

## TRUE HAPPINESS

An often mistaken concept is that one who has great riches is truly happy while one who is in poverty is truly sad. Nothing could be further from the truth. Many are those who are affluent that live lives of sadness, loneliness and true internal poverty. While likewise, there are multitudes that are in financial poverty that live lives of peace, happiness and eternally speaking, in great riches.

One can only experience true inner peace and happiness when they have offered up their physical lives to the Lord and gone about life striving to serve the Lord in every way. Two times the apostle Paul admonishes the brethren in Philippi to rejoice in the Lord. He states, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord" (Phil. 3:1) and "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). True happiness is found only in the Lord. Certainly, there are those who have pseudo-happiness, that is, it is a false happiness based upon a false premise of what is required for salvation, but as stated it is false. No matter the present trial, tribulation or temptation, one who is faithfully serving the Lord has the greatest riches of all laid up for them. Paul said, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). He who is faithfully serving the Lord has laid "up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:20). To the church at Smyrna, the Lord wrote, "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich)..." (Emphasis mine, RCO).

True happiness in this life will only come when one places their emphasis on the next. Paul wrote, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. 4:18-5:1). Trials, tribulations and temptations will come in this life (I Cor. 10:13; II Tim. 3:12). But, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12).

Take a look around at all those who have so much of this worlds goods and know that **you** are really the rich and happy. *RCO*

## “THAT YOU MAY GROW THEREBY”

We probably have no clearer statement in Scripture on just how Christian growth comes than I Peter 2:2: “*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*” There is set before us (1) The Word of God, (2) The purity of it, (3) The nutrition therein, (4) The appetite that we must have for it, and (5) The growth that thus comes. It could not be plainer, and yet many have expressed our day as being the “time for church growth emphasis.” By that is meant, *Meet and talk about growth*, but *doing* very little of it! Why is so little accomplished in a time of workshops, seminars, and “encounters” supposedly related to growth? One thing is certain: In such meetings, very little Bible is presented. A second thing is evident: Fun, games, “Gymnastics for Christ,” “Jogging for Jesus,” “Kung-Fu For the King,” (and for the aged, “Dominoes for Deity”), etc., will entertain, but will not make for church growth. If a religious body drew from all over a metropolitan area, and had 10,000 people for every service, if drawn by the fun, the social, and the entertaining; growth, as God calls growth, is still not there!

Application of the Word makes for growth. In what ways should one desire to grow? (1) From being a babe to being full-grown and mature, (2) From being non-spiritual to being spiritual, (3) From having no or very little knowledge to really possessing a fine Bible knowledge, and (4) From being one of little or no discernment to having great discerning skill. There is no way on earth to achieve this apart from a continual study of the Word of God!

A good portion of the problems to come upon the church in all of her history has been from those with little knowledge or discernment, grabbing a point of truth or a half-truth, and then rushing forward to divide the body of Christ; yea, desiring to be teachers, but understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm (I Tim. 1:7). When all is said and done, our need is to grow—to grow in keeping with what the Lord said about growth, and really, that is the one protection we have, if we do not grow, we will always be “fair game” for those out to damage our souls!

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