



How To Live A Happy Life

Who said “A peaceful, happy man I have been these seventy years.”
Sermon By George Müller of Bristol

PHILIPPIANS IV 4-7

THESE four verses are by the Holy Ghost written to the beloved brethren and sisters in Christ here present. All of us, more or less, need the counsel, advice, exhortation, here given to us. May we seek now to listen to the voice of God the Holy Spirit in them.

“*Rejoice in the Lord alway*” (verse 4). This exhortation is given to believers, for none but such can rejoice in the Lord. In order to attend to it, we must first have been made to see our lost and ruined condition; we must have owned this before God, and then have put our sole trust for salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. In doing so we become justified, we are regenerated, we are forgiven, we become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; we are brought into the road to Heaven, and Heaven will be our home at last.

Entering into this, joy in the Lord commences, but only *commences*, because to the highest degree it can be brought only in glory. But in a little degree the joy of Heaven then commences; and the more we lay hold on what we have obtained by faith in Christ Jesus the greater will be this peace and joy in God, the greater our real, true

HAPPINESS WHILE YET IN THE BODY.

We should especially also couple with this, in order that this joy in the Lord may continue, the careful, diligent, habitual reading of the Holy Scriptures; a seeking to carry out in our life what God makes known to us in His precious Word, in order that we may attend to the second part of this exhortation – “And, again, I say, Rejoice.” This is especially to be noted: Joy *commences* by attending to what I have mentioned; but this joy will be *continued* to us, we shall be happy always if we are dwelling by faith on the work of the Lord Jesus – appropriating it to ourselves.

We know how much has been spoken of this joy in the Lord. Philippians, in particular, is full of it. We have in the beginning of chapter iii this word – “Finally, my brethren, Rejoice in the Lord.” Then it is repeated here, but with this especially weighty addition: “Rejoice in the Lord *alway*,” and then, as if all this were not enough, it is yet once more repeated – “And, *again, I say, Rejoice.*” So much stress is laid on it, because it tends so much to the glory of God to give testimony to the world that it is not a vain thing to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to show to the world how much we obtain through this faith in Him, and also by attending to it we strengthen the hands of our fellow-believers.

“*Let your moderation be known unto all men*” (verse 5). Most of the beloved brethren and sisters here present know that the meaning of the word “moderation” is “*yieldingness.*” It does not mean that we can go too far in the things of God. This never has been the case. We cannot pray too much, trust too much, love too much, too much carry out the mind of Christ. It cannot be; but, as I said, the meaning is “*yieldingness.*” This is, though believers in Christ, we should not insist on our own rights, but be ready to yield to the world and to our brethren in Christ; and by manifesting this meek, this yielding spirit, we glorify God. Naturally we might be inclined to say, “If I do so, the people of the world will take great advantage of me.” This would be the case if we had no Father in Heaven who cared for us, if nor Lord Jesus Christ were our Friend and Helper. And immediately after we read: “The Lord is at hand.” Commit your matters into the hands of God, leave yourself in His hands; He will look after you, care for you, and see that the people of the world shall not overpower you and take too much advantage of you. Since you have a Father in Heaven, and the Lord Jesus Christ is your intimate Friend and Helper, it cannot be so.

Then come two other most precious verses: “*Be careful for nothing*” (verse 6). That, as we all know, does not mean, “Be careless and unconcerned altogether about your family affairs and business matters, and work and labour for the Lord;” but, as we again and again have heard, it means, “Be *anxious* about nothing.” It is the great privilege of the child of God *not to be anxious*. And it is possible to attain to it even in this life; yea, in the midst of great difficulties, great trials. It can be attained to, it is attained to by not a few of the children of God. And, by the grace of God, I am one of those who for many a long year have not been anxious;

FOR MORE THAN SEVENTY YEARS I HAVE NOT BEEN ANXIOUS

I have rolled my burdens on the Lord, and He has carried them for me. The result of that has been that “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,” has kept my heart and mind. If we are anxious, it brings about a gloomy look, and a gloomy look greatly dishonours God and greatly deters the unconverted from seeking after the Lord, for they say to themselves: “That man, that woman, is just as miserable as I am when I am in trouble.” But when they see we are in heavy trial, in heavy affliction, and yet there is found a cheerful look about us, our very look is an encouragement to the unconverted, and also strengthens the hands of our follow-believers in God. And, therefore, beloved, let us aim at this, that *we be not anxious*. As I stated: It is to be obtained, but we cannot obtain it by our own resolutions, by our saying to ourselves – “I will go through it bravely.” We have in our weakness and helplessness to roll our burdens on God, then it is brought about that we have the peace of God.

Let me affectionately press this on the hearts of my beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, for it brings about a miserable life if we carry our own trials, our own burdens. Even in the lightest trials and burdens will be found too heavy for us, if carried in our own strength, and we oblige our heavenly Father to step in and make the burden heavier. If we, in our foolishness and self-importance, try to carry the burden ourselves, then, speaking after the manner of men, the ten-pound weight will be made fifty; and if, in our high-mindedness, we try to carry that, He makes it a hundred; and if we foolishly think we can then carry the burden, it will be made still far more, so that God may make us see how weak we are, and that we cannot carry the burden ourselves.

The next thing which I desire affectionately to commend for your souls’ profit is the counsel: “*In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God*” (verse 6). That means, not merely when the trial is exceedingly great, only then to pray, but about *little* things, the ordinary affairs of life – to bring them all before God. And the result of this is – “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Though this is a vale of tears, yet we are able thus to go cheerfully through the world. It is my habitual practice about little things, to bring them before God. I never attempt to carry any burdens myself; I roll them on God and speak to God about them. Beloved Mr Wright and myself, the first thing when we meet every morning, have prayer about the affairs of our work, and bring everything before our God; the most minute affairs we bring before God, roll them on Him, do not attempt to carry them ourselves.

ASKING FOR ORPHANS

And I give here an illustration which some may not have heard out of my mouth. When, sixty-two years ago, God particularly laid on my heart to care about destitute orphans, the first thing was to seek to ascertain the mind of God whether I should be engaged in this work, and after a great deal of prayer I came to the decision that it was the will of God. I tried my motives, and invariably came to the decision, “It is for the glory of God I seek to be engaged in this.” Then I began to pray with regard to the various matters in which I needed the help of God. I asked God for money. For a house, for helpers to take care of the children, and He gave me all these. And about all the various articles of furniture I asked God to guide and direct me, and did not think myself clever enough or wise enough to get them. Now all was ready for the orphans, and I fixed two hours when I would be in the vestry to receive applications for orphans. I sat there two hours, and not one came, so I left the vestry and walked home, and on the way I had brought to my mind this very verse, “*In everything,*” and I said to myself, “You have asked for money – you have obtained it; you have asked for helpers – you have obtained them; you have asked for a suitable house – you have obtained it; and while you were furnishing it you asked God, step by step, about everything, that He would guide and direct; but you never asked God for *orphans*.” This was not

wilfully and intentionally left out, but it never came to my mind to ask for *orphans*. I said to myself, “There are tens of thousands of destitute orphans; there will be no difficulty in getting them,” and therefore I never prayed about it. Now I saw how sinfully I had acted about this matter, and when I came home I locked the door of my room and cast myself flat on the floor, confessing my sin, how I had not regarded the Word of God in this particular; and I lay on the floor two or three hours in confession and humiliation of myself before God. At last, after I had once more examined my heart, I came to this “It is for Thy glory, Lord, that I have begun this, and if Thou wouldst be more glorified by bringing the whole to nought, and putting me to shame before my fellow-men and fellow-believers, bring it to nought if Thou canst be more Glorified; but if it would be for Thy glory, be pleased to forgive me, and send me orphans.” And I rose cheerfully from the floor, on which I had been lying in prayer and supplication. Next morning at eleven the first orphan was applied for; before a month was over forty-two came, and since more than twelve thousand – a plain proof that there were plenty of orphans to be had.

I have given the details of this to show what we have to understand by “in everything,” bringing our matters before God, and never attempting to carry our own burdens. And I cannot tell you what a blessing this had been to me – to roll every one of my burdens on God, and never to attempt to carry them myself. I had done this before, but this little circumstance taught me the lesson so perfectly that I have never lost sight of it since.

“*By prayer and supplication*” (verse 6). Ordinary prayer, and oft-repeated prayer, is not enough; we must ask in the way that a beggar asks for alms, and pursues us, sometimes fifty yards, and will not let us go till he gets something given to him. In a way something like this we have to bring our matters before God in order to have the blessing.

And notice, further, this is to be done “with thanksgiving.” So to speak, we have to lay a good foundation with praise and thanksgiving, and then build on this prayer and supplication, for, whatever our position in life, however great, and varied, and manifold our trials and afflictions may be,

THERE IS ABUNDANT REASON FOR THANKSGIVING.

Why? Because our heavenly Father remains to us. Whatever is wanting, He is not taken from us; He remains to us, and our precious Lord Jesus, our heavenly Friend, remains to us, however our own friends might forsake us; however heavy, great, and varied our trials and difficulties, He remains to us, and the Holy Spirit is given to us and remains to us; our bodies are still a “temple of the Holy Ghost,” and the Word of God remains to us. Therefore we have still abundant cause for praise and thanks giving, and we should not lose sight of these blessings that remain. And what would be the result? We should be calmed, quieted down; we should say, “I shall yet be happy; my heavenly Father will not forsake me, but will help me and keep me while yet in the body near Himself.”

And, as is stated here, the result of all this will be –

“*The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*” (verse 7)

“The peace of God!” – that calm, quiet, trustful state of heart which is called “the peace of God,” and which is so blessed that the greatest orator could not describe what it is except he knew it, the greatest poet in the world could not represent to us in poetry unless he knew it by experience, and the greatest painter could not represent on canvas what this peace of God is unless he knew it by happy experience. But it is to be known by every believer by the grace of God, and by the grace of God I have habitually enjoyed it for sixty years, and therefore because I know it is to be had while yet in the body, I affectionately beseech and entreat beloved brethren and sisters in Christ to aim at it, and it is to be obtained in the way that is stated before.

Then this is the precious winding-up of the matter, the fruit of all: “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” The word “keep” in the original is applied literally to military power, as if by military power we are kept; and then this spiritualised means that we should be kept in Christ Jesus, our minds and our hearts happy in Christ Jesus. That is just what real, true believers especially desire, that under no circumstances they may fall or dishonour God, but that they may be kept from

falling. Now, we shall not fall as long as our hearts and minds are kept *in* Christ Jesus (it is “through” in our version, but “in” in the original), and this as by military power. Just as a garrison is sent forth to keep a fortress against the power of the enemy, so in like manner, by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the peace of God that we get by attending to this exhortation, shall we be kept in Christ Jesus.

Now, is not all this most precious? And shall we not endeavour to obtain it through attending to this exhortation? Oh, it is worth while to attend to it!

If you will allow me again to refer to my own experience, I could tell you what

A PEACEFUL, HAPPY MAN I HAVE BEEN THESE SEVENTY YEARS,

And every one of my beloved brethren and sisters in Christ who have not yet habitual peace may have it too, therefore I comment so continually on this. This peace of God “which passeth all understanding” may be enjoyed not merely now and then, but month after month, year after year, and for many a long year, even as I have had it now for above seventy years. And let my beloved brethren and sisters in Christ who have not had it as an habitual gift and blessing from God, see for it and they can have it. I have not the least doubt that there are very many in our midst who like myself enjoy this peace of God, but it should not be merely a few, but everyone.

God grant that this may be the result of our mediation.

The word "Mullers" is written in a large, black, cursive script. The letters are thick and fluid, with a prominent 'M' and a long, sweeping tail on the 's'.

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