**The Facet of Inner Happiness, No. 2 – BD16-02**

We are looking at a second segment of the subject of the facet of inner happiness. Negative volition to the Word of God is expressed in various ways, but all of these are ways that seek to dignify the spirit of unbelief. One expression is the declaration, "Well that's just somebody's interpretation." That's one of the most beautiful expressions of negative volition, and when you hear somebody say that, you want to recognize the problem that they are struggling with within their soul. "That's just somebody's interpretation."

What they really mean is I don't like what you say because it counters and scuttles my plans. Now it seems very intellectual and a kind of open to the truth remark. But the Bible is a book which declares the mind of God in words which are identifiable in their meanings relative to their original Greek and Hebrew and it's presented it in grammar which defines the thoughts that God expresses, and it gives this to us against a background of history and culture of the times, both of which we know in considerable degree. So with these elements, we are able to take the language on the page of Scripture and to make an interpretation that arrives at the meaning that God had behind what he wrote.

The challenger defends himself with a position which in effect says that God incapable of making known to us what He thinks. That is identically the position to which the liberal has come. In time he will arrive at the full rejection of Scripture which the liberal has done. He insults God as being incapable of setting up a means for believers to arrive at an understanding of divine viewpoint.

So God has given us a system. We call it the grace system of perception. It's a divine provision whereby Christians can come to the point where they know the mind of God. And this system is not dependent, I'm happy to say, upon IQ. Immediately this puts everybody on an equal basis. Now God had to do it this way or it could not be grace. Grace says it has to be everybody equal so this can't be dependent up your human IQ. Otherwise there's merit on what you learn relative to Scripture. God has given us this grace system of perception and it has several facets.

First of all, it begins with God, and God has a mind. God says, "I'm going to tell you what I think." Doctrine, when we use the word doctrine, we are using a New Testament term which means teaching. Doctrine is the way that God does things. It's His modus operandi. So God gives us His mind. God recorded that in the Bible. We call it the canon of Scripture. The canon means the rule or the rod whereby through the working of the spirit of God, believers judge which books of sacred writings were indeed inspired of the spirit of God and which were mere human expositions and did not bear upon them the stamp of inspiration. And in time the canon was completed with 66 books. Now we have a completed Scripture.

3) God has provided a pastor-teacher as an expositor of the Word of God, to the local assembly, an organized grouped of believers who gather at organized stated times for the explicit purpose in order for God's people to be fed spiritual food which is the Bible, via expository preaching--preaching that the pastor-teacher uses to explain the Bible and the mind of Christ.

Now the believer is capable of receiving this exposition under the filling of the Holy Spirit. That means all of his known sins are confessed so that God the Holy Spirit controls him. That's what filling means. He dominates him and therefore is able to guide him in his thinking, so the believer is able to comprehend, to analyze, and to understand what the pastor-teacher has said. It doesn't mean he believes it. It doesn't mean he doesn't believe it. All it means is that he is capable of comprehending it as of the moment that he listens to that exposition.

5) And then the Christian reacts. He either goes positive or negative in his will, or what we call volition. Then, at that point, the truth either becomes usable in his life and in his experience, if he's gone positive, or it become neutralized if he goes negative, if he rejects it, or if he rejects it or he doubts it, that's the same as going negative.

Now we do interpret the Word of God. We make no apologies for that. But we have a means through language and through grammar and through the background of Scripture on which to make an accurate interpretation, and God has set up a system by which you may have the Scripture interpreted. You may come to understand them, and you can come to a point where you yourself can increasingly read the Scriptures and be able to understand what God has said.

Now you don't start off in the Christian life fully capable of understanding the Word of God. You have the capacity to understand it but you need some basic groundwork and training so that you come to the point where the Bible become a meaningful book for you. God has brought us to a point of spiritual maturity through another provision He has made. We call it the pentagon of the soul because there are about five facets that constitute a spiritually Christian. We call this the spiritual maturity structure of the soul, and it is based on doctrine in your human spirit. That is, what you have heard explained and have received.

Now everybody here this morning is in various places in the development of his own spiritual maturity structure. Some of you people are very well oriented to grace. Some of you have a few struggles with that. You still chew over some taboos. You still gag on thinking in terms of a relationship to the Lord rather than spirituality in terms of what you do and don't do. You realize that what you do or don't do comes out of your relationship to the Lord, and that's when you're grace-oriented.

Some of you are pretty relaxed in your mind. Some of you have some pretty nasty mental attitude sins, so you have fractures and weaknesses in this wall of your structure. Some of you have a very good mastery of the details of life. Some of you sit here the day after Christmas very miserable because you haven't mastered the details of life and you hate everything you got yesterday. Some of you have developed a real capacity to love. You know to love God. You know how to love your mate. You know how to love your friends, on a stable basis.

Now we're looking at inner happiness. The Bible tells us in Philippians 4:4, "rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." A mature Christian is a Christian who is filled with joy and gladness on a stable basis. But we found in the Word of God that this is related to a relationship to God, and not to the externals in the form of a person or a thing or a situation. Genuine happiness is a stable condition and it's part of this pentagon of spiritual maturity in your soul. It comes from meeting certain conditions:

1) A habitual status of being filled with the Spirit. That means all known sins confessed.

2) Daily functioning under this grace system of perception, under the system which God has provided in order for you to be able to breathe in doctrinal divine viewpoint.

3) Breathing out full knowledge of doctrine toward God and people, as a result of your positive volition toward what you have breathed in.

4) Developing all facets of our spiritual maturity structure that we just looked at.

Sources of Inner Happiness

Now these are basic for inner happiness. There are three sources of inner happiness. Perhaps we should look at those for a moment too. Where does inner happiness come from?

1) Regeneration - If you are to be happy, you must be in the plan of God. You cannot be happy when you are outside of the plan of God. And the plan of God begins with salvation--regeneration.

2) The second source of happiness is the filling of the Holy Spirit. The only way you and I can function under the grace system of understanding spiritual things is through the filling of the Holy Spirit. That's how we secure the mental attitude of God.

3) Number three is our spiritual maturity structure. That becomes a source of our inner happiness. Only a spiritually mature believer has permanent stable happiness. A spiritually immature believer has only (an) external type of happiness which fluctuates. It's an up-and down situation. And it is dependent on these externals. God is constantly testing the facet of our spiritual maturity structure of inner happiness. He is testing with troubles and with trials and suffering which puts our inner happiness status into a position of experience, where we are able to experience this quality of inner happiness--to put it to a test to see just how much there really is there.

We looked at the example last week of Solomon and his inner happiness. Solomon, we indicated, had a spiritual maturity structure when he began his reign, so he had inner happiness. This was indicated by what he asked God to give him and the way God prospered and blessed him as he began his reign as an 18-year-old boy. But in time Solomon fell out of fellowship and he spent years seeking happiness in externals. Ecclesiastes 2:10-11 says, "And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them. I withheld not from my heart any joy for my heart rejoiced in all my labor. And this was my portion in all my labor."

He says that whatever I wanted to do, whatever I wanted, I didn't deny myself a thing. And he says I got kicks from it. But notice verse 11. "But then I looked on all the works my hands had wrought and on all the labor that I had labored to do, and behold all was vanity." Emptiness, nothing. "And vexation of spirit." Feeding on airs is what that means. "And there was not profit under the sun." Solomon said, "Sure, while I was doing it, it was fun. But then when I finished putting up this building, when I finished something I was studying in the course of learning." He pursued psychology, you know, for a while, and different things. He says, "Then, it was nothing. I look back and say, 'What is this?'" And he discovered he had been feeding on air. There was a hollowness within his being. What had happened to him was that he had moved out of fellowship.

Now what happened to his spiritual maturity structure when he moved into carnality? Now this fellow had a splendid structure to begin with. He had become quite a mature young man in the Lord. In carnality, your spiritual maturity structure isn't giving you any guidance. It has just been blanked out. And neither is it reflecting the glory of God any longer. It's simply hidden. So what you could be is suddenly no more because you're off the track. You're out of functioning in God's plan. So what did Solomon do? The same thing you'll do. He turned to human viewpoint of society, and he started producing human good.

Now don't somebody come up and tell me that there's nothing wrong with social action and human good because nobody said there is. And don't go telling me that you have a lot of bright boys at college who are student leaders that you respect and who honor social action and production of human good, because we respect them too. What we are saying is that what is produced under the impetus of the old sin nature, and don't forget there is a segment of your old sin nature that produces good, and that's where human good comes from--that God says He treats as filthy rags, when it comes to value and rewarding. There is a human good which is produced by human capacities. There is a divine good which can be identical to the human good. The very identical thing in the way of social action produced from divine viewpoint is now divine good because it's produced by God the Holy Spirit rather than your old sin nature. And this God honors, and this God can bless, and this works in the lives and in the experience of society.

This is why our culture is fractured, because it's all of our brainy people operating out of the strong side of their old sin nature, producing human good that doesn't work. But the same thing produced by God's people through the impetus of God the Holy Spirit produces wonders.

So Solomon did a lot of good. He did a lot of magnificent things. But when he got through he says, "It's been the strong side of my old sin nature cranking this out. And it's vanity. It's nothing. It's productive of exactly nothing."

So the conclusion of it all is in Ecclesiastes 11:10. Now here's this man who has spent years. He's an old man. He has looked back. He has come to his senses. He has returned to fellowship so God can use him to write portions of three books of the Bible. The conclusion in Ecclesiastes 11:10 is, "Therefore, remove sorrow (self-induced misery) from thy heart (your mind) and put away evil (mental attitude sins) from thy flesh (by confession of those sins) for childhood and youth are vanity." They’re nothing. "Childhood and youth" are nothing.

Now that's sad, to say, "... childhood and youth are nothing." That's what his was. That's the way he spent his. That's why in Ecclesiastes 12:1, the very next verse, he says, "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth. While the evil days come not, nor the years draw near, when thou shall say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'" Now if you're a young person, and you don't want to look back like Solomon did and say, "I've spent my life in unhappiness, really," the answer is doctrine. The answer is responding to the Word of God.

And we've got people around here who are both kinds. We have people who miss a service and hound us for a tape and say, "I have to hear what I missed." We have college students that if the tapes don't keep coming, they start complaining to their parents back home, and their parents let us know, and that's a good thing. And when they see us, they lodge their protest with us.

There are some that couldn't be less interested. I think it would be good for you to take Solomon's advice and say, "Start remembering your Creator in the days of your youth," and you'll only remember Him as you have information about Him.

Now in looking at this subject about inner happiness, we again have an example of how this works, on the people of Israel on the occasion of the Exodus of 400 years of enslavement in Egypt. So will you turn back to the book of Exodus, in chapter 14? And we're going to look again below the surface at what was functioning in the lives of these people that reflected their situation relative to joy and gladness. Exodus chapter 14, (and) we're going to begin at verse 5.

The Jews had been taught divine viewpoint by Moses. There were three reactions to the doctrinal instructed that Moses was giving the people before they left Egypt and after they had moved out of Egypt and toward the promised land. One reaction was that some people didn't attend the studies of the Word of God. They saw little point in attending Sunday School or church services.

There was a second group that did attend, but they learned very little because they were negative toward what Moses was teaching of God's Word. They kept yelling, "That's your interpretation, Moses. That's what you think. That's the way you say it is." Or they gave one of these (other) negative responses.

Number three, there were some who attended and who grew in divine viewpoint because they were positive toward the Word that they were being taught. There were very few in this group. Most of the people who walked out of the land of Egypt were on negative response systems toward God and toward what they were being taught.

But, God's patience was such that He was going to give them the chance. God says, "I know you've been slaves. You've been in a backward retarded situation. I'm going to teach you some things. I'm going to show you some things that are going to be so spectacular that if you've got any response at all in you, you will turn to Me, and you will open your hearts." God was going to spend a year giving them a chance to switch from negative to positive. Now the lack of the response of most of these Jews was not the fault of their good teacher Moses, but of their own attitude. These Jews were unable to love God, and so they were unable constantly to appreciate Him and to act in faith rest. It's one thing to be saved, and it's another thing to be an informed and responding believer.

Well, the Jews during the first year of the Exodus expressed regular unhappiness. (On) occasion after occasion after occasion, these people were unhappy. While they were in Egypt, they probably had many ideas as to what would make them happy--usually something the Egyptians had that they wished they had. However, most people discover that when you get something that other people have, it doesn't make you happy, and then you discover also that the people who have it aren't happy with it either, because happiness is not a matter of a thing, a person, or an event. Happiness comes from a relationship with God which these Exodus Jews lacked. What was the relationship? They couldn't appreciate God.

Your inner happiness this morning is dependent to the extent that you can appreciate God. To the extent that you can really love God. That you look at Him and He is number one with you. As you are aware, this fits with the other facets of maturity too.

Now these Jews, no doubt, of all the things that would make them happy, they thought, "If I could just be free. I'm sick and tired of getting up in the morning, going out here and making these bricks, (and) having the crack of the taskmaster's whip on my back. If I could just be free. That would make me happy. Freedom." And that's very reasonable. So they got their freedom. We're going to see in a moment that they were just as unhappy as they could be.

But picture that moment when they were walking out of Egypt. What an exhilarating moment. Four hundred long years--four generations had been in enslavement. Now the final moment had come. The Passover had been observed. And Moses passed the word down to about two million people, "Let's move out." Finally the last, the tenth plague had so devastated Pharaoh, and the people of Egypt ... couldn't wait to get rid of the Israelites. The Israelites asked for gifts, and God moved the heart of the Egyptians to freely give them anything they asked. They gave them a tremendous paycheck, four hundred years wages all in one check.

So they moved out. What an exhilarating moment. You can just see them walking along, and you see this guy... say, "Hey Morris, isn't this great? Here we are walking out of here... we've been looking forward." And he says, "You bet, Mushai. (I) could hardly wait for this thing to get started. And here we go." And then Morris looks over and he sees his friend Abby, and he says, "Hey, Abby, did you get a good paycheck?" And Abby says, "Oh, not so bad. You know how it is. It's a living." And Saul says, "You've got to watch that Abby, boy, he'll Jew you down any time you do business with him." And everybody's really excited, and isn't this great. They're walking out and they're on their way. Freedom. Freedom.

This is what they waited for. Are they happy? Well, inner happiness is based on positive response to God's thinking. It's breathed in in doctrine and it's breathed out as a relaxed mental attitude in the form of faith rest, and in the form of love and appreciation for God. And you cannot exhale doctrine toward God until you have first inhaled. No baby is born by exhaling first. First he gets a slap, and he gasps his first inhale, and then he's got something to give out.

And we have forever Christians running around who are saying, "Oh, I just want to serve the Lord. I just want to do such things for the Lord. And we have forever great movements that are organizing vast numbers of Christians because they have leaders who are in nationally influential positions, or in positions of power structure (and) finances. And they're gathering great numbers of students and people in all walks of life together with great enthusiasm for doing great things for God within the next few years. And I've heard one of those leaders contemptuously make remarks to a man who a teacher of doctrine, because he considered only that the evangelist as being worthy of being called a servant of God. And he's a big high-powered man running big high-powered operations that all of you will be constantly hearing about. But doctrine, breathing in the word. That's held in contempt.

And so, thousands of young people, and thousands of adults are conned into thinking that they've got some real genuine significant relationship to the living God, when whey all they (have) is an emotional pitch at a bunch of meetings they're going to be attending in a big convention here and another convention there, in a little seaside sunset service in order to send them out with inspiration. Until you breathe in, you have nothing to breathe out.

And if you want to run around and think you're running around serving the Lord with any significance, you're mistaken. And if some of you are bothered by the fact that you don't feel that your lives are counting very much as a testimony for Jesus Christ, it's in all likelihood that you haven't breathed in enough of the word of God to have anything to breathe out. And you will not exhale what you have not first inhaled. That is a principal of the spiritual life. And when you come under the pressures of life, whether the pressures of a student or the pressures of the economy or anything else, it tends to stifle your opportunities for inhaling the Word. You substitute other things for that. So you begin skipping that part, and consequently your love for God, your relaxed mental attitude, your whole spiritual maturity structure is fractured. And your inner happiness goes right out the window. Most Christians, I'm sad to say, suffer from shortness of spiritual breath as indicated by the hysteria they express when they come to a crisis situation.

Now that's what you have with the Jews here. They came to the trial of a water barrier. In Exodus 14 beginning at verse 5, we find that Pharaoh finally had let the people go. He was told that they had fled, and then he turned against the people, and changed his mind. He said, “Why have we done this that we have let Israel go from serving us?” And he made ready his chariots and took his people with them. He called out a military force and said, “We’re going after those slaves and we’re going to bring back all two million of them. I don’t know why we let them go in the first place.”

Now Pharaoh had built up a negative… response to what God was telling him through the plagues. Pharaoh had built up spiritual callouses on his soul. Consequently he was unimpressed by all that God had done. When we commit spiritual callouses to develop on our souls, we become stupid. And he became stupid. You’d think he would have known enough after these ten experiences what God was like and whom it was that he was dealing with. But God’s very information that he gave to Pharaoh about Himself set the condition for Pharaoh to harden his own soul. That’s what verse 8 tells us, that the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh the king of Egypt, by the information that He gave him.

So Pharaoh was in a condition where he could not see what God was really like. So he became bitter and vindictive and decided to pursue the slaves. The latter part of verse 8 tells us that the Jews left Egypt under a high hand, that is under the hand of almighty God. They were under His protective care. But the negative volition of these Exodus Jews had destroyed their appreciation for the Lord. So the callouses on their soul made the freedom that they received the important thing. Here’s the distinction. They were exhilarated by the fact that they were finally moving out of Egypt. But what were they excited about? That almighty God has kept His promise made to Abraham so long ago, that for 400 years we would be in slavery and then we would be let out? That … Moses’s promises (were) now being fulfilled here before our eyes, blessed be the name of the Lord? Praising God for what He was doing there in that moment? No.

They were getting their kicks out of the freedom. Out of the fact that they weren’t going to have to wake up to be slaves tomorrow morning and start working for the taskmasters. And their eyes were set on the gift and not the giver. And there’s the key to inner happiness. If you want to be happy, your eye is on the giver and not the gift.

Now you may have received something yesterday (Christmas) that you didn’t particularly care about. And if your eye was on the gift, you were disappointed. You were indifferent. You hated it. But if your eye was on the giver, you appreciated the person and (the) kindness behind it. It didn’t matter what you got. It didn’t matter what the gift was. It didn’t matter whether you needed it, or didn’t need it, or cared for it, or didn’t care for it. If you appreciated the giver, that’s what counts, and you’re happy over what you got. To the extent you’re unhappy with what you received, to that extent you don’t appreciate the giver.

That’s exactly the condition that these Jews had here. They left here under the high hand of the protective care of God. But in a spiritually mature believer whose soul inhales the doctrine, the giver becomes more important than the gift. We can only experience real happiness as God’s gifts are put in their proper place. We appreciate Him. Then we can appreciate and enjoy the gift.

People want to be happy but they’re so spiritually disoriented that the focus their attention on a person, an event, or a thing, and say that’s what makes them happy, rather than the God who is behind the person, the event and the thing. Doctrine orients us so we’re able to appreciate what the Lord gives. So whatever He gives, we can enjoy it if we have it, we’re happy with it, and we’re happy without it because we appreciate the giver and not the gift.

Well, these Jews came to the Red Sea, a fantastic water barrier, and they panicked. Verse 9 tells us that the Egyptians pursued them. Verse 10 says, “As the Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold the Egyptians marched after them, and they were in great fear, and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord.”

Now they could have still been just as exhilaratingly happy as they were when they walked out of Egypt when they were punching each other and making their cute remarks to each other about their freedom, and moving out. Now all of a sudden, no more jokes, no more fun, no more happiness. Now they’re crying out unto the Lord, and by this context you will see that what this means is that they were rebuking the Lord. What’s the idea, putting us in this position?

Now they were in a rather panicky position because they were faced by two miles of the Red Sea, and on each side of them were mountains, and behind them was breathing down their neck the Egyptian army. In verse 10 they were in great fear which is a mental attitude sin. Obviously God is not going to ask them to do combat before they’re ready, though it is an illustration that once national freedom has been won, you’ll always have to be prepared to fight to keep it. They had no sooner won their national freedom than they were going to be faced with a battle to retain it. But in this case they were not ready to do combat so God was going to have to do it for them.

In verse 11 they turn and they rebuke Moses also, and they make a smart remark to him and chide him with something to the effect that did he think there weren’t enough cemetery lots in Egypt that he had to bring them out here to the desert to open up a new edition. “And they said unto Moses, ‘Because there were no graves in Egypt has thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt with us to carry us forth out of Egypt?’” How’s that for a question? “Why have you dealt with us like this, Moses? Why have you taken us out of Egypt? Well, why had he done it?

And you can just see Moses trying to be patient and feeling like turning to these people and saying, “I took out here to give you freedom, you bunch of ding-a-lings. What do you think I took you out here for?” He didn’t bring them out here to fill cemetery lots. He brought them out here to give them freedom. And here they’re saying, “What did you bring us out here for, Moses?” When you become disoriented to the Word of God, you become weird, as well as stupid. And these people, exhilarated because their eyes were on their freedom, were now on the blues when they were faced (with) this boxed-in position.

Verse 12 says, “Is not this the Word that we did tell thee in Egypt saying ‘Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians,’ for it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.” Now they reveal something about themselves here. They’re saying, “We told you so, Moses. You remember that when you were negotiating with Pharaoh, we told you to lay off and let us stay as slaves.” Which is interesting that all the while Moses was speaking and executing God’s plan, they were reflecting their negative response there and telling Moses, “Forget, we’ll stay slaves. Better red than dead. We don’t want you to be upsetting the apple cart on us.” It’s strange how Christians will insanely champion the very opposite of the mind of God. Women who are prone by nature to be emotional in their orientation are particularly susceptible to championing the very opposite of what God wants them to do, or wants other people to do.

These people decided that they were doomed to die, when in fact God was leading them to the greatest happiness in the Promised Land that they had ever experienced. That’s what He had told them He would do. But the Red Sea was a chance for them to demonstrate and to experience their inner happiness.

Verse 13 and 14 say, “And Moses said unto the people, ‘Fear not. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which He will show to you today. For the Egyptians whom ye have seen today ye shall see them again no more forever. And the Lord shall fight for you and ye shall hold your peace.” He exhorts the people not to fear because this is a mental attitude sin. He tells them that they will see these Egyptians no more and that the Lord will do the fighting for them. Their fear was a result of the callouses that they had built up on their souls. So they were unable to breathe faith toward God or respect even toward their leader Moses. Moses says, “Stand still and do nothing.” That’s the solution. Just exhale doctrine toward God.

You know what he said. “I’ve been telling you what He’s going to do. I’ve been explaining the Word to you. Now act upon what you have been taught.” That’s how you breathe it back out toward God. And the result will be that you will see the salvation that God will bring. He will deliver you from the Egyptian army. But first, if you’re going to see that deliverance, first you have to see it with the eyes of your soul. And if your soul is not operating on divine viewpoint, you’re going to be blind. You’re going to look at these circumstances here, the mountains on each side of us, the sea in front of us, the Egyptians behind us. This is what you’re going to see, and you’re going to say, “We’re hopeless. We’re doomed.” But if you see the Word of God with your soul and you see this situation from God’s perspective, you will stand still and you will say, “Now Lord, what’s the next move? How are you going to get me out of this? What is your plan? And I’m sure glad that I’m in your plan at this point.” Happiness would have been their lot. Their physical situation was bad, but since they were operating on human viewpoint, they saw the Egyptian chariots as invincible.

Later when they saw the Lord’s deliverance, they weren’t able to appreciate it. They weren’t able to enjoy it because they couldn’t appreciate the Lord. They were happy only in some event. Knowing the Deliverer is more important than knowing the deliverance. But Christians want to center on the deliverance rather than the deliverer. Then when God does deliver us, we go sentimental for a while. We sing a hymn of praise. Then we return to our negative capacities so we’re not prepared for the next crisis. If you want inner happiness and you want to be happy in life, the time has to come where you fall in love with the living God. And you start appreciating Him through His Word. Then you start living. And then you’ll start going for doctrine on a daily study basis.

Well the Lord in grace was going to do the fighting for them (the Israelites). Verse 19 says that the Angel of Jehovah, which is the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ, stopped the chariots with a pillar of cloud. Verse 21 says that Jesus Christ opened up the passage through the Red Sea for the Jews, and they walked across the two miles. Verse 23 and the verses following tells how the Egyptian army was wiped out. Verse 29 says that the Jews crossed safely, dry-shod. Verse 31 (says) they saw the Lord’s deliverance so they’re happy again. And everybody was rejoicing. They sang a hymn of praise when they got over to the other side. But we’re going to see in a moment that they didn’t go very long before they were down in the dumps and singing the blues because there was another crisis—two crises as a matter fact, one at Marah and one at Rephidim. Look in Exodus chapter 15, beginning at verse 22. So they left the Red Sea and they move out into the wilderness for three days, and they found no water in root. Verse 23 says they came to Marah and they couldn’t drink the waters of Marah for they were bitter. They were undrinkable. Therefore the name of it was called “Marah,” bitterness or undrinkable. The Jews needed water urgently so they are facing a crisis. Mind you that this is just three days journey from what they saw took place at the Red Sea.

They moved out into this position. Now if their eyes are on the Lord, how are they going to act? Should this crisis now be a problem to them after what they’ve just seen God do? Should they have learned now that they can trust him? Well you’d think that they would continue with some inner happiness and a relaxed mental attitude toward this new situation, but they did not. Verse 24 says, “And the people murmured against Moses saying, “What shall we drink?” They again revealed they still had the callouses there and they were still negative and so they still lacked inner happiness, and they’re complaining to Moses.

In verse 25 Moses takes the problem to the Lord. God points out a tree to Moses, probably one that had fallen. He tells Moses to throw it into the water. He does, and the water becomes drinkable. God takes our bitter life experiences and He makes them sweet when we throw true doctrine into them. The testing and the discipline become blessing thereby because this is what it says, that there He tested them, at the end of verse 25. God was showing these Jews that while they were on His path, God was leading them step-by-step. They were following the cloud. They were in exactly the route that God intended them to be. They were right on force. And when they got to this point they should have known that they were still on course and that God had a way to meet this crisis.

Verse 26 says that the basis of happiness, whether in the desert of their land, is going to be this, “If thou wilt diligently harken to the voice of the Lord thy God.” Diligence means the daily regular response to the Word of God as spiritual food. “Listen to the voice of the Lord” is doctrine. “If thou wilt harken (listen) to the voice of the Lord thy God and wilt do that which is right in ty sight.” “Do that which is right” means positive volition toward the Word learned. “Wilt give ear to His commands and will keep His statutes, I’ll put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians for I am the Lord that healeth thee.” Here, interestingly enough, God says, “I will not only care for you but I will give you physical good health when you say, ‘Yes’ to doctrine. I will give you physical well-being. You will fight physical debilitation. Your physical stamina will rise and will be maintained as you are positive to the principals of divine truth.

Verse 27 says that they came to Elam. There were twelve wells, one for each of the tribes, and 70 shade trees on the campsite. Then they came to another trial, in Exodus 17, the first seven verses. This was the trial of no water. The Jews were traveling the Lord’s route. They came to Rephidim. And it says they came there according to the commandment of the Lord. Exodus 17:1 says, “And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of sin, after their journeys according to the commandment of the Lord, and encamped in Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink.” The word “Rephidim” means “refreshment.”

Here you have another situation. They come to a place called “refreshment” and they look it over and there’s no water. A campsite with no water. Any of you that have ever been camping know that that’s not a good situation. How could they be in a place of happiness when there was no water? Well, again, they were in the plan of God so their eyes had to see things from God’s perspective. You would think that now again they would be prepared to see Him work. But what did they do?

Verse 2 says, “The people did strive with Moses and said, ‘Give us water that we may drink.’ And Moses said unto them, ‘Why do you strive with me? Wherefore do you put the Lord to the test?” They complain to Moses. Moses rebukes them and warns them that God will discipline them if they keep pushing with their negative responses. They’re all unhappy again. They can’t appreciate God, so there’s no happiness. Their situation makes them happy or unhappy.

Verse 3 says, “And the people thirsted there for water. The people murmured against Moses and said, ‘Why hast thou brought us out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?” Well, God never said he was bringing them out to kill them. Moses never indicated that’s what he was going to do. And yet, here again, because they don’t love Moses, on their negative volition, they accuse him of doing the very opposite of what he was going to do and what his intentions were. Moses was responding to God and they were not. This was an irrational reaction on their part but it seemed reasonable to them. Why? Because they had callouses on their soul. It seemed reasonable to them that he had brought them out to a deathly situation.

In verse 4, Moses, who has a spiritual structure, takes it to the Lord. The people are ready to kill him. After they had seen the plagues. After they had seen the Red Sea. After they had seen the Marah. After they had seen the manna. They come around and they’re ready to kill God’s man. Now joy in people will be a roller coaster experience, up and down for you unless your appreciation is for the Lord who works a divine good through them. This is what Moses had to learn.

So if you’re happy in people over the Lord’s work that they do, you’ll be unhappy with them when they cast it aside. You have to be happy because of what the Lord is doing. Your appreciation has to be for the Lord. If your joy is in Him, He who produces the good works, then whether the people cop out or not will not make any difference, and you’ll continue serving with complete happiness.

Moses had to face the angry mob with his rod. He was told to strike the rock in verse 6. And water came forth, the rock which pictures the cross which gives us the living water of eternal life. Moses struck the rock and the water was there. Then Moses gave some names to this place. Verse 7 says he called the place Massah which means “testing” and Meribah which means “complaining.” The callouses on the eyes of the Jews made them even question the intention of the Lord Himself.

Well, here’s a summary on the matter of inner happiness. In Deuteronomy 1:19-46, Moses reviews, in retrospect, their experience. He’s about ready to turn the command over to Joshua. All that he says indicates once again (that) this people, the original generation, could not come into the land because they did not appreciate God so they could not experience happiness. Now whatever the land of your happiness is, if you get it you won’t enjoy it unless you inhale doctrine so you can appreciate God. Yet Christians think that, “If I just had this thing or that thing, I’d be happy.” Never. Here’s the way it works:

1) The plan of God for this life is that we share His happiness.

2) God’s plan of happiness for you was designed in eternity past and it covers your life from salvation to your death.

3) A person with spiritual callouses on his soul cannot be happy. He has momentary passing experiences of joy and gladness that are attached to externals.

4) The gifts of God are perfect for us, but can’t be enjoyed means to do so which is Bible doctrine. That’s what gives you your perspective to appreciate God and to see things how He sees them.

5) Only daily intake of doctrine (inhaling) and the exercise of appreciation for God (exhaling) will produce inner happiness with His gifts.

6) Bible doctrine thus, with positive volition, is the means for appreciating God, and thus for enjoying what He provides, and thus for developing the maturity of inner happiness.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971