

What You Can Do To Be Happy

By Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam

The Bible says, "A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones" (Proverbs 17:22). Discouragement dries up the spirit of the person. It is a painful experience to live with or be with unhappy people; they discourage us. When we are around cheerful people, they build us up. Happiness is a choice.

The biblical teaching is that true happiness is found in the heart. The Bible calls it joy. It does not depend on circumstances. True happiness is of the heart because it comes from a relationship with God.

Let us look at Psalm 1: "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the **ungodly**, nor stands in the path of **sinners**, nor sits in the seat of the **scornful**; but his delight is in the law of the Lord. And His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does he shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish."

"Blessed is the man" also means "happy is the man." Some people say, "I'll be happy when I retire" or, "when I get married" or, "when I get my independence from my parents." Others say, "I'll be happy when I make my first million dollars" or, "I'll be happy when I owe a car or a house." True happiness is not only what we possess or what happens to us. It is who we are and where we are in our relationship with God.

The Bible says, "Blessed (happy) is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful" (Psalms 1:1). The scriptural teaching on how we can be happy is different from that of the world. A happy man is distinguished by the things he **does not do**. He does not associate with the **ungodly**, the **sinners** and the **scornful**! The Bible tells us that there are times when a believer must say "No!" He needs to say "No" when associating with evil and wicked people; "No" to places of sinful lifestyle and "No" to participating with those who are wrong and sinful. There is a need to re-evaluate our value system. We cannot expect to find happiness by associating with the wrong people and being in the wrong places.

In this Psalm, three categories of transgressors are mentioned: the ungodly, the sinners and the scornful. The first group of transgressors is the ungodly. We are not to walk with them. Who are they? They are people without God but religious. In God's view, the ungodly are like the chaff that covers the wheat. The chaff has no good value. It is worthless and good only for the fire. The Bible tells us, "no one is good but One, that is, God" (Matthew 19:17) and "all our righteousness are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6).

In the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), Jesus told about the Master who gave away his talents to his three servants. After a long time, the Master came back to settle accounts with them. The third servant came and told him that he had hidden his one talent in the earth. The Master then called him, "you wicked (or ungodly) and lazy servant!" too many times we think that a wicked or ungodly man must be a murderer, an unkind man, or somebody who has no religion. Ungodly people can be found in churches too. They know the truth, memorize various Scriptures, but are still ungodly. A godly man has a right relationship with God. He does not live like the ungodly. We need to examine ourselves so that we will not be ungodly. Timothy says that in the last days, there are some "having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!" (2 Timothy 3:5). A happy man is a man whose heart is right with God and lives a life that is pleasing to the Lord.

The second group of transgressors is the sinners. Sin is not what you and I think but rather what God says it is. We are living in a permissive society where what was known as sin, has become tolerable. Man has changed sin into something modern or fashionable. Sin is what God defines to be sin, as in 2 Timothy 3:4 and Galatians 5:19-21. Sinners are people who live a habitual sinful life. They have not experienced the saving grace of Christ through faith. A sinner is also one who rebels against God's Word. James says, "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him is a sin" (James 4:17).

The third group of transgressors is the scornful or the mockers. Who are the scornful? They are those who laugh at you because you believe what the Bible says or because you are a Christian. Be encouraged by for Galatians 6:7 says, "do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." 2 Peter 3:3 says, "knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lust." The Scoffers, following their own evil desires, take what God has called holy and sacred and ridicule it.

A happy man does not walk with the ungodly, stand with the sinners or sit with the scornful. But "his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does he shall prosper" (Psalms 1:2-3). A happy man is one who delights in God's Word and obeys them daily. The Psalmist describes him to be a tree that is watered, fruitful, alive and prosperous. It is the Lord who watches over him. Happiness is a choice; you can choose. As it is said in Joshua 24:15, "... choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve." Let us choose God and His ways because in doing so, we choose true happiness.