

Happiness Through the Word

#0548

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—February 1, 1969

One of the topics that I've enjoyed studying most through the years is how to be happy. I find that just about everybody is interested in that. The text this morning is Jeremiah, the 15th chapter, and the 16th verse. And it's one of the many verses in the Bible that show us the way of joy, the path of happiness.

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O LORD God of hosts" Jeremiah 15:16.

Jeremiah found that the way to be happy was to eat the Word of God. Yes, this is the bread of life. Not merely as the guide to heaven so that we can be happy a million years from now, but here we find the directions for daily life so that we can be successful in that which we undertake.

Now, I find as I study the Bible that much of it is made up of the experiences of different human beings, some of whom followed the Lord's directions and some of whom didn't. And in case after case, life after life, we see that success, satisfaction, happiness, came through listening to God's directions.

But now, mark this point. This doesn't mean that everything that we find in this Bible that God told people to do is for *us* to do. I find in this Bible that Abel offering a lamb was approved and accepted of God, and he'll have eternal life. But God doesn't want me to bring a lamb, does He?

I find in this Book that God told Noah to build an ark, and he carefully followed the directions. Did it mean success to him? Did it mean happiness? Why yes, for himself and his family. And what do I learn from that? To go and build a boat? Oh, no. I've never built a boat. I don't expect to.

And then, I come on down to the time of Abraham. And I read how the Lord told him to take his son up to Mt. Moriah and there offer him on the altar. Shall I do that with my child? Oh, no. What's it there for? Did it bring a blessing to Abraham? Yes. In all these instances, we see examples of the success and joy that come through doing what God says.

And the important thing, as we read the various stories in the Bible, is not to imitate what Abel did, or what Noah did, or what Abraham did, as far as the specific activity they engaged in. The important thing is that we learn two things. That God has a plan for each life, and second, if we'll follow it, it means success and happiness.

You remember that when the people were gathered for that marriage feast at Cana, that Mary anticipating that Jesus would do something to meet the need, said to the servants, "Whatever He tells you to do, do it" [a paraphrase of John 2:5].

Did it work? Oh yes, it worked. And the reason it worked—*He* said to do it.

You and I could fill waterpots with water and empty them out all day long, dear friends, and unless Jesus had given us a specific command to do that, we'd pour in water, and we'd draw out water. But when *they* did it in obedience to the command of the Creator, in went the water, out came the wine.

Oh friends, it's a wonderful thing to move by divine direction. There's a great satisfaction in living a life under the divine superintendency. And God has planned that every one of us shall have that joy and satisfaction.

Oh, I'd hate to be in something that wasn't covered by the divine blueprint. Wouldn't you? I'd hate to be working for anybody but God. To have Him as the senior partner, to know that He is actively interested in every detail of my life and that He has given directions, this is a wonderful experience.

Now, our text this morning says:

"...Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart..." Jeremiah 15:16.

The only way that this can be true is for us to be convinced that God loves us and knows what is for our best. Do you believe that? Do you believe that God loves *you*? Would He take advantage of you if He had a chance? Would He put you in a hard place? Oh, no friends! He loves you. And does He know what is best for you? Does He? Well, if both those things are so, if He loves you and if He knows what is best for you, then you can be happy and contented in following His directions.

The truth is, friends, He loves us better than we love ourselves, just as He is wiser than we are in our wisest moments. He sees the end from the beginning, and in this Word He has given us His directions.

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart..."
Jeremiah 15:16.

Another man that had a special work to do was Moses. You remember that he was to build the sanctuary, that earthly tabernacle which was a replica, a miniature model of the heavenly temple. But how was he to *do* that?

Did God say to Moses, "Well Moses, just get together a building. Do it the best you can"?

Did He? What did He say?

“Come up unto Me in the mount and I’ll show you just exactly what I want you to do” [a paraphrase of Exodus 24:12].

Did Moses go? Did he get the directions? Did he follow them? Did it work out all right? Why my dear friends, that 40th chapter of Exodus tells the wonderful story of the completion of that tabernacle, and the experience of Israel as they watched the glory of God enshrouded in that cloud take possession of that sanctuary, that’s a wonderful thing. Think of it, God was dwelling with man.

But may I tell you, He’s just as interested in making our homes, our institutions, our Sabbath schools, our churches the abiding place of His glory. And He has given us explicit directions for every phase of life. And to study those instructions as Moses and those connected with Him studied those divine blueprints given in the mount, this is the key to joy and success.

Now, for two great reasons, God has amplified and magnified the directions found in His Word in these later days. I say for two reasons. First, it is vital in this closing hour that God’s entire church reach the highest standard of character. The sanctuary, which has been opened for generations, is soon to be closed. Jesus is to finish His work of making ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Paul says:

“...The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world...”
Acts 17:30–31.

In the judgment hour, God can no longer wink at transgressions, even of ignorance, and still arrange to close the sanctuary. Light must come to every soul, and with light, the blessing of power in Christ to walk in that light so that when the High Priest leaves the sanctuary, there will be no more transgressions coming in to defile the heavenly temple.

So, for this reason, God has been pleased in these latter days to give His remnant church the gift of prophecy, not for the purpose of *adding* any truth, but for the purpose of magnifying, making clear the great principles of truth found in His Word.

There’s another reason, friends, and for this, we can rejoice. God has given added light today because of the increasing darkness around us. The world was never so confused and never so weak as at the present time. Our poor human natures are suffering the results of 6,000 years of sin on the part of our ancestors. And so, these poor brains of ours need all the help that they can get in understanding the will of God.

So, I’m thankful this morning for the gift of prophecy. I’m thankful for this wonderful testimony, the testimony of Jesus. What did the angel tell John in Revelation 19:10?

“...The testimony of Jesus is...” Revelation 19:10.

What?

“...the Spirit of Prophecy” Revelation 19:10.

But remember, the whole purpose of the gift of prophecy is to magnify the Bible, to exalt the Word of God, to make clear the messages that God gave long ago through Moses and Daniel, through Isaiah and John, through Peter and Paul.

And as we study the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy, let us ever keep in mind that we are looking—watch this point—through a magnifying glass at the Word of God, as found in the Bible.

This is true not only as we find in these books thousands of quotations from the Bible. Every line of the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy is magnifying and clarifying and amplifying the principles of the Word of God. We’re looking through a glass, and thus we see brought out in beautiful detail the principles, the guidance, the instruction that God has given us in His holy Word.

And remember, friends, we are reading, as we read these inspired books of the Spirit of Prophecy, we are reading the application of the principles of the ages to our modern time. And thus, we will find in these books many words which we do not find in the Bible.

Do you find the word “tobacco” in the Bible? No. You don’t find the word “tobacco” in the Bible. They didn’t have tobacco back there in the land and in the time when the Bible was written.

But can you find the word “tobacco” in *Ministry of Healing*? Oh yes, and in some of the earlier books. And for over a hundred years, this people has had light that tobacco is a malignant poison. And has that light been a blessing to us? Has it saved the lives of thousands of people? Are you thankful for it? When you read that, does it make you happy?

Some of you, by reading that, have been led to give up tobacco. Some of you by reading that have been kept from ever starting to use tobacco. But in either case, has it made you happy? Has it added to your joy? Ah, yes. And so with all the thousands, and I use that word deliberately, literally thousands of wonderful things revealed in these wonderful books.

Now, this morning I would like to have us think of it personally. We’ve seen how Moses, when he built the sanctuary, went up into the mount, and God gave him specific instructions. Many years before, Noah had built a boat. Did he have directions for that? Dimensions? The whole thing was outlined by the Lord. And so, in everything that God has called us to do, we shall find specific instructions.

Now, all of us are not doing the same thing, and we need to seek the Lord earnestly to find the instruction that He has given us for our particular job. Suppose that I’m in medical work. Well, here’s a book called *Medical Ministry*. It has

hundreds of pages for doctors, nurses, sanitarium administrators and helpers, all who participate in the care of the sick and giving instruction in healthful living. Oh, I think that's a wonderful book. I found a lot of joy in this book, friends, a lot of joy. It's meant so much to me I wore out one cover on it, and this is the second cover. The inside is just as good as when I got it many years ago.

And so, if I'm in medical work in an institution, here is a book for me to study to find out the directions for my particular work. Is that right? Yes.

Now, suppose I'm a parent in the home, a father or mother. Well, here are two wonderful volumes: *The Adventist Home* and *Child Guidance*. Around a thousand pages in those two volumes, and it is amazing friends, the amount of detail that's in there.

I want to call your attention to a few chapters here. Here's a whole section on the work of the father, the house-band. Wouldn't it be a shame to try to be a husband without reading the particular directions the Lord has given on how to be a good husband? And one of the chapters in this section is the kind of husband *not* to be. Isn't that interesting?

Well, here's a section on the mother and another one on the children. I thank the Lord for every one of those. There's even special instruction here on a stepmother. If I had the job of being a stepmother, I think I'd need to study that very carefully. What do you say?

All right. I'll put that down. Suppose I'm a colporteur. I'm going to distribute literature in connection with the Lord's work.

Brother Long, anything special on that? What book do you study? *Colporteur Ministry*. That's right.

Elder Vixey, back when you and I started, what did they call the book? *Colporteur Evangelist*. Well, there is the specific instruction.

Now, I think we'd all enjoy *reading* the books written for the colporteurs, but friends, my point is the colporteur needs to be down on his knees with that blueprint every day. What do you say?

All right. Back to the home again. You know, I think one of the most important rooms in the house is the kitchen. Any of you agree with me? And here's a book called *Counsels on Diet and Foods*. Think of having the instruction of the One who made the world and who made all the trees and the plants, and here He has given us in this modern age in our own language over 500 pages of precious instruction on what to eat, what not to eat, how to combine foods, how to prepare them. Why friends, that's a marvelous book.

You know, a man who isn't a Seventh-day Adventist at all (he's the professor of nutrition in Cornell University in New York state) got hold of this book a few years ago and he just became enraptured with it. And he started talking about it to his friends at the Unitarian Church there in New York. He gave a lecture on the

instruction of Ellen G. White in the book *Counsels on Diet and Foods* as one of the best guides to nutrition available. Think of it. But you and I, we've had this light for many decades. Aren't we blessed? Aren't we privileged? Does it make you happy, friends?

Well, Jeremiah says:

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart..."
Jeremiah 15:16.

[Man from audience] How do you eat the Word of God?

[Elder Frazee] Study it, take it into the life, do what it says.

Now, suppose I'm a teacher. Well, here's a book called *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*. That takes in nearly all of us, doesn't it? Oh friends, I thank God for that little book. I got hold of this when I was just a boy, and I began to read and study it. And I'll just have to tell you it made some changes in my life. It took out some kinds of amusement that I thought were pretty nice. But friends, I found by experience just what Jeremiah says, that when we eat what Jesus says, it makes us happy. It does.

Now, may I tell you there are some things that have to be chewed in order to be sweet? You know that, don't you? You can take a piece of bread, and if you swallow it quickly, there may be no sweetness in it. But you can take a cracker, or a piece of zwieback, or a piece of bread and chew it and chew it and chew it and chew it, and what happens? It gets sweet. The action of the ptyalin and the saliva on those molecules of starch brings changes that bring out the sweetness, the hidden sweetness.

And so, as you read the Bible, as you read the Spirit of Prophecy, if you come to something—don't miss this—that doesn't taste very sweet, don't spit it out. Maybe it calls for some chewing. Maybe it calls for some meditation. Maybe it calls for some prayer. Maybe it calls for some surrender to the wisdom and the love of God.

You know, God intended prayer and Bible study to be mixed together, just like cooks mix the ingredients in a recipe. To just sit and read is all right, and there are many books written that's the best way to do them. But oh, my friends, if the One who made me, who loved me and died for me is speaking to me through this book and through these books, is it not fitting at least on some occasions for me to get down on my knees and say, like Samuel:

"...Speak, LORD; for Thy servant heareth..." 1 Samuel 3:9.

And if because of age, or infirmity, or any other reason, that isn't practical, we can with bowed heads and reverent hearts open the inspired pages and listen while God speaks. And friends, isn't it wonderful as He speaks to us to visit with Him?

You know, even if I happen to be sitting reading some of these inspired books, again and again, I find my heart talking in response to my heavenly Father. I hear Him speaking to me through these pages, and I want to talk in return to Him. I want to thank Him for the light. I want to ask Him for the strength to do what these books say. And oh, I know He hears, and I know He answers.

Suppose now, that I'm in home missionary work, lay activities as we call it now. Why, here's a whole book of wonderful instruction brought together, this book *Christian Service*. Don't misunderstand me. I don't mean this is the *only* book on it. I suppose of all the 50 books in the Spirit of Prophecy, it would be hard to find one that didn't have something about home missionary work in it.

But here is what at least some folks thought was the cream of it all, gathered together and brought into this book. And if I'm engaged in home missionary work, here, I can find chapters on Christian help work, medical missionary work, harvest ingathering work, ministry of the printed page, personal work—special instruction.

Tell me, friend, wouldn't it be a strange thing to try to build *this* building in which we worship this morning without any blueprint? And wouldn't it be a strange thing if the workmen, having received the blueprint, should very carefully put them up on the mantle and then go ahead and build without looking at them?

Oh, this precious blueprint that covers every phase of life was not meant to be left in our library bookcases. We are to fill our minds, fill our hearts with this precious instruction.

Here's another little book that I love called *Messages to Young People*. This book came out when I was a young fellow still unmarried. This book helped me to get the right wife. There's a whole section in there on courtship and marriage. This book gave me some more precious light on amusements and recreation. There's a whole section in there on that, and one on reading and music, and one on dress, and one on life work for young people.

Why friends, I wore the cover off of this one once or twice. I love this little book. It's brought joy to my heart. True, there were some things in it that cut across my natural ideas, my human inclinations, but oh, I have found by experience, friends, that following what Jesus says brings more joy than following my own little puny mind. He knows more than I do. He loves me better than I love myself. His words bring joy and blessing to my soul.

Well, book after book, volume after volume, all for the purpose of magnifying, amplifying the Word of God. And let me tell you, no matter what line of work you are in, if you're in anything that angels can cooperate with you in, here you will find in the Bible and in this inspired commentary specific directions for you.

So, may I suggest dear friends, we're still in the early weeks of this new year, let us make this year in a special sense the year of the Book, the year of the Book, the year in which we find the light from these volumes that shines upon our personal pathway.

Oh, the joy of going to Him personally and saying, “Lord, I see what You did for Abel. I see what You did for Enoch. I see what You did for Noah, for Abraham and Jacob and Joseph and Moses, for Daniel and David, for Isaiah and John, for Peter and Paul. Lord, what will You do for me?”

“I know You haven’t told me to build a boat or to make a sanctuary, but Lord, I know You have something for me to do. Oh, help me to find the place in the Book where it is written concerning *me*, and reading it I can say, ‘this day is this Scripture fulfilled’” [a paraphrase of Luke 4:21].

This is your privilege, my friend. I know it. This is the joy of life. Don’t settle for anything less than this! Don’t attempt to be contented with anything less than this! *This* is for you! This Bible is for you! Here in these volumes, you will find something that bears upon *your* life, *your* position, *your* responsibilities. And as you find those things, zero in on that instruction. Let God fill your mind with this instruction, and then you will find happiness.

Now, we had an opening text in Jeremiah 15:16. Turn over to John the 13th chapter, and the 17th verse, and we’ll have a closing text, and then I want to hear from you. And this opening text and the closing text are like the covers of a book. One begins it, and the other closes it. I told you that this was about how to be happy. That’s what the opening text was about, wasn’t it? And this is what the closing text is about. You’ve found it, haven’t you? Will you read it with me:

“If ye know these things, happy are ye if you do them”
John 13:17.

What’s the first thing here to be happy? Know what God says.

And what’s the second thing to be happy? Do it. It takes both.

God bless you everyone in following the light—finding and following it.

Now, what is your testimony this morning of joy and thanksgiving to God for the precious light that shines in His Word?

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W. D. Frazee Sermons
435 Lifestyle Lane, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org