

The Pursuit of Happiness

Introduction:

- A. We all desire peace and happiness.
- B. [July 4th, 1776 – Declaration of Independence – “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”]
- C. That is a great declaration but where do we truly find happiness in this life?
- D. Hebrews 13:5-6
- E. “The key to happiness is not what you have, but who you have.”
- F. Cory, have you lost your mind?
- G. Where is happiness in this passage?
- H. 2 Truths for happiness:

- I. Happiness comes when we are satisfied with what we have.
 - a. A life driven by covetousness is a life of insecurity. (5a)
 - i. Notice the word “Conduct”
 - 1. “conversation” – KJV
 - 2. Lit. – “Manner of life”
 - 3. The way you live your day to day life...
 - ii. The author of Hebrews is saying that our way of living should be without covetousness.
 - iii. What is covetousness?
 - 1. Lit. – “the love of silver or money”
 - 2. It is a lusting after material riches
 - iv. We can be covetousness by seek to gain more or by hoarding what we have...
 - v. You can be rich or poor and still covet...
 - vi. We live in a consumer covetous society.
 - vii. [Black Friday 2014 - \$9.1 Billion – This year was down, but online alone for Thanksgiving & Black Friday was \$4.45 Billion – No happiness – Fights!]
 - viii. Yet we are told by Jesus to be careful of covetousness...
 - ix. “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.” – Lk. 12:15
 - x. [“I’ve been in a lot of testimony meetings, and I’ve heard a lot of people share how they’ve sinned, and I’ve had people come to me and make confession of sin. But in all my life I’ve never had one person confess the sin of covetousness to me.” – C.H. Spurgeon]
 - xi. It boils down to a faith problem, because we seek to answer our insecurities with stuff...
 - xii. Thus we covet or crave the next thing thinking it will satisfy what we need...
 - xiii. And a greedy lust for stuff turns our hearts from the Creator to just mere creation...
 - xiv. **So instead...**
 - b. A life of contentment is a life of satisfaction. (5b)
 - i. Notice the word “content”
 - 1. Lit. “to be sufficed, to have enough”
 - 2. It is to be satisfied with what you have...
 - 3. To be happy with what you got.
 - 4. **[Our Topic]**
 - ii. Happiness comes with contentment...
 - iii. Therefore we must heed Paul’s warning...
 - iv. “Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. ⁷ After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can’t take anything with us when we leave it. ⁸ So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. ⁹ But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.” – 1 Tim. 6:6-10 NLT
 - v. When our greed and cravings drive us we run the risk of many sorrows...
 - vi. But when we are satisfied and even grateful for what we do possess we have peace and happiness.
 - vii. “I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.” – Phil. 4:11-12 NIV
 - viii. [The amazing call here – 10:34]

- ix. You see our hearts, our lives, and our character is not measured by our stuff...
- x. **[A story is told of a king who was suffering from a mysterious sickness and was advised by his astrologers that he would be cured if the shirt of a content man was brought to him to wear. People went out to all parts of the kingdom looking for such a person, and after a long search they found a man who was really happy. But he did not even possess a shirt.]**

“But self-contentment alone will not last or bring true happiness...”

II. Happiness comes when we are confident in God.

a. We must trust God’s promise to us. (5c)

- i. The phrase “I will never leave you nor forsake you” conveys a couple of wonderful truths that aren’t easy to see on the surface...
- ii. “leave” – lit. “to let go”
- iii. God is in essence saying to us I will never give up on you!
- iv. “forsake” - to abandon
- v. God will never remove His presence from us and we will never remove his help from us.
- vi. In the Greek there are 5 negatives used in this statement
 - 1. *“For He himself has said, and the statement is on record, I will not, I will not cease to sustain and uphold you. I will not, I will not, I will not let you down.”* – Kenneth Wuest
 - 2. In other words...
 - 3. *“There is absolutely no way whatsoever that I will ever, ever leave you.”*
- vii. **[This is a wonder promise given over and over again in the OT: Gen. 28:15 – Jacob, Deut. 31:6 – Israel, Josh. 1:5 – Joshua & 1 Chron. 28:20 – Solomon]**
- viii. And the author of Hebrews is reminding all of us who are in Christ, that God makes this promise to us as well!
- ix. This promise from God is the key to contentment and happiness!
- x. When God is our source for daily living, our possessions lose their importance in our eyes...
- xi. We begin to realize that nothing man can give us can improve on the presence and help of God in our lives...
- xii. When we truly believe God has all our needs under control we find peace and happiness.
- xiii. *“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”* – Phil. 4:19 NIV
- xiv. **[“God’s promises is better than any bond or note of any bank, financial institution, or most stable government, for all these may have to repudiate their bond; God never does so.”** – R.C.H. Lenski]
- xv. And because of this...

b. We must let our faith boldly change our attitudes. (6)

- i. Notice the word “boldly”
- ii. The idea is that we can confidently & courageously boast in God’s provision...
- iii. The phrase that follows can best be understood: “The Lord is my help, {so} I will not fear, what {then} can man do to me?”
- iv. This is a declaration that we truly believe God is our helper in life.
 - 1. This phrase is a quote from Ps. 118
 - 2. **[Martian Luther’s favorite Psalm]**
 - 3. *“The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”* – Ps. 118:6
 - 4. Notice that the Psalmist said that “Lord is with me” & the author of Hebrews states the “Lord is my helper”...
 - 5. That is because they are one and the same!
- v. But this is also a declaration that we will trust God over fear.
 - 1. When we truly trust God we believe that He holds our future and all that we need.
 - 2. Nothing can happen to us apart from God’s will...
 - 3. **[A little boy had a part in a school play that read, “It is I; be not afraid.” He came out on stage and said, “It’s me and I’m scared.”]**
 - 4. Honestly what can man do to us?
- vi. Thus our lives, our attitudes, and our hearts are at ease in the presence of our eternal God...
- vii. For the more we draw closer to Him the more we will truly find happiness!
- viii. **[“The more we focus on Him the less we will be concerned about anything material. When you are near Jesus Christ, you are overwhelmed with the riches that you have in Him, and earthly possessions simply will not matter.”** – John MacArthur]

- A. Are you a happy Christian? – *Church Members?*
- B. Do you have the joy of salvation?
- C. *“Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.” – Lk. 2:10*