness. There is nothing wrong with establishment happiness since it is designed by God, but it is temporal and lasts no further than the grave. Therefore the most important category of happiness is God's perfect happiness also known as divine happiness.

There never was a time when God was unhappy. In such truth, there never was a time when God was unhappy with you! In His omniscience He knew all about all in eternity past and remained perfectly happy. Such +H is obtained on our part according to our intake and application of Bible doctrine. No person can take +H away since it comes from God and cannot be changed. Of course, relatively few believers possess God's +H, since it requires consistent perception, metabolization, and application of B.D., as well as the advance to spiritual adulthood, especially spiritual maturity. God's +H is independent happiness and is the monopoly of the believer in spiritual adulthood. This +H is not found in the world, Mar 8:36. God's +H requires something no lazy minded person can do...concentrate. As John 8:31 notes, to abide in Christ denotes a direct dependence of the one under instruction upon one who is an authorized superior in spiritual knowledge. The word disciple also found in John 8:31 is a reference to the existence of a personal attachment which shapes the whole life of the one described or to be dedicated to something, here it points to a dedication to the word of God.

The majority of believers cannot concentrate long enough on the word of God to come to know God's system, His plan, nor His mystery doctrine, therefore they become bored with God's plan and easily distracted. Such a believer will never know the +H of God. Perfect happiness is divine happiness resident in the soul of the church age believer who utilizes his portfolio of invisible assets and divine power to attain spiritual maturity. God's happiness does not change with circumstances or with someone's mood. This does not mean you don't ever get emotional or that you will

never have negative thoughts, but it does mean that you immediately rebound and rise above the circumstances. We never have a right to be unhappy or bitter with anyone due to the availability of problem solving device #7, impersonal love which is worth much more than money since it allows you to rise above letting people get to you.

The absence of problems is not +H, but peace and contentment no matter what you are faced with. Jesus Christ had this happiness throughout His whole incarnate life and even on the cross, Heb 12:2. Therefore, the opposition from Satan and the persecution from other believers in the cosmic system should only serve to intensify your +H! God will deal with those who are wrong, your job is to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and continue forward in God's plan. Problems are actually a vote of confidence from God in that He knows you can (if you choose to) handle them. In fact, you will never know what type of happiness you have until you go through some bad experiences and tragedies. Again, happiness is not the absence of problems but the ability to deal with anything the devil's world can bring toward you, Phi 4:13. Once you have God's +H nothing that happens to you can change your peace and contentment. One of the powers the Lord Jesus Christ left for us through His teachings is... His perfect happiness, problem solving device #9! It's not enough to have a measure of God's +H, it must be brought to completion. And, if you know God as a rigid disciplinarian then you will never forge the way to His +H. God in His perfect justice and is waiting to be gracious to us, Isa 30:18. Knowing who God is and being devoted to His plan for your life is what offers the believer +H, only then can the temporal blessings of this world be appreciated for what they are and only then are we placed beyond being influenced by the problems and circumstances of the devil's world!

If solid happiness we prize,
Within our breast this jewel lies,
And they are fools who roam;
The world has nothing to bestow;
From our own self our joys must flow
And that dear hut -- our home.

Cotton

How cheap is genuine happiness and yet how dearly do we all pay for its base counterfeit!

We fancy wants, which to supply, we dare
Danger and death, enduring the privation
Of all free nature offers in her bounty,
To attain that which in its full fruition,

Brings but satiety. The poorest man
May taste of nature in her element:
Pure, wholesome, never cloying; while the riches;
From the same stores, does but elaborate
A pungent dish of well-concocted poison.

J.N. Barker

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