

Law and Happiness

#0722

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—July 31, 1965

In the opening part of our service, we speak to God; through His Word, now, He speaks to us. And thus, this Sabbath morning service is indeed a communion. Let us turn to His Word, Proverbs the 29th chapter, and the 18th verse. Where we will find the text for our meditation. It is a wonderful thing that down through the ages, God spoke to different men, each one, with a little different slant on things. These Proverbs of Solomon, for 3,000 years now, have been giving instructions and guidance, and in our text this morning, there is a wonderful statement of a wonderful principle. Will you read the text with me?

“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” Proverbs 29:18.

It is the last part of the text that we shall study.

“...he that keepeth the law, happy is he” Proverbs 29:18.

The way to be happy, is to what? Keep the law. Do you believe that? Do you really believe that? The way to be happy is to keep the law. Someone was telling me the other day about a father that was weeping because his son, a young man around 20 I judged, had taken the Oldsmobile and had gotten out on the highway and actually gone 150 miles an hour! Now that young man thought he was being, what? Happy. He thought he was happy. Was he keeping the law? Well then, this text isn't so, is it? How about it? Is the way to be happy to keep the law, or is it something else? Well, you say, “he might run into a tree” or, “he might get off the road and land in the ditch,” and that wouldn't be so happy! But as long as he doesn't get hurt, it really is a way to be happy, isn't it? Or is it? I wonder what this text means? Of course, if the policeman had stopped him, he probably wouldn't have been quite so happy. But then they didn't stop him, so he got by all right, and that made him happier than ever, didn't it? I wonder, what about this thing, anyway? Did Solomon have the right answer here, or did he?

“...he that keepeth the law, happy is he” Proverbs 29:18.

Is the way to be happy to keep the law or break the law? What do you think? Now, if I should ask you to raise your hands, you would all vote for what? Keeping the law, because that is the way to be happy. But as Elder Neil says, we need to vote with other parts of our anatomy besides our hands and our voices. Everything we do votes one way or the other, is that right? That's right.

“...he that keepeth the law, happy is he” Proverbs 29:18.

Let me ask you another question. What part of life do we learn the fastest and learn the most in? Which part? The first part. Which part of the first part? The first part of that. That's right. And which part of that? The first part of that, that's right. The One who knows tells us that the lessons that a child learns during its first three years affect it more than any other period. Now, if that is so, when do you think a child should learn this lesson that Solomon is talking about? But can a child of one year or two years, or even three years, can he understand what L-A-W spells? Not on the blackboard perhaps, but are there other ways that he can learn what law means?

Now, if we believe this text, the little child should learn that the keeping of the law brings what? Happiness. I wonder how he would learn that? Is there any other way he could learn it? If the people that he is associated with are happy when they keep the law, would that help? And if they make him happy when he keeps the law, would that help? And if something happens that is unhappy when he breaks the law, would that help? Yes, all of those three things would help. And you know, that is one of the greatest reasons, that God gave little children, a father and a mother so that the little children could learn from father and mother that...

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The One who knows, again tells us, that even a child of a year old and under notices what is said and gets certain impressions from it. So impressions are being made upon the little minds, far more than any of us realize. And the child of one or two or three years, already, is having its life set in the pattern, that law-keeping brings pleasure, or that lawbreaking, is the way to get, a lot of fun—one way or the other. By the way, who originated this idea that...

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Did Solomon? Who did? God. Did He, did God, originate that idea? I wonder why God associated law-keeping and happiness? May I ask that as a question? Why, do you think, that God put law-keeping and happiness together? What? Now that is where they belong, all right, because He put them there. But why did He put those two things together—law-keeping and happiness? So that we would keep the law, and the other is, He wants us to be happy. I would like to emphasize the latter one.

Happiness is not a bribe to get us to do right. No. Keeping the law is *the* way to happiness. That is why it is the law. The One who made us knows how we are put together. To use an expression, “He knows what makes us tick.” He knows how these 10 billion brain cells operate, why? Because He made them, and He made us to like certain things and to dislike other things. And before He made us at all, my dear friends, that Infinite Mind of Infinite Wisdom put survey, and did survey, all the infinite number of possibilities, of how to arrange things. And out of the infinite number of things that could have been arranged, He arranged for each of us, the thing that would bring the greatest happiness in all the universe. That is law. That is what law is. And so...

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Now let's see, I have my purse here. We will see if there are any laws that affect this or any like object. I hold this here—suppose I turn loose of it, what will happen to it? Why are you so sure? Why not say, "let's see what happens"? What would you say if I said, "Well now, it may just go on out the door and go around out there"? Is there any likelihood of that? You are all sure it will do, what? Well, let's try it and see anyway?

[Elder Frazee's "purse" makes a noise as it hits the pulpit or the floor]

Sure enough, just like you said. I wonder how you all knew what would happen? Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if every child knew what would happen when it disobeyed like that? Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing? I wonder why it doesn't? A child does not automatically know what I just showed you here, what you told me. We all learned it, by what? Experience. Including breaking that law somewhere along the line. But when we broke the law and got off the bed, where mother told us to stay or did something else that defied the law of gravity, the law of gravity took hold, and we found that the way of transgressors, is what? Hard—hard floor, hard cement. Some of us learned easily, some of it took quite a long time, but all of us that understand what I am saying this morning, have all learned that, and we are satisfied with that.

And I don't hear anyone complaining about it. In fact, dear friends, we really get satisfaction out of that. We know what to depend upon. Now I want to read you something very interesting, very significant here. In the book *Child Guidance*, page 284.

"When it is necessary for parents to give a direct command, the penalty of disobedience should be as unvarying as are the laws of nature" *Child Guidance*, page 284.

What does "unvarying" mean? What? Not changing, always the same, is that right? Now I dropped this purse, here on a sunny day, if it had been raining, you can't tell for sure whether it would have dropped, or not, can you? That law is what? Unvarying. It always acts that way. In fact, it acts with extreme mathematical accuracy. The scientists can tell you exactly how far the thing will drop in a certain number of seconds. Yes, it is all mathematical law. Who made it? God. All right.

"When it is necessary for parents to give a direct command, the penalty of disobedience should be as unvarying as are the laws of nature" *Ibid*.

Every time I keep the law, I should experience, what? Happiness. And every time I break the law, I should experience, what? Unhappiness. Oh, well, don't worry about that, take a tranquilizer, one of those happy pills that will fix you up. Eat anything you want, drink anything you want, do anything you want, and man has gotten so wise today, so scientific, that it is old-fashioned to think that the way of transgressors is hard. You just have to spend a little money and get some kind of pill or a puncture, and then you are off again. Really off, too! And we need something to get us back on, my friends—on the way of life and true happiness.

“...he that keepeth the law, happy is he” Proverbs 29:18.

Now some of you have children, some don't, but I want to tell you something, friends. This lesson we are studying this morning is just as much for the people that don't have children as the ones that do. Don't let any of you sit back and relax and go to sleep thinking, “Well, this part isn't for me.”

Everything we are studying, every sentence, is of tremendous importance because every one of us will soon be put into the sweatbox on this particular point. Do we believe that obedience to the law of God is the way of happiness, or do we believe that there is some profit, some pleasure to be gained, through transgression? That is the issue! It was introduced by Lucifer 6,000 years ago, and it is soon to come to its final climax, and every being in the universe will vote one way or the other. Ah friends, how important it is, that deep in our souls, where nobody but God and the soul, is conscious of the decision; that the decision is made clear, and without any question. “Lord, I vote for law-keeping. I vote for law-keeping.”

Now you know, friends, faith is believing God and acting upon it, is that right? If I believe that keeping the law brings happiness, then whenever I keep the law, I should expect to find pleasure and satisfaction, is that right? Yes. When I eat the fruit that God has told me to eat, I should expect to find it, as Solomon says again.

“...his fruit was sweet to my taste” Song of Solomon 2:3.

That's right. I should expect to find joy and satisfaction in the service of God and give that witness. Now back to the child again. You told me, a while ago, three things that parents can do, to help little children and older ones too, to understand and know experimentally that...

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One was to show it by their own example and experience. I think that is important. Another is to associate happiness with obedience on the part of the child. You know, one of the biggest things a father and mother can do, to accomplish that. And that is, “just smile” when the child obeys. Why, my dear friends, there is nothing that a child enjoys more than the smile of those that love it and that it loves. Am I right? And by the way, we older ones, don't we enjoy a smile, too? Supervisors, foreman, managers, when those who are working with you please you, smile. Tell them so. Husbands and wives, when your companion pleases you, smile, tell them so.

“...he that keepeth the law...

What?

“...happy is he” Proverbs 29:18.

When we are in the path of obedience, we should be experiencing pleasure all the time. And the smile of love from God, and all who reflect the smile of God.

Now of course, the Devil won't like that. We are told over in Revelation 12:17 what attitude the Devil will have toward those who keep the commandments. The very ones who are happy and keeping the law, he will be, what towards? He will be "wroth," and that means, what? Angry. And he won't smile at them at all. And anybody that is inspired by the Devil may reflect a bit of that displeasure and anger. They may use ridicule and scorn. Don't expect the world to smile at you if you are keeping the law. No, they won't do it. If they do, it is pretense to try to inveigle you into something else. But Jesus and those who love Him will smile at you. All right.

Now, this other point, friends, of associating displeasure, pain, and unhappiness with disobedience. Yonder is that new highway. The way they have cut through the road, there are cliffs at certain places, where it's dangerous for a child, or anybody else for that matter, to get up there, too near the edge. Now there are two ways that a child can learn not to do that—two ways. Two ways that he can learn that disobedience brings pain. One is, to tell him, "Now, son, don't go out there because you may fall and get hurt." And then stand by and watch him. He must express himself, you know, you mustn't repress anybody. And so, he is going to experiment now. And he goes out there, and we watch him, and he goes out there, to the edge, and falls over. Does he learn? Well, if there is anything left to learn, he learns. Yes. And now, dear friends, is that good education?

I tell you, friends, life is too short to learn everything that way. And it is shorter yet, on that program, isn't it? Yes. Here is some arsenic, or carbolic acid, or fly poison, or rat poison, or any one of a dozen other things, that for some reason, mother may have around the house. But baby mustn't touch. But then it must be allowed to express itself, to find its own way through life, as if it is always told what to do, it will just be an automaton; it won't amount to anything. So tell the child, "You had better not touch that. It will hurt you," but it wants to touch it and find out. So it swallows some. Will it find out? Is there any other way, friends?

Let's go back here to the highway. Let's go back to the cliff. Could the parents have a certain kind of pain, and a certain amount of pain, associated with disobedience before the child falls over the precipice? Could it? Yes. Why not? Wouldn't that be a merciful thing? Instead of bringing in the little mangled form of broken bones, why not have, as a friend of mine says, "The application, of the board of education, to the seat of learning." Why not let the child experience a little pain, if it has disobeyed, in a way that does it no permanent injury, that doesn't endanger its life. That merely—watch the point—associates disobedience, and what? Pain, pain. It is too bad, friends, if our children have to wait until the lake of fire to learn that sin, the end of it, is pain and suffering and death. It's too bad if they have to wait that long to learn it.

Do you see that this lifts punishment, clear out of the realm of getting even with a child or blowing off steam? It lifts it clear out of the realm of making a child "behave" so I won't be bothered with him. It makes it a part of discipline, in the two things. You know, the word "discipline" and "disciple" come from the same root. It is a matter of learning. And so the wise man said...

"Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give thee delight unto thy soul" Proverbs 29:17.

“Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying” Proverbs 19:18.

Those verses come back to me easily, for I had to memorize them when I was learning what they meant when I was a little fellow. Ah, my friends, I thank God for everything my dear parents taught me, in the way of associating disobedience and pain—disobedience and lack of pleasure, disobedience and unhappiness. And oh, I am so glad also, for the many experiences through which they taught me that...

“...he that keepeth the law, happy is he” Proverbs 29:18.

Sister White tells about an experience she had with a child that she had in her home for a while. From time to time, busy as she was, she took children into her home, besides her own, that were born to her, and she studied how to help those children to learn the lessons of obedience.

And she told of one child that she had, and she told the child, as an incentive, to try to help the child to learn to master herself. This was a little girl. She said, “Now today, if you all day long, will never once give way to temper, then tomorrow, my husband and I, will take you for a nice little ride, out in nature.” They were going, you see, on a little excursion. Well, wasn’t that nice? Now, that is not bribing, that is associating obedience, and what? And pleasure, pleasure. And the opposite, of course, a withdrawal of privileges, it isn’t always necessary to use the rod, in fact, many times there are other measures better. But, however, it is done—I come back to this point. How often should the object drop when it is turned loose off? Every time. May I read that again?

“When it is necessary for parents to give a direct command, the penalty of disobedience should be as unvarying as are the laws of nature” *Child Guidance*, page 284.

Now, I want you to look next at the introductory clause of this. When it is necessary for parents to give a direct command, I wonder what that means. I wonder why, that is put in there. Let me tell you something, friends. If you and I as parents, as teachers, as instructors, if we know that once we have said a thing that must stand and the law must be enforced, and the penalty inflicted, if we really sense that and stick to it, we will cut way down on the number of our commands. That’s right. Cut way down on them.

People who are telling other people all day long what to do, children or others, “Do this, do this, don’t do this, don’t do that.” Believe me, friends, they don’t have time enough to enforce what this says. And thus you hear the question, “How many times am I going to have to tell you to do that”? And neither the child nor anybody listening in could answer the question. For who knows how many times they would, over and over again. No. I repeat, friends. And the adoption of this important principle will make us very careful when we give a direct command. We will be sure that it is necessary, that it is timely, and that we are prepared to stand behind it.

Now, let me show you how important that is. If I had a blackboard here, I would write down one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. You have all visualized it, haven't you? All right. Now all of these are decisions that either I as a parent can make or a child can make.

I will use a simple little illustration, "Wash your teeth after breakfast." Now, I can decide that, and I can say to the child, "Johnny, Mary, wash your teeth now, as soon as you get up from the table." I can do that. Is that all right for me to do? Yes. But if I do it, I must what? I must carry through on it, that's right. Now, I can turn that decision over to the child. I can say, "Now Johnny, you are getting to an age now, where you are old enough, to remember some things yourself, this week, daddy is going to let you run this whole thing yourself, and you wash your teeth whenever you choose. Now it would be a good thing if you would wash your teeth, such and such time. Here are some of the things when people wash their teeth; here are some of the things that might happen if they don't. It is all up to you, Johnny. It will please me if you will do thus and so, but it's all with you. You won't be disobeying me if you forget, and I am leaving it all with you."

What does that lay upon the child? Responsibility, all right. Now, if I never lay any responsibility upon the child, and he comes to adult life, and he has never made any decisions except just doing what I said, is that good? No, but suppose I go the other way, and suppose I say, "Well, he has got to learn, the best way is to pitch him in the water and let him swim, if he survives, he will be a good swimmer." Is that the way? No, you see, there is a middle ground.

All right, now watch, here are the ten decisions that the child may face today, of course, there are more than ten. But suppose I look at that list of ten, and I say, "Now look here" out of those ten, there is one that I know, that I must make myself. I dare not entrust that to the child. If it is an eight-year-old child, I certainly won't turn the keys of the automobile over to that child, will I? You say, "Well, he has got to learn sometime, I guess I will let him take the car, and off he goes." No, no!

And so, out of this particular list of ten, there are nine of them, I turn over to that child. He makes those nine, and I reserve how many? One! If he obeys me on the one point where I reserve the decision, what kind of obedience is his obedience that day? What kind of obedience is it? Perfect obedience, right? Sure. There were ten choices (ten things that needed to be decided) I turn nine of them over to him. I reserve one myself, and I said, "Son, this one, you must do, God has given me this authority, I am letting you decide, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, but number one, I must decide." If he obeys me on that one, he has obeyed me, right? You see that point, don't you? All right, now let's turn it around.

Suppose that I reserve, on some other point, on another day, all ten points. Suppose I say, "Son, here are ten things, but each of them, I must decide for you, God requires me to do that. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten." Suppose he obeys me, on every one of those, except just one. What is his obedience for that day? What is it? It is disobedience, you see. But the day before, he obeyed me on just one point, and here he has obeyed me on nine points, and he only disobeyed me on one, and the other day you said that was perfect, did you?

And this is what? Perfect disobedience. This gets me to the closing text. James 2:10. And then I want to hear from you.

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” James 2:10.

I wonder how that can be. Very simple, my friends. The child or the adult who does this and this and this, which the law requires, and reaches the point where he says, “No, I won’t do that!” he shows by that, that the only reason he kept the law, on the other points, was that he didn’t want to break it. At least I did not want, too bad enough. He shows that if he wanted to break all the others the way he wants to break that one, he would break all the rest, right? And obedience is an affair of the heart. Obedience is an affair of the heart. It’s a state of mind. It’s an attitude of spirit. It is a matter of harmony with authority, harmony with God. And harmony is another name for happiness, or happiness is another name for harmony. This leads us back to our opening text:

“...he that keepeth the law...

What?

...happy is he” Proverbs 29:18.

Ah, my friends, when did a being out of gear, oh what was inharmonious notes come. To be in gear, to be in harmony, to be walking along with God, and with those that God placed over us, in the home in the church, in the school, wherever life may find us, ah, that is pleasure, that is joy.

This principle we are studying is so vital that to teach it, and enforce, and make it possible, that you and I might get back into harmony with these principles, Jesus came to earth. He came and demonstrated these principles and then died upon the cross to show us how terrible is the sin of lawbreaking. And oh, I am so glad this morning, friends, that He is willing to take these poor minds of ours and so change them that we love what He loves and hate what He hates. What is your testimony this morning?

Let me say this, friends. If I didn’t learn it when I was three years old, do I still need to learn it? If I didn’t learn it when I was five, or seven, or nine, is there still hope for me, if I am thirty or forty, or fifty or sixty, or seventy, is there? It will be harder now, but can I learn it? Through the grace of God, oh yes.

“...he that keepeth the law, happy is he” Proverbs 29:18.

All right.

[Man testifies using microphone] I am thankful for this thought, and I think of the *New English Version* of Revelation 22:14. Happy are they that do his commandments that they may have right to the tree of life. I choose to learn that happy way of obedience to God.

[Elder Frazee] Amen!

[Break in the tape]

That's good, sister. That's right. The mother's smile, oh, it means so much to children! If they are obedient for an hour, they ought to get for an hour, shouldn't they? That's right.

[Break in the tape]

"...he that keepeth the law, happy is he" Proverbs 29:18.

If you folks don't want to speak out, I will fill in the time. It is an interesting thing, what the attitude of mind is, toward a fence between you and the precipice. Do you know, to what, some minds, that is? That is an invitation, to what? To find some way through, under or over, and get out there, and dangle on the edge. They don't believe this text.

"...he that..."

What?

"...keepeth the law, happy is he" Proverbs 29:18.

Watch yourself on that! If you find in your mind an attitude to experiment with the commands of God and see whether it hurts or not. Remember, that is what started Eve on the wrong track. We are still suffering the pain from it. Correct? Oh, let's take God's word for it, what do you say? All right, who else?

[Break in the tape and inaudible testimonies]

Is there anybody here this morning who needs to make a decision. I do not know you all. There may be somebody here who needs to make a decision to follow Jesus all the way. There may be someone who has been following Jesus, but as you hear the message this morning, you feel that there is a decision that God is calling you to make and your attitude toward law, either with yourself or with others. Whatever the decision is, Jesus is calling on you to make a decision this morning, and by His grace, you are saying, "Lord, I will." Would you like to raise your hands now? Thank the Lord for each one.

Dear Lord, seal to our hearts the words of Thy book. Seal to our hearts, the decision of our will, and answer to the appeals of Thy Spirit. Give us the joy that comes to those who catch Thy smile in the path of obedience. Teach us how to teach others the joy that comes in harmony with Thee. For Jesus' sake, amen.

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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