

A Happy New Year for God

#0503

Study given by W.D. Frazee—December 31, 1976

This New Year Eve, I want to study with you about 'A Happy New Year for God'. Most of the thinking in this world centers around human beings. Few think about God, few are interested in what makes God happy. Wouldn't you like to wish Jesus a Happy New Year tonight? We're going to study what will make Him happy.

In Psalm 149, verse 4, we find where God gets His pleasure:

"For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people"
Psalm 149:4.

Parents take pleasure in their children. And you and I are the children of God, and He takes pleasure in us. Isn't it wonderful that you and I can bring pleasure to the Creator of the universe?

In Ephesians 5:10, the Twentieth Century translation gives us this appeal:

"Always be trying to find out what best pleases
the Lord" Ephesians 5:10, 20th Century translation.

You will agree with me that the more pleasure that parents take in their children, the more sorrow the children can bring to them as well. Is that a fact? Oh, yes. You can't love somebody and get joy out of them without getting pain if they make the wrong choice and go the wrong way. So, if you and I are to wish God a Happy New Year, we will be always trying to find out what best pleases Him.

And really, that's one of the great purposes of the Bible—to help you and me find out what will please Him *best*. And I trust that none of us will be hunting for the bargain basement to see how little we can do, how we can have as little a sacrifice as possible—do something that will satisfy Him. Thank God, we want to give Him our best, don't we?

Now, in first Thessalonians the 5th chapter and the 18th verse. If you will turn there, we'll find one of the ways to make God very happy.

"In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in
Christ Jesus concerning you" 1Thessalonians 5:18.

How do I know this will please Him? It says so. "This is the will of God." What is the will of God? "In everything, give thanks." When you give somebody a present, and they say, 'Thank you,' doesn't it please you? If you thought enough of them to give them something, their gratitude makes you happy, right?

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights” James 1:17.

And since God is giving all the time, He appreciates it when we say, “Thank you” all the time. You know, dear friends, it doesn’t take faith to say, “Thank you,” for *some* things. But by faith, we can thank God for those things that seem to be a disappointment, that seem to be working against us, because we know that all things do what? “Work together for good to them that love God.” (Romans 8:28)

And we love Him, don’t we? And we want to make Him happy. And, oh, it makes God so happy when His children thank Him for things that look like they’re going to bring sorrow or pain. God is looking for people who love Him enough and trust Him enough that they say, “Thank you,” whenever they get a package from Him, even before they open the package. So, as we wish God a Happy New Year tonight, let us settle it in our hearts that we’re going to do what this text says: “... for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” 1Thessalonians 5:18. In everything, give what? Thanks.

Now tell me, could we give thanks in everything and complain too about some things? Why, no. That would be contradictory, wouldn’t it? So, this rules out all complaining, all murmuring. Is that correct? By the way, that wouldn’t subtract from our happiness, would it? It certainly will add to *God’s* happiness if we’ll just say what? “Thank you,” for what He sends to us. And if we are in Christ, everything that touches us has to first pass Christ before it can reach us. Is that right? Yes. And so, we can make Him happy by thanking Him.

Here’s something else that will make God happy. Turn to 2 Corinthians, the ninth chapter and the seventh verse. And when I read this verse and come to the last line, I say to myself, “I know just how God feels, for I feel exactly the same way.”

“God loveth a cheerful giver” 2 Corinthians 9:7.

Wouldn’t you hate to get a Christmas present or a birthday present or any other kind of a present from somebody that you knew they were just grudging, they were doing it just because they thought it was expected, but they really didn’t want to? Could you get much pleasure out of that? Why no. Neither can God. God loveth a what? A cheerful giver. Then if you’re going to give, do it how? Cheerfully. What for? To make God happy. By the way, can you think of any better reason for giving than to make God happy? So, tithe or offerings for Sabbath School or home missionary activity or helping the poor and needy, it is all to come from what kind of a heart? A cheerful heart, a glad heart, a thankful heart, a grateful heart, a loving heart. For God does what? Loves a *cheerful* giver.

Oh, how glad Jesus was to see that widow there in the temple that cast in how much? Two mites. It was all she had. But the thing that pleased him was not the size of it. It came from a loving heart. She put *herself* with the offering. It pleased Jesus. It pleases Him today when we give Him our hearts and give Him our money and give Him our service and give Him all the rest, for “God loveth a cheerful giver.”

Now, there's something else in this verse I want you to notice that makes God happy:

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give" Ibid.

The gift is to come from a purpose where? In the heart. I'm to give as God moves upon my spirit. The gift is the response of the loving heart to God's goodness. This is why, friend, giving must never be regimented. Regular? Yes. Systematic? Yes. Proportionate, as God has prospered us? Yes. But not regimented. In other words, it is very important that this matter of giving be a personal experience between you and Jesus. God must not only help you to find out how *much* He wants you to give, but for what *purposes* He wants you to give. This is an individual matter.

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" Ibid.

Now, let's look at 1 Corinthians, the 16th chapter. You'll see some more on this matter of giving. And remember, what we're studying is what? How to make God happy, how to give God a Happy New Year, and He loves a cheerful giver. He loves to have people give according as they've purposed in their hearts.

Paul says:

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I've given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him a store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.

This is the way to make God happy on Sunday. You say, "Brother Frazee, do you believe in keeping Sunday? Sure I do. Keep Sunday the way God told us to. Here He tells us how to make Him happy on Sunday. What is it? Well, look over how He's blessed us, figure up our accounts, and *lay aside* an offering according as He has prospered us. Then our giving is to be *proportionate*, you see.

Our first step in thinking of returning to God has to do with the 10 percent of our income that we call what? Tithe. That isn't the end, that's the beginning. As someone has well put it: "The tithe tests our honesty; offering tests our gratitude."

"How much shall I give?"

Well, God has left that with the individual. He hasn't left the amount of the tithe; He's left the *figuring* of it with the individual, but He's plainly specified the tithe. Did the children of Israel have a second tithe? Yes. It had to do with some religious services, with helping the poor. But we're told that the offerings that were required of the Hebrews amounted to fully one-fourth of their income. And some of the more

conscientious gave one-third. Well, you can any of those you want and start, you see.

Start with the tithe. Be honest. You know you have to be *honest* before you can be *generous*. So start with the tithe. Then keep experimenting in faith and gratitude. If you want a blessing and haven't adopted a regular, systematic plan, take a second 10 percent and set it aside to use as God arranges for different offerings and purposes of charity and mission work in home and foreign fields. Help with the conference evangelism. Help with local needs. But don't stop there, friends. You won't if you really get into the experience of learning the blessing of regular, systematic giving, it'll go on and on.

Some people have even found a blessing in getting as far as the government lets people give. You know what the government allows people to give today and make a tax-deductible on their income tax? Fifty percent. Did you know that? That's right. You can give away 50 percent of your income. And the government will allow you that as a deduction on your tax. Of course, some of us don't have to worry about tax deductions.

My point is, friends; regular, systematic, purposeful giving is one of the ways to do what? Make God happy. Provided it comes from what kind of a heart? A cheerful heart. Somebody says, "Well, suppose that I don't *have* a cheerful heart." Then before you start a grudging program, get down and look at Calvary's cross and ask God to put love in your heart. What do you say? That's right.

Now here's another way to make God happy. We're not only to give, but we're to *for-give*. Let's turn to Luke the 11th chapter.

Our heavenly Father loves to see His traits appearing in His offspring. He likes to have His children *look* like Him, *act* like Him, *love* like Him. That makes Him happy.

Luke the 11th chapter, you remember, gives us the Lord's Prayer, a slightly different form from the way Matthew records it. I call your attention to the fourth verse:

"And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone
that is indebted to us" Luke 11:4.

Do you? As the old year sinks away into silence, can we honestly say that we have forgiven *everybody*? Or does there lurk in our hearts an unforgiving spirit towards somebody? Ah, somebody says, "Brother Frazee, but you don't know what so-and-so said about me. It isn't so!" What kind of witnesses appeared against Jesus in Pilate's Judgment Hall? False witness. And so, if you are reviled falsely, remember that this is the experience *Jesus* had. But the Bible says that when He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not. He prayed for His murderers, and He meant it:

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"
Luke 23:34.

And He's told us:

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you" Matthew 5:44.

Oh, my dear friends, if there's anybody here tonight that has a grudge against anyone, let it go out with the old year. What do you say? Lay it at the foot of the cross. Ask Jesus to cover it with His blood. God can change hearts. He can put *love* instead of *hatred*, a *tender* spirit instead of a *hard* spirit. This will make Him happy.

3 John, the second verse. Here's another way to make God happy. Inspiration tells us that this verse expresses the wish of God concerning every human being.

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" 3 John 2.

There are three kinds of prosperity mentioned here. One is the part that we ordinarily think of about prosperity. We say of a person, "Well, he's doing pretty well." That's fine; God wants us that way. He also wants us to be in health. And He wants us to have prosperity of our souls.

Let's think about this matter of our health for a moment. Does it make God happy for me to seek to preserve the health that He has given me? We all have *some* health, or we wouldn't be here tonight. And I suppose almost everybody here could use more than he has. Let me just see. Is there anybody here who has *all* the health you want? May I see your hand? Well, then you agree with me, don't you? Would it make God *happy* if we had more? The verse says so.

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" Ibid.

Well, if God wants me to be healthy, if He wants me to be in health, why doesn't He just give me a whole bushel of it? Why not? I'd like it, wouldn't you? Sure. Does God give me a part to act in cooperation with Him in this matter? And this is exercised in two ways: in *learning* the laws of life and health, the laws of physiology and hygiene, and then what? "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (John 13:17)

When learning and following the laws of health makes *us* happy, it makes our Father in Heaven happy, too. So, if we're going to wish God a Happy New Year, let's settle it in our hearts that, for *His* sake, not just so we can avoid the pain of lung cancer or a heart attack, but for *His* sake who made us, for our *Creator's* sake, we're going to take the best care possible of this body. What do you say?

And then, one of the greatest ways to make God happy is suggested in the 15th chapter of Luke. You remember in this chapter, Jesus told some of his

wonderful stories that we call parables. And each one of these stories starts out with a sorrowful experience and ends up with a glad experience. What's the sorrowful experience? Losing something—losing a sheep, losing a piece of money, losing a son.

And what was it that brought the joy in all three? Finding. The shepherd *found* the sheep; the housewife *found* the piece of silver; and thank God, the father had the joy of welcoming his son. "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was *lost*, and is found." (Luke 15:24) Oh, what a scene of rejoicing.

"I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth" Luke 15:7.

If you want to make God happy, then do what? Well, be sure you repent *yourself*, and give your heart to Him this New Year's Eve. But oh, friend, join with God in reaching out to find some lost one this year. Is that it? That'll make Him happy. Nothing in this universe can make Him more happy than *this*. So, if we really want God to have a Happy New Year, we're going to devote this year to soul winning. What do you say? [Audience: "Amen."]

A dear woman who spent many years in the mission field, and whose husband gave his life in service and sacrifice halfway around the world, wrote these lines:

Not in the well-fenced pasture,
Not in the lighted fold,
Not where the warm, glad sunshine
Showers its welcome gold;
Not in the cozy safety
I lay me down to sleep;
For out in the cold and darkness
Wander His "other sheep."

Out on the barren desert,
Over the dangerous tide,
Deep in the lonely jungle
Where grief and terror hide;
Out where the night is blackest
Where sorrow is cruel and deep;
There's where my feet must follow,
Seeking His "other sheep."

How can I seek for comfort,
Living for self alone?
How can I call my body
Or aught that I have my own?
How can I sit and listen
While suffering millions weep?
Jesus is out in the darkness,
Seeking His "other sheep."

~Mrs. G.B. Youngberg

Now, dear friends, I come to a very practical point. Somebody's going to get more help in the next five minutes than in all the rest of my study tonight. It could be you. Listen.

Suppose that when it was discovered that there was a sheep missing, suppose that it was suggested that a certain man go and hunt that sheep. And suppose he had said, "You know, I would be glad to go, but I'm busy attending a class in how to rescue sheep. So I won't be able to go."

Or is that a fair question? Let me ask another question. Suppose I'm so busy attending classes in health that I haven't got enough time to sleep, or enough time to take outdoor exercise in walking or gardening or something else. And why is it that I don't have enough time? I'm so busy learning about health, you understand. Or is *that* a fair question. What do you think? Could it be relevant?

In the January ministry that just came, I read a little gem from my dear old friend Elder Ernest Lloyd. He is nearing 100 years on this planet. He was educated in health reform years ago in Battle Creek, and he's been living it.

In this little gem, he writes of the curse of luxury. It's short; let me read it to you.

"The life of ease is a destroyer of sympathy for our fellow men in distress. And the woolly softness of luxury too often shuts out the cries of human need and suffering. It is well for us to remember our Lord in this matter.

'Jesus lived the life of a poor man, and was cheerfully content with the simplest of life's furnishings. He ... lacked and was content to lack its luxuries.' The rank and file of His disciples through the centuries have been most truly His and have testified most effectively for Him when they too have worked for their living and have been content with those furnishings of life that minister to modest comfort, rejecting as both needless and dangerous the accessories of luxury.

One great cause of spiritual declension in these latter days is the unholy appetite of multitudes, including many church members, for *things* quite unessential to life—things that lie beyond necessity, and often so far beyond the requirements of generous comfort ...

Then beyond this zeal for the possession of things runs the unchristian eagerness for display, and at such a time of world distress and human need as this the folly of such display borders on the criminal. There are well-to-do folk who are honestly trying to keep close to the simplicities of life and to use their substance as good stewards. They need

encouragement. There are others who can have so much that life becomes a confusion of uncertain choices. They need to see the peril of body, mind, and soul in such a course, and to decide for Christ and find freedom from complexity in following His example of simple living”
The Peril of Luxury, by Ernest Lloyd.

Now, let's put this all together, for it's all focused on one thing: A Happy New Year for God. How are we going to make God happy? He finds pleasure in His people. The response of loving hearts makes Him happy. It is outlined in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy a *simple* way of life. The Devil tries to make it complicated. If he can't make it complicated with a lot of *worldly* things, he tries to get us sick eating good food at well-filled tables. He tries to get us to over-stuff our minds with reading good books, taking good classes, listening to good meetings so that we don't have time to sleep, so that we don't have time for physical exercise, so that we don't have time to go out and hunt lost sheep. We're too busy talking about how to save sheep. Haven't time to go hunt them, you understand.

Someone has well said that the passion to *talk* about soul winning *increases* as the *work* of soul winning *decreases*. Somebody says, "Brother Frazee, don't you think people need training?" Yes, dear friends. But I want to ask you something. How long do you think it ought to take to learn how to tell somebody else that needs help *how* you got help? Training? Yes. We'll be in training as long as life shall last. But bless the Lord, we're learning to swim *in* the water. We're learning to win souls *in* the process of winning souls. And may it please God, we're learning how to be healthy by taking *time* to sleep, *time* to eat slowly and joyfully, *time* to exercise; even if, in doing that, we don't have quite so much time to read about how it ought to be done. It is in the water, not on the land, that men learn to swim.

So, we're going to make God happy in 1977. Are we? We're going to make Him first. And we're going to consider all these things that we've been talking about tonight in this frame of reference: We are seeking, day by day, not so much what will make *us* happy as what will make *Him* happy. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

As one of old put it: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."

Believe me, my friend, if you will give *God* a Happy New Year, He will give *you* a Happy New Year.

[Testimonies follow.]

As we come to the close of this service, how many would like to send our Lord the word that we want to wish Him a truly happy New Year? Shall we kneel? You tell Him all by yourself as we quietly wait before the Lord.

Our Father, truly we desire that this shall be a happy year to Thee. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in Heaven. Oh grant that, in our hearts, the cords of thanksgiving shall echo the praise of the Heaven. Grant that, in

our lives, the loving service of Jesus shall be represented. Grant that we shall share with Thee the yearning, burning love for the lost. As we lay aside the luxuries, the complexities that interfere with the simple, loving service, teach us how to zero in on the real things, the things that will last through eternity. We thank Thee for the gift of Christ, our Redeemer, His life of service, His death of sacrifice. And we choose to share in His love, in His service, in His sacrifice to make Thee happy. Through Christ, Amen.

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