

A RECIPE FOR HAPPINESS

Three supreme questions exist in the minds of the majority of people in all the civilized nations. These questions are as old as civilization, itself. Upon them and their solution are based the religious, social, political, mental and physical activities of man. These questions are as follows:---

1. "What can I do to be saved?"
2. "What can I do to succeed?"
3. "What can I do to achieve happiness?"

Sometimes, the question is asked, Is there any such thing as 'A happy life' in a world of sin and suffering and sorrow? If so, what is the recipe for it? Surely anyone would be willing to pay a big price for such a recipe.

It is very interesting nowadays, just to notice the advertisements in the average paper or magazine and see what money will buy. For instance if you wish to get thin, just use Dr. So-and-So's pills. No diet; no exercise; no care; just buy the pills. Or do you wish to get rich? Then just buy the book, read it carelessly five minutes a day, and your salary will rise. Or maybe you wish to be beautiful. Then buy Madame So-and-So's cream. No natural beauty; no care of the health; no cultivation of the mind; no expression of the spirit. Just buy the cream and smear it on. Or possibly you would like to be famous, powerful and popular. Then take Professor So-and-So's course. No brains; no diligence; no character; no hard labor. Just pay the fee and the professor will pour the necessary equipment into you.

So read the advertisements. And the advertisers know human nature. They know what the people want. And what the people want is to buy things for money. To buy them with time, work, self-sacrifice, brains and courage, is not so popular. And what they want with the things they buy for money, is to use them to get more money. The result is, that the vast majority of people are obsessed with the idea that money and happiness are synonymous. But the idea is wrong---tragically wrong. You cannot buy happiness. Therefore, I want to give you a recipe for happiness that never fails. Here it is -- "Who so trusteth in the Lord, happy is he." Proverbs 16:20. That is an introduction to a happy man and a recipe for happiness in one verse of Scripture. The Psalmist said, "O taste and see that the Lord is good: happy is the man that trusteth in Him." Psalm 34:8. "Happy is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord." Psalm 1:1-2a. "Happy is that people whose God is Lord." Psalm 144:15. Evidently there are two classes of people then, the happy and the unhappy.

In the light of these facts let us consider:---

I The Pursuit of Happiness

The quest for happiness is universal. Every individual has a consuming desire to be happy. Everybody is seeking happiness. That is one thing upon which all mankind are agreed. Among all men there is more or less of an effort to secure happiness. Some are concentrating all their energies in the pursuit of happiness, while others seem less hopeful, and more faint-hearted in their efforts. But if the efforts that are being made to secure happiness were only put forth in the right direction, many of the cups of happiness would be filled to overflowing. Much of the effort to become happy is made in the wrong way, and so happiness is never achieved although it is expected.

II The Preventatives of Happiness

While every individual is in the pursuit of happiness, it must be frankly admitted that multitudes are not happy. The reason why so many are not happy is that there are so many things that prevent one from being happy. Among these preventatives are:---

1. Impossible and unattainable ambition.
2. A self-interest which is so strong that it will not admit of a social interest.
3. An unsatisfied craving, whether it be physical, social or mental.
4. A rebuking conscience.
5. An irritating and uncongenial environment.
6. Uncontrolled fear and anxiety.
7. Misdirected energies, whether physical or mental.
8. A spirit of covetousness.

Very few people are happy with what they have, but think if they had what some other people have they would be supremely happy. A covetous person cannot be happy, even if he or she owned the world. Happiness does not consist in what you have, but in what you are. Jesus said: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth." Luke 12:15

I am like a negro--I never had much but my appetite, but I am thankful for that! I wouldn't give my appetite for any man's fortunes.

Then, too, the very thing that many people covet and think that it would make them happy might be the very thing that would make them the most unhappy if they had it.

9. The enthronement of a false standard of life.

A man committed suicide because his income had dropped down to ten-thousand dollars a year. He felt that he could not exist in comfort and respectability on a sum so small as that. His trouble was that he was dominated by a false standard of life.

10. An unsaved soul.

There can be no real happiness where there is unconfessed and unforgiven sin. Sin is the violation of law, and violated law always creates unrest in the violator. In Isaiah 48-22 we read "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." So a lost sinner can never be happy but, "Happy is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Happy is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Psalms 32:1-2.

11. A disobedient life.

A really happy person must necessarily be a Christian, that is a saved person. But how do you account for the fact that many Christians are not happy? That is an easy question to answer. They are living outside the circle of God's will for their lives. They are living disobedient lives. Their sins of omission and commission fill them with unrest and unhappiness. An unhappy Christian is a reproach to Christ, whose witness he or she is.

III. The Possessors of Happiness

Inasmuch as we are all searching for happiness and the Lord wants us to be happy, let us now consider the best way in which to come in possession of happiness. If we ever come to be real possessors of genuine happiness it will come to us through our:---

1. Salvation from sin

The only person who is really happy is the one who has been saved. Oh, there are lots of unsaved folks who think they are happy. But they only think so. When one is living with the wrath of God abiding on him, which is true of every unsaved person, you cannot tell me that one is happy. Jesus Christ said, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36. If you would be truly happy for time and eternity, you must have Christ as your personal Saviour, because He is the author of all real happiness.

The secret of true happiness, according to the testimony of God's Word and those who have proved it by experience, lies simply in knowing Jesus Christ as your Saviour.

Yes, there is only one way to be truly happy. And that is by faith in the Saviour of mankind. Salvation from sin is the one thing above all else that will make one happy. It was a glorious experience of salvation that gave birth to the hymn-----

"Oh, happy day, that fixed my choice,
On Thee, my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad."

"Happy Day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away.
He taught me how to watch and pray,
And live rejoicing every day.
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away."

Just as certain as sin has brought all the unhappiness in the world; just so certain, salvation is the only sure way back to happiness again. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." That is the gate to the road to happiness.

2. Submission to Christ

Since Christ has bought us back from Satan at the great price of the shedding of His own precious blood and we now belong to Him, certainly we wought to definitely submit ourselves to Him and place our lives and influence at His disposal. That spirit is always conducive to genuine happiness. If you are submissive to Christ, He will enable you to concentrate on the things that are vital and essential. But you say, "I know I would be happy if I was up in the world in a position of power and influence." That depends on how you get there. If you work your way up, that might be true, in a measure. But to hold a high position and to maintain your influence is no easy matter. Many times you have to work harder to hold your place than you do to get it.

On the other hand, if the soul is saved and the life is surrendered and submissive to the will of Christ happiness is positively guaranteed. Follow His leadership and you will certainly be happy.

3. Service for Christ

If one is submissive to the will of Christ he will spend his time and energy in work or service for Christ. Some people are foolish enough to think that if

they had nothing to do they would be happy. This is a delusion, for the happiest people in the world are those who work and work hard.

Happiness is prone to follow an enthusiastic love of work. There can be no enduring happiness without occupation---a congenial occupation. There is no substitute for honest toil. There is no place where you can sit and sing your soul away to everlasting bliss. For your work to produce the greatest amount of happiness, there must be a combination of circumstances to suit your own peculiar temperament. For instance:---

The scholar asks for a quiet hour and a book.

The athlete asks for strength and obstacles in the way.

The scientist asks for instruments and a "problem" to solve.

The capitalist asks for business and organization.

The preacher asks for a subject and a congregation--and the first is often as difficult to find as the second is to get.

The physician asks for a patient and a diagnosis.

The lawyer asks for a case, a brief, and a jury.

Indeed, industrious people spending their lives in service are the happiest people in the world. A loafer is not an ideal for a happy life by any means.

If we are to make our lives count for most in service for Christ we should:--

1. Care for our health.

Everything must have a basis upon which to stand.

The body is the lower floor upon which the whole building of life rests.

Happiness begins with health. It is the overwrought nerve or brain that causes despondency.

The gospel of health will always be related to the gospel of happiness in service for Christ.

Health has three phases:

(1)Physical

Physical health obtains when the cells of the body move in perfect harmony with the cells of the brain.

(2)Mental

Mental health exists when every act of the will moves in harmony with an enlightened and enthroned conscience.

(3)Spiritual

Spiritual health is our possession when all physical forces center harmoniously in the mind and when the mind centers in and is merged with God.

2. Cease from worrying.

Did you ever define worry? Worry is discounting future troubles so that you may have present misery.

Worry will defeat happiness every time. If you can do better, do it; if not, why worry?

3. Control our thoughts.

When we speak of thought control we mean control of the nerves, emotions, passions, appetites, moods, temper, tongue and spirit.

As one great writer has said, "God governs the rock by gravitation, He governs the tree by a natural law, He governs the animal by instinct, and He governs man by reason.

4. Sharing with Others.

To be helpful is to be happy.

To keep happiness you will have to give it away.

Whenever we lift another's load we lighten our own.

You will find happiness when you give it away.

One night, when Jenny Lind was singing to a great audience, and after they had repeatedly encored her, she walked back to her room and dropped into a chair.

Putting her face in her hands she said, "Such cheering and applause is just killing me. They are only enjoying my voice. And I want to help humanity."

About that time a man walked in and said, "Are you the singer, Jenny Lind?" She told him she was and asked him what he wanted. He said that down in the slums of the city a girl was dying. And she had said that her greatest ambition was to hear Jenny Lind sing.

She gathered up her wraps and started. She went down to the slums and found the girl lying on an old straw pallet coughing her life away. She walked in and put her hand on the brow of the girl. The girl looked up and said, "Who is that?" She said, "It is Jenny Lind. I have come to sing for you."

She did not sing any of the classical pieces she had been singing, but she sang a hymn or two. And out of the words as they were framed by that marvelous voice, that girl got a glimpse of Jesus as her Saviour and she died with the glory of salvation in her soul. Jenny Lind said the look in the face of that redeemed girl was worth ten thousand times more than singing for the world.

Yes, if you would be happy, spend your lives in submission to Christ, serving Christ, and sharing with others.

The happiest people in the world are saved people, who are submissive to the will of Christ, live clean lives, do high thinking, serve Christ and share their blessings and benefits with their fellowmen. If you are an unsaved person remember that you can never find happiness outside of Christ, that He wants to save you, and that He will save you the very moment you accept Him as your Saviour. Won't you decide for Him now by saying:

"Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole;
I want Thee forever to dwell in my soul;
Break down every idol, cast out every foe;
Oh wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."