

Tom's Pen

Is There Really A "Key To Happiness"?

by Tom Wacaster

Through the years I have come across a number of articles and books that share with the reader "the key" to happiness. Most of these articles provide some helpful suggestions, but none, so far as I now recall, provide the single, solitary key to happiness. Happiness derives from the practical application of a multitude of Biblical principles to one's own life. The Psalmist writer presents at least three keys to happiness in one verse: "Blessed is the man that (1) walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, (2) nor standeth in the way of the sinners, (3) nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" (Psalms 1 :1). Our Lord presented no less than nine keys to happiness in the sermon on the mount (see Matthew 5:3-12). It is quite unfortunate that so many never come to possess genuine happiness. Ab-el-Raham, a Moorish ruler, is reported to have said, "I have reigned above fifty years in victory and peace, beloved by my subjects, dreaded by my enemies, and respected by my allies. Riches and honor, power and pleasure have waited on my call. In this situation I have diligently numbered the days of pure and genuine happiness which have fallen to my lot; they amount to 14!" Someone reported seeing a bumper sticker that read, "If my life was a TV show I'd change the channel." I fear that these two examples express the sentiments of a large number of our population. Five plus decades of material affluence have produced naught but frustration, disappointment and disillusionment. Friend, you will not find happiness in pleasure, possessions or pride. It comes from deep within, out of a heart that has learned to be content with life's circumstances. Expensive clothes, a nicely furnished house, and a large bank account just don't seem to satisfy that deep inner longing. Life's unexpected tragedies leave us asking, "Where did happiness go?" It is time we learned that happiness is not just a feeling; it is a state of mind. Poor people can be happy. Sick people can be happy. Surely all of us are familiar with brethren who, though enduring great trials and suffering, are still happy. They have recognized that true happiness comes from being at peace with oneself and from being content with one's situation. Dr. William C. Menninger, one of the world's most highly respected psychiatrists, wrote: "The big person is rare the world is filled with many 'small potatoes' who do not grow up in their capacity to give of themselves, of their substance, of their energy and their time. Good causes with constructive opportunities exist in every community. There is still validity in the old admonition, 'If you would save your life, lose it.' That is basic to mental good health, and following it is an indication of emotional maturity." God put it this way: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). Likely there are some now reading this bulletin who have sought, but failed to find, genuine happiness. Perhaps it is time you took a closer look at how you are going about finding that happiness.

