

contemplation of suicide has gotten many through a dark night." Of course, our course is far better than this.

2. Do Right Today (Isaiah 48:22)

"The Lord says, 'There is no peace for the wicked.' (Isaiah 48:22)

Happiness is a serendipity - something we find while looking for something else. We put our **happiness** first and God puts our **holiness** first. And He has designed a world where those who seek holiness - to be and to do good- will find happiness as a by-product. However, if we strive for happiness we will not find it. It is like chasing after the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. But if we strive for goodness, we do.

In the Bible the word for the highest form of happiness is "**Blessed**". The Amplified Bible translates it, "**Blessed, happy, to be envied**". The Book of Psalms begins with it and the blessed man is the one whose delight is in the Bible way of life [the law of the Lord.] The first word in the Sermon on the Mount is blessed, it is repeated ten times and each is connected to a Christian character trait.

3. Don't Expect Perfection Today and Don't Practice Imitation

"I write to you who believe / if we say we have no sin, the truth is not in us / If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

(1 Jn 5:13 / 1:7-10)

Being good and doing right is not perfection or doing what others say we ought to do. We will all sin and when we do, we need to confess it; ask for and claim God's forgiveness; and ask him to cleanse us- give us the strength not to do it again. The cardinal weakness of God's truly good people is trying to be perfect and letting Satan fill them daily with guilt.

Much of this comes from listening too much to others. We see someone giving most of their money and time to the poor and feel guilty because we don't. We see someone read their Bible for an hour each day and feel guilty because we don't. Let God give you your marching orders, not other people.

3. Make Up Your Mind to Be Joyful Today

"This is the day the Lord has made, we (I) will rejoice and be glad and in it." (Psalm 118:24)

We do what we make up our minds to do. Put a smile on your face if you have to starch it. Rise and shine don't rise and whine. Say, Good Morning, Lord, not, Good Lord! Morning!

A psychiatrist asked a lady, "Do you wake up grouchy every morning?" She said, "No, I let him sleep."

Lincoln said, "Most people are as happy as they make up their minds to be." Since joy is commanded, it is a choice. We choose to be thermometers or thermostats. Thermometers register what is around them; thermostats set the temperature around them. When bad things happen, we usually have a bad day. When good things happen, we have a good day. We place our happiness in the hands of others and circumstances.

A lady told a psychologist, "This kid is driving me crazy." The doctor said, "Let me get this right. You have placed your mental balance in the hands of a 3-year-old?"

Joy comes from within; good things can't produce it and bad things can't take it away.

Continued Next Week