

HAPPINESS

By Dr. Gary M. Gulan, ©1986 (Rev. 96)

Lesson #18
Proverbs 3:13-20

Introduction: It has been said that happiness consists of three things: 1. something to love, 2. something to do, and 3. something to hope for. However, people seek happiness and only experience short lived pleasure. Seldom do they find enduring happiness. Solomon shares the secret of happiness with his son.

1. BACKGROUND OF HAPPINESS (What is happiness?)

Happiness may be understood from the following facts.

A. Proverbs 3:13 "**happiness**" (Hebrew "asher, esher, osher") meaning "blessing."

(William Gesenius A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, page 52)

The three Hebrew words for "happiness" come from the Hebrew root word "ashar" which means "to go straight on." This is found in Proverbs 9:6 "go in the way;" and in Proverbs 23:19 "guide thine heart in the way." As a side light both occurrences in Proverbs are imperatives of command.

(William Gesenius A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, page 52)

(George V. Wigram The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance, page 180)

One of the derivatives of the Hebrew root word for "happiness" is translated into English as "grove." In these groves, images of "astarte" the goddess of fortune, happiness, and fertility were worshipped.

(William Gesenius A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, page 52)

When dealing with happiness or blessedness "asher" is found in the plural, which may suggest the state of repeated circumstances or circumstances which stem out of a combination of material conditions.

B. Our English word "**happiness**" means "favored by circumstances."

(Webster's New World Dictionary, page 659)

The English root word for "happiness" is the word "hap" which is usually in the plural and means "to occur by chance, fortune, or luck."

(Webster's New World Dictionary, page 659)

For the Christian, chance or luck do not exist. The events of life, both positive and negative circumstances, are made up of several factors: 1. the sovereign unfolding of God's plan and program; 2. the result of our own choices; 3. the oppression of Satan; and 4. the victimization or generosity from other people.

People often associate the word "happy" with "feeling great pleasure, contentment, or joy," rather than "recognizing the status, position or circumstance" they now have.

What are some of your thoughts or insights on happiness?

2. BASIS FOR HAPPINESS (What is the foundation for happiness?)

Solomon informs his son about the foundation for true happiness.

A. Proverbs 3:13 = "wisdom" produces true happiness.

B. Proverbs 3:13 = “understanding” produces true happiness.

C. Proverbs 3:18 = taking hold of and retaining the “tree of life” brings true happiness.

Summary note: There are eight qualities that reveal why true happiness is related to wisdom.

1. Proverbs 3:14 = better than profit of silver
2. Proverbs 3:14 = better than the gain of fine gold
3. Proverbs 3:15 = better than precious rubies
4. Proverbs 3:15 = better than all things one desires
5. Proverbs 3:16 = length of days are in the right hand of wisdom
6. Proverbs 3:16 = riches and honor are in the left hand of wisdom
7. Proverbs 3:17 = wisdom’s ways are pleasant
8. Proverbs 3:17 = wisdom’s paths are peace

3. BUILDING TOWARD HAPPINESS (How can true happiness be achieved?)

Solomon reveals several ways to achieve true happiness.

A. Proverbs 8:32 = listening and keeping the things Solomon states

B. Proverbs 8:34 = watching and waiting at the gates

C. Proverbs 14:21 = mercy on the poor

D. Proverbs 16:20 = trusts in the Lord

E. Proverbs 28:14 = the man who is always reverent

4. BENEFITS OF HAPPINESS (What benefits are there to finding true happiness?)

There are many benefits of true happiness, Solomon reveals one.

A. Proverbs 20:7 = it affects our family and children

B. What would be other benefits from Proverbs?

5. BARRIERS TO HAPPINESS (What barriers hinder true happiness?)

There are many barriers to true happiness, Solomon reveals one.

A. Proverbs 20:21 = hastiness with the view of gain

B. What would be other barriers Proverbs?

Conclusion: Are you searching for happiness in the wrong ways?