

## **THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS: A SUPERIOR WAY TO HAPPINESS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. Phil. 4:11-13
2. One of man's greatest desires is the attainment of happiness. The Declaration of Independence stated that all men were endowed by God with certain "inalienable rights" including "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."
3. Jesus commended happiness to his disciples (Matt. 5:3-12; John 14:27; 15:11).
4. The Apostle Paul appealed to his readers to "rejoice in the Lord...be anxious for nothing" and promised the "peace of God" will guard those who are in Christ (Phil. 4:4-7). Joy and peace are listed by the Apostle among the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5).
5. The text suggests that there is a better way to happiness.

### **I. HAPPINESS IS NOT DETERMINED BY CIRCUMSTANCES (vv. 11-12)**

- A. Not what we have (1 Tim. 6:6-10; Heb. 13:5)
- B. Not pleasure (Eccl. 2:1-3)
- C. Not freedom from suffering (Jas. 1:2)
- D. Not the result of deliberate steps (2 Cor. 3:5)

### **II. HAPPINESS IS WHAT WE ARE**

- A. It is not superficial, circumstantial, but deep-rooted. It is a matter of character, personality, and attitude, as Jesus taught in the Beatitudes (poor in spirit, merciful, pure in heart, etc.). It is a matter of habit. Habits that are good and wholesome and increase our health and well-being add up to a state of happiness.
- B. It is a sense of meaning and purpose in life (Eccl. 12:13).
- C. It is a matter of perspective.
- D. It is doing (Ps. 128:2; Eccl. 2:11; 3:22; 5:12).
- E. It is anticipation (Tit. 2:13).

### **III. THE SECRET TO HAPPINESS (v. 13)**

- A. Practice moderation (Eccl. 7:16).
- B. Look beyond self.
- C. Let go of resentment and guilt (Eph. 4:31).
- D. Trust your life to God.
  1. Let go of anxieties (Matt. 6:25-34).
  2. Cast your cares on the Lord (1 Pet. 5:6).
  3. Trust in God (Prov. 16:20).
  4. Pray (Phil. 4:4-6).