

In Search of Happiness

Introduction

- 1. Last week a husband and father told me that God was revealing the source of much of his difficulties in leading his family--his own desires to be happy and comfortable. He was realizing a foundational truth: *The desire to be happy and comfortable is a powerful drive effecting almost everything we do.*
- 2. Christian counselor, Larry Crabb, in his book, Inside Out, suggests that *we all have a God-authored longing for heaven within us--a desire, a need, for security, happiness, and peace.*
- 3. Francis Schaeffer, in Whatever Happened to the Human Race, expressed the same true in this way. He said that *everyone is striving to secure person peace and affluence.*
- 4. However it is said, these have all recognized the powerful drive within man which motivates every action and decision. *Everyone is in search of happiness and the ability to cope with life.*
 - A. Why does a young man try drugs and drinking?
 - B. Why does a man keep a secret stash of pornography or browse the dark side of cyberspace?
 - C. Why does a man go into the ministry? Law? Medicine? Advertising? Construction? or any vocation?
 - D. Why does a man select a certain girl to marry?
 - E. On and on we could go.
- 5. *The only problem with having such a strong drive to be happy and comfortable, to be able to cope with life, and to be able to perform adequately is that it will never be fulfilled this side of heaven.*
- 6. *Why do we have such a desire?* I trust that within the next hour, the answer to that question will be clear and we'll understand why it is important to know.
- 7. *For if we don't realize God's purpose for instilling that longing for the peace, security, perfection, and acceptance of heaven within the soul of man, we'll be driven by a nagging fear and powerlessness as we seek happiness here.*
- 8. *The incessant pushing of these questions fuels it:* Are we able to perform, cope, or secure personal happiness? How can I avoid feeling the pain of rejection, failure, and guilt which comes with being a sinful human being in a fallen world? These questions have unconsciously driven us since childhood.
- 9. *Perhaps you've experienced the same thing Adam did--you've experienced the dynamics of at least two or three spiritual powers in your quest for happiness.*
- 10. *What is a spiritual power? A spiritual power is an influence."*

The Spirit of Law

- The weakest spiritual power or influence to which men first look in their search for happiness, ability to cope or perform, or for comfort is-The Flesh
- 1. *The spirit of law influences a man to look to himself* for the power to cope, be happy and comfortable, or perform what God and others require. From the time we were children we have tried to control our world and the people in it in order to secure our happiness and comfort.
- 2. *The spirit of law comes to us and says, "Do _____, and God will bless you." or "If you do _____, God will curse you.* The natural man without the Holy Spirit will attempt to do whatever is required in his own strength and power.
 - Adam/mankind -Gen. 2:16-17
 - Gen. 2:16 And the \Lord\ God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;

- Gen. 2:17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die. "
- The nation of Israel -Deut. 5:27
- Deut. 5:27 'Go near and hear all that the \Lord\ our God says; then speak to us all that the \Lord\ our God will speak to you, and we will hear and do {it.}'
- The rich young ruler -
- Matt. 19:16 And behold, one came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?"
- Matt. 19:18 He *said to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, " \You shall not commit murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness\;
- Matt. 19:19 \Honor your father and mother;\ and \You shall love your neighbor as yourself.\ "
- Matt. 19:20 The young man *said to Him, "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?"
- Matt. 19:21 Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go {and} sell your possessions and give to {the} poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."
- Matt. 19:22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieved; for he was one who owned much property.
- 3. *The spirit of the law has four functions.*
 - A. It enables us to know what sin is by defining a standard.
 - Rom. 3:19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God;
 - Rom. 3:20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law {comes} the knowledge of sin.
 - B. It judges one's power source. It exposes the power of sin.
 - Rom. 7:14 For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.
 - C. It protects. In such cases, the law protects by restraining the wicked from actions which destroy. Without the light of the law, there would be greater destruction.
 - Gal. 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.
 - D. It leads to Christ. It is necessary as an outside motivator for those whose spirits are dead to God.
 - Gal. 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.
 - Gal. 3:24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor {to lead us} to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.
- 4. *Every person is born under this spirit.*
 - Rom. 2:12 For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law; and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;
 - Rom. 2:14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,
 - Rom. 2:15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,
 - It is helpful to remember that when God gives a law, it does not imply that one has the ability to perform it. The law will reveal the absence or presence of God's Spirit at work in the heart.
 - Deut. 5:27 'Go near and hear all that the \Lord\ our God says; then speak to us all that the \Lord\ our God will speak to you, and we will hear and do {it.}'
 - Deut. 5:28 "And the \Lord\ heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the \Lord\ said to me, 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people

- which they have spoken to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken.
- Deut. 5:29 'Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!
 - Acts 2:38 And Peter {said} to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - Acts 16:31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household."
 - 5. *The spirit of law is a weak influence when it comes to seeking happiness, ability to cope or perform because it results in death and cannot produce life or please God.*
 - Rom. 8:3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God {did;} sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and {as an offering} for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,
 - Rom. 8:5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.
 - Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,
 - Rom. 8:7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able {to do so};
 - Rom. 8:8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
 - 2 Cor. 3:5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as {coming} from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,
 - 2 Cor. 3:6 who also made us adequate {as} servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
That is the lesson of the O.T. and the history of Israel.
 - 6. *The root of the spirit of law is the spirit of idolatry.* The spirit of idolatry looks to self rather than God for power.
 - 7. *But what does a man do when he still feels inadequate, uncomfortable, and hurts?* How can he avoid feeling the pain of rejection, failure, and guilt which comes with being a sinful human being in a fallen world?

The Spirit of Antichrist

- When the flesh fails in the search for happiness, the ability to cope or perform, or to gain comfort, a man is vulnerable to the influence of the spirit of antichrist which is in the world.
- 1. *Having tried to control things in his own strength, the natural man whose spirit is dead to God and alive to the things of the world falls under the influence of the spirit of antichrist.* The spirit of antichrist looks to things or people in the world to supply power to cope, be happy or comfortable, and perform what God and others require.
 - A. The spirit of antichrist is any influence which suggests that Jesus Christ is not God's way or source of supply for the need of the moment.
 - 1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.
 - 1 John 4:2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;
 - 1 John 4:3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the {spirit} of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.
 - B. The spirit of antichrist may be characterized as a "user" spirit. It suggests that something or someone in the world can supply the happiness, the power to cope, the ability to perform, or anesthetize the pain or discomfort.

- 1 John 2:15 Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
- 1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world
- 1 John 2:18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour.
- 2. *It is an spirit which is in the world and is an influence which says, "You need to try ____ and you'll be happy or successful." or "If you don't use ____, you won't be happy or successful."*
- 3. *In essence, the spirit of antichrist says that Jesus Christ and the cross are not enough.* That spirit or influence doesn't actually say that to you, it just points you to something other than Christ.
 - *Physically destructive idols (bad things):* drugs, occult, disorderly and rebellious music, peers, pornography, immorality, certain forms of entertainment,...
 - *Spiritually destructive idols (good things):* religion, supernatural experiences and phenomena, sensuous music, reading the Bible, prayer, serving, church attendance, commitments, disciplines, shopping, food, sex --as many as are things, experiences, and people in the world
 - *1 John 4:3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the {spirit} of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.*
- 4. *Whereas the spirit of the law is weak because of the flesh, the spirit of antichrist is stronger because it has been given power to provide temporary relief or motivation.*
 - A. Since this power is stronger than the flesh, will power or *the flesh will never overcome this spirit or influence.*
 - B. And since this spirit does have temporary power, *it leads to addiction.* What worked to cope, control, perform, or anesthetize the pain for a little while will be used again and again if the person doesn't realize why God put that longing for happiness in his soul.
 - C. Before one realizes it, he's hooked by a power greater than himself. *In seeking to gain control of his world, he loses control of his world.* That's the way the spirit of antichrist destroys the naive. The key to overcoming addictions is a repentance for looking to the spirit of antichrist in one's search for happiness.
 - D. *This spirit will also trade off one idol or addiction for another.* Some may appear on the surface to be a good trade off, but when you look at the character or influence of the spirit, the truth is revealed.
 - Group accountability for drug/alcohol/sex addiction
 - Religious activity for immoral activity
 - Recreation and exercise for food
 - Food for pornography
 - Euthanasia for morphine
 - E. The influence of the spirit of antichrist remains: anything but looking to God through Jesus Christ alone.
- 5. *Whereas the flesh produces spiritual death and is unable to please God, the spirit of antichrist destroys the body and increases guilt and pain by casting a darkness over the heart and blind one's mind to the truth.* This is the reproof for not looking to Jesus.
- 6. *The root of the antichrist spirit is the spirit of idolatry.* The spirit of idolatry looks to someone, something, some idea (anything) other than God to supply power.

The Spirit of Holiness

- When the spirit of law and the spirit of antichrist fail in the search for happiness, the ability to cope or perform, or to gain comfort, a man is ready for the influence of the Spirit of Holiness--most often called, The Holy Spirit.

- 1. *Having tried to control his world by his own power and then by using one item after another from the antichrist's worldly menu, a man is primed and ready for the ministry of the Holy Spirit.*
 - A. He feels powerless to do what is right, to please God, even to assuage his own conscience.
 - B. He feels the pain and bears the scars in his body and soul from rejecting God's Word and God's provision through Jesus Christ
 - C. He's fallen into the lap of the evil one, and can't work himself out of his grasp.
 - D. In short, God has used the powers of the antichrist to teach his son, chosen before the foundation of the world, the power and nature of sin, the vanity of the world, and his need for a Savior.
 - E. He's been qualified for grace by the humiliation of his pride and sin.
- 2. *That's why God put the longing in the soul of man for happiness, security, comfort, and power in the first place. It was implanted in man in order to keep him searching until he finds Jesus.*
- 3. *Upon such sin-sick souls as this, God sends the Spirit of Holiness which is the influence of God.*
 - *When this Spirit moves upon the heart of the uncomfortable, hopeless, powerless, bruised and broken man, his eyes are opened to see the destruction and his state.* He's embarrassed and ashamed of what he sees and wonders how he could have been so blind not to see what he was doing.
 - *This gracious influence of God turns the eyes of the sinner's heart to look to God through the cross of Jesus Christ as the only power to forgive, cleanse, comfort, and give grace in time of need.*
- 4. *The Spirit of Holiness says, "Jesus and what He performed on the cross is enough."*
 - John 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.
 - 1 Cor. 1:18 For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
 - 1 Cor. 2:9 but just as it is written, " \Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, \And\ {which} \have not entered the heart of man\, \All that God has prepared for those who love Him.\"
 - 1 Cor. 2:10 For to us God revealed {them} through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.
 - 1 Cor. 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God,
 - Matt. 4:4 But He answered and said, "It is written, ' Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.' "
- 5. *The Spirit of Holiness has one purpose: to bring glory to Jesus Christ.*
 - *John 16:14 "He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose {it} to you.*
 - *John 16:15 "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose {it} to you. 16:13-15.*
 - When the flesh is weak, He comforts and empowers.
 - When the spirit of idolatry is repented of, He delivers.
 - He manifests the presence of Jesus Christ.
- 6. *The Spirit of Holiness has the power that the will of man couldn't produce and the spirit of antichrist couldn't create--He produces faith in the heart and enables one to finally have a hope of eternal happiness, a peace which passes understanding as the conscience has an answer for it's guilt, an ever-present comfort in the life's pains.*
 - Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,
 - Rom. 8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

- Rom. 8:10 And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.
- Rom. 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
- Rom. 8:12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh--
- Rom. 8:13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.
- Rom. 8:14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.
- Rom. 8:15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"
- Rom. 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,
- Rom. 8:17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with {Him} in order that we may also be glorified with {Him.}
- 2 Cor. 3:5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as {coming} from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,
- 2 Cor. 3:6 who also made us adequate {as} servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
- 2 Cor. 3:15 But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart;
- 2 Cor. 3:16 but whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
- 2 Cor. 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, {there} is liberty.
- 2 Cor. 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.
- 7. The Spirit of Holiness is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. It is an influence which leads a man to turn from himself and the world in his search for happiness and to turn to God alone revealed through His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - *Why did God put that longing in our hearts for happiness? To keep us moving toward Him!*

What about your search for happiness?

- 1. As a man, where are you in the quest?
 - Are you still searching?
 - Have you been wearied yet by the influence of the spirit of law?
 - A. The Law is good, righteous, and just, but salvation can never occur by the spirit of law or the spirit of antichrist. To say to someone if they will only believe or accept Jesus is to give them a law. It will only show that they cannot believe enough. As Jesus told Nicodemus as recorded in John 3:7, flesh cannot give birth to Spirit.
 - B. Many people think they are saved because they have given mental assent to Jesus' death and resurrection, prayed a prayer, and or made certain commitments. If you have been trusting in your commitment or choice, then you know and are experiencing the fruitless and powerlessness of the spirit of law. John wrote in John 1:12-13 that a man cannot be born by the will of flesh or man.
 - C. Are you tired of trying to be Christian with in the spirits of the flesh and antichrist?
 - D. Look this very moment to God through the cross of Jesus Christ, and the indwelling Spirit of Holiness which God alone will send to those who sincerely repent and believe will cleanse you heart, enliven your spirit, and quiet your guilty conscience, and fill your soul with Jesus.

- 2. As a husband and father, have you placed yourself and your family under the influence of the antichrist?
 - Do you see signs of addiction--anger if the thing is removed? Habitual use of things of the world to be able to cope and function on a daily basis?
 - To be free from addictions, one must repent of looking to the spirit of antichrist and the things of the world.
 - Have you seen the sin and hostility toward God that has spurned Jesus Christ and embraced the world? Will you confess those things to which you've looked for happiness, pleasure, comfort, and power?
- 3. As a minister to the body of Christ.
 - Have you and your church tried the ways and things of the world to motivate and bring people to Jesus rather than trusting in the Spirit of God alone?
 - Have you noticed that the spirit of antichrist can get people's attention, move and empower them, but only temporarily.
 - Do you feel the pressure every Sunday to provide a bigger and better show to satisfy their insatiable hunger?
 - Have you been deceived into believing that the Spirit of Holiness would have fellowship with the spirit of antichrist in the growth of the church?
 - Is there a fear that if you spoke out against the things of this world which you see choking out the Word of God every week that you would lose many of your so-called "converts"
 - A. If this nation is to experience revival, the church must repent from trusting in the spirit of antichrist to influence and motivate people to do the work of God.
 - B. That repentance must begin with those of us who lead and determine the philosophy of ministry.
 - C. May God give you the faith and the courage to lead out in an exposure of the spirit of antichrist and a repentance toward God.
 - D. I would like to encourage you with this testimony. When the power of the spirit of antichrist has been broken, you'll see evidence of the power of the Spirit of Holiness at work honoring the Word of God as it is taught and preached. Those who are tares will flee from God's presence, and those who are His will shine forth in love and power of the Holy Spirit. For they will have found happiness in Jesus.