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The Problem of Observation Psalm 73 & Matt 7:24-29

Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For they have no pangs until death; their bodies are fat and sleek. They are not in trouble as others are; they are not stricken like the rest of mankind ... But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end ... Whom have I in heaven but you?



And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. For behold, those who are far from you shall perish; you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you. But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.

Pastor's Blog | *Get Wisdom* | John Piper

Ibelieve all men have this in common: that they want to be happy. They do not all agree on what brings the greatest happiness, but they do all long to have it. And this longing is not bad. It is good. Evil consists in trying to find happiness in ways that displease and dishonor God. Goodness consists in finding happiness in ways that please and honor God. *(cont. over...)*



We can conceive of a world in which we might be called upon to do right at the expense of our ultimate happiness. But that is not the world in which we live. God has established this world in such a way that doing good through faith in Christ always leads to greater happiness eventually. We do not live in a world where we must choose between our eternal happiness and God's glory! God has created this world and its moral laws in such a way that the more we choose to glorify God, the happier we will be.

Of course this does not mean that there is no discipline, no self-denial.

What sets Christians off from the world is not that we have given up on the universal quest for happiness, but that we now seek our happiness from a different source and in different ways. We have learned from Jesus ...

"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mark 8:34, 35). But it is clear from Jesus' words that self-denial is a means to saving our lives. This means simply that we must stop seeking our happiness in one way and start seeking it in another. Therefore what sets Christians off from the world is not that we have given up on the universal quest for happiness, but that we now

seek our happiness from a different source and in different ways. We have learned from Jesus, who *"for the joy set before him endured the cross"* (Hebrews 12:2), that the joy we seek may require that we choose to suffer for Christ's sake. Yet we must never become self-pitying because *"the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us"* (Romans 8:18). Nor can we ever become proud since we know that *"suffering produces patience, and patience produces approvedness, and approvedness produces hope"* (Romans 5:3, 4) - hope that God will restore our happiness one hundredfold (Mark 10:30). So you can't boast in your sufferings since they are all bringing about our greater happiness in God.

So I take it to be a great and wonderful and liberating truth that God made us to be eternally happy. And I find great help in viewing the Bible as God's guidebook to joy. We ought to view the Bible as a divine prescription for how to be cured of all unhappiness. The medicine it prescribes is not always sweet, but the cure it brings is infinite and eternal joy at God's right hand (Psalm 16:11) ... We should bend all our efforts to become wiser tomorrow than we are today ...

I say that ultimate and eternal happiness is what wisdom will bring, because I want to emphasize that not all happiness comes from true wisdom. Proverbs 15:21 says, *"Folly is a joy to him who has no sense."* Our thirst for happiness is insatiable in this world, and if we do not have the wisdom to seek it in God, then we will find whatever substitutes we can in the world. Terrorists may find it in shooting presidents and popes. Executives may find it in climbing the corporate ladder. Athletes in breaking world records. Scholars in publishing books. Gamblers may find it in a casino. Musicians in selling a million records. The sources where people seek happiness apart from God are countless: drink, drugs, sex, suntans, television, tubing, eating, talking, walking, etc., etc. But the happiness that these things bring is not true and lasting. It is not ultimate and eternal. It is not the joy for which we were made. And, therefore, it leaves us unsatisfied, frustrated, incomplete, knowing that there must be something more. But that ultimate and eternal happiness that we crave is only found by wisdom. Therefore it is supremely important that we "get wisdom." [John Piper www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org)

Upcoming & Notes



- **New Life 2017 Christian Women's Conference Aug 25 & 26 @ Carinya Christian School Tamworth** > New Life aims to provide quality Bible teaching to encourage women in their relationship with Jesus and equip them to serve Him in their local communities. Flyers out now.
- **Confirmation with Bishop Rick Lewers October 22** > Contact Matt in the Office.

• **Car loan needed for Gillian Law on home assignment end of July to mid-January** > Gillian will be arriving in Australia at the end of July 2017 and will be on Home Assignment based in Armidale. Gill will have long distances to cover as she visits Link Churches all over the Armidale diocese. A fuel-efficient, reliable vehicle would be great. If you can help fill this need, contact Amy Saville at CMS - asaville@cms.org.au or 07 3112 6530

• **Prayer for Armidale** > A morning prayer & worship time will be held on Thursday 29 June 29 at Minimbah School, Galloway St, East Armidale from 10–11 am, followed by morning tea. Do come along and pray for our city.

• **Room to Rent with Christian family in town** > \$195 per week (includes food, NBN, central heating), 2 blocks from the Court House bus stop (easy access to town and UNE), home-stay like accommodation with Aussie family. Enquiries to Fay Paris on 0434 144 243.

• **Colin Buchanan Concerts** > PLC Astra Arts Centre. *Kids Concert 2pm Friday 11 Aug* \$8pp tickets. *Adults/Family Concert 7pm Saturday 12 Aug* \$20pp. Tickets www.trybooking.com



Family Prayer

- **Grieving** > The Sindel family at the passing of Pauline's brother Andrew (Wednesday June 21).
- **Baking** > Henry and Candy Yeomans (due end July); Heidi & Hunter Gerberich.
- **'Tent' Wear & Repair (2 Cor. 5)** > Pauline Sindel's brother Andrew; Samantha Guilbert; Luke McCleneghan; David Meares; Owen Chapman.
- **Betrothed** > Ben Lukins and Laura Millican Dec 9.
- **SunAM Prayer Ministry** > See Robert Baker.

Family Finances

Giving 8/6 – 14/6	\$7429
Giving Year to Date	\$390,150
Amount needed to meet *Budget YTD	\$351,981
Amount needed to cover expenses YTD	\$401,303

- ***Deficit Budget** * A deficit budget with a 7% increase is in place.

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