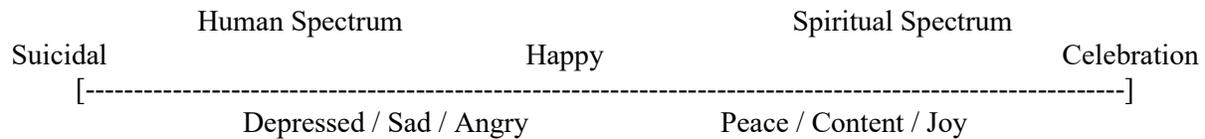


JOY - CONTENTMENT

Human experience can be viewed using the Misery – Happiness spectrum.



At any point in life, people’s emotional status is somewhere along this gauge.

- a. We all are born with an emptiness in our core that produces a hunger for love, intimacy, security, connection from others. Jn 7:37-39
- b. God designed us to need Him primarily to fill our hearts and to need other people to a lesser degree.
- c. There is an Unconditional Happiness (+H) that comes from the spiritual life of a mature believer based on receiving love from God & growing in that love for God.
- d. There is a conditional, Human Happiness (HH) that humans enjoy regardless of their spiritual status, generally based on circumstances.
- e. (HH) is generally based on our relationships, circumstances & situations.
 - Marriage, success, wealth, health, freedom
- f. (HH) based on an immediate, conditional situations are always temporary, causing the feeling of (HH) to go up and down -
- g. (HH) based on the virtues of compassion, giving, integrity, honor, stability produces a more stable, state of wellbeing compared to the fleeting feelings of pleasure.
- h. (+H) (Unconditional Happiness) is available to believers only & joy to growing believers
- i. Spiritually Advancing Believers (SAB) can pursue (HH), but always in a subordinate manner to the Will of God and spiritual (+H).
- j. (HH) is temporary, based on desirable circumstances; (+H) from God is an enduring state of security, confidence contentment & peacefulness.

Sharing the Happiness of God (+H)

- 1. In eternity past all 3 members of the Godhead enjoyed perfect relationships with each other and perfect (+H) within & among themselves.**
 - a. God is complete within Himself, needing nothing, overflowing with goodness, love, and joy – result of His inner perfections
 - b. God knows that what He is doing will turn out exactly how He wants it to be
 - c. The relationships enjoyed by the three members of the Trinity demonstrate for us the perfect model for unconditional relating.
- 2. In eternity past, in the Divine Decrees, God decided to make His (+H) available to those who would learn how to access it.**
 - a. His (+H) comes from His thinking & perspective about life.
 - b. We share His (+H) when we are freed from our human views, adopting His thinking about life.
Mat 2:10 – rejoiced when they saw Messiah’s star – knew what the star meant.

3. God only shares His (+H) with those who are part of His family.

- a. (+H) is only for believers, indwelt by God the Holy Spirit (GHS) & able to access the truth
- b. Unbelievers don't have any kind of relationship with God

4. God shares His (+H) with believers who mature in His grace, learn to use their Divine Assets in Christ to remove their ungodly or non-godly views of life & embrace the mind-set of Jesus in His humanity.

- a. God, who is far out ahead of us, has made divine provision for us to change
- b. Grace is accessed by faith, believing the promises & principles in the word
- c. When we understand that He has caused our future of every believer to be as good as possible

5. Bel's unhappiness is caused by continuing to be dominated by the Old Man (OM) belief system that bases happiness on circumstances.

- a. (OM) beliefs are built around seeking (HH) based on better situations.
- b. When happiness is based on increasing (HH), your sense of wellbeing will go up and down with whatever you consider positive events.
- c. Only by rejecting this way of thinking and removing these ideas from your soul will you have room for New Man (NM) beliefs to take their place.
- d. Only the beliefs used by Jesus in His earthly life will allow us to develop His way of thinking and therefore His happiness.

6. God's (+H) is experienced on a spectrum: contentment, joy & rejoicing.

- a. Contentment is the idea of having enough – satisfied to have all you need
- b. Joy is a feeling of inner happiness & gladness based on a mature realization of the spiritual truths in God's grace plan.
- c. Rejoicing is a momentary feeling of extreme happiness that celebration

Agalliao – rejoice (1 Peter 1:8) and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory; (Mat 2:10)

7. God uses our desire for His (+H) to drive us to maturity, to cleanse our hearts from OM beliefs but the desire for (+H) is not the ultimate motivation in the Christian life.

- a. God designed the human soul to be motivated by needs that feel like desire
- b. We were made to experience joy, therefore the hunger & pursuit of it.
- c. As we grow, our desire for (+H) changes to love for Him, making (+H) a by-product rather than a primary purpose
- d. As you mature, your joy slowly grows, especially as you lay aside the griefs & pains that you have stored in your heart.
- e. You realize that the joy you seek is slowly growing in you as you grow spiritually and that seeking it is not necessary, perhaps counterproductive.

Contentment

1. Definition: arkeo – to have enough, sufficient, satisfied, content

- a. **Enough:**
 - (Mt 25:9) Wise virgins had enough oil for their lamps
 - (Jn 6:7 16) Denarius would be needed to buy for the crowd
 - (2 Cor 9:8) God always provides enough for us to do His will
- b. **Sufficient:** (2 Cor 12:9) My grace is sufficient for you – same idea as enough

- c. **Satisfied:** (Lk 3:14) Be satisfied with your pay
- d. **Content:** (Heb 13:5) Live free from the love of money, being content with what you have
 - The idea is that God provides enough for every day and as we acknowledge His provision, we can view it as enough.
 - To be pleased, satisfied with what God provides and allows, realizing that what He gives is sufficient

2. Contentment is related to God's Will, provision, and our circumstances.

(2 Cor 9:8) And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.

- Regardless of our situation, He will give us what we need to do His will

(Hebrews 13:5) Let your soul be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"

- Love of money – greed is a root of all kinds of evils – opposite of content
- Believe that if you have enough for today, that you have enough
- Basis – we have Christ and His incredible promise to never abandon us

(2 Cor 12:7-9) And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me -- to keep me from exalting myself! ⁸ Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

- Demon induced illness to keep him humble – providential preventative suffering
- Paul prays to change his circumstances, relieve his pain
- God had previously said – my grace provision is exactly what you need to endure your adversities, use them for growth & to glorify God.
- My power is completed in your weakness - Paul rejoices in this process.
 - a. God's power (dunamis Col 1:11) is the power indwelling Paul, enabling him to grow spiritually, to lay aside his earthly attachments & fully embrace the Lord.
- Spiritual growth & the surrendered life of the super mature believer is the "greater things" that Jesus said the Church Age believer would do.
 - b. God's Plan is to allow adversity in bel's life, giving an opportunity to trust His promises that He always honors, building our trust & revealing His faithfulness
 - c. God's desire was for Paul to use his grace assets to endure the thorn, trust Him for the capacity to have joy despite it, rather than use prayer to remove it.
 - d. When Paul removed the belief that he must be pain free to be effective for the Lord or happy in this life, he was able to embrace a mental image of God's power enabling him to be joyful through the pain.
 - e. He was given a new level of appreciation for the depths he had to endure to gain the heights of the spiritual life. **(Acts 9:16)** for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."
 - f. Not only was God's provision sufficient, Paul came to see it as sufficient, realizing that what God had already given him was enough.

3. **The secret of living the contented life must be learned by walking with the Lord, realizing that what He has given us in the moment is exactly what we need to live victorious in that moment.**

(Phil. 4:10) But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³ I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Vs 10 The Philippian church had been able to send him a gift to support his work
Vs 11 Learned (**manthano**) [learn as a disciple – living & walking with the teacher]

- Watching God’s provision for every contingency of his storied ministry had taught him that what God has already given you now is all you need for that moment.
- When we need more than we have, God will send it or has already sent it.
Vs 11 – regardless of circumstances – humble means – prosperity, filled – hungry,
Vs 11 – learned the secret – **mueo** - initiated into one of the Mystery Religions
- God has always provided for the needs of His divine agencies in every period of history.
- The Mystery Doctrines are specifically connected to God’s grace system for the Church Age.

The Secret:

- a. The secret to contented living cannot be learned in the classroom alone.
- b. Learned – **manthano** – **mathetes** – learn as a disciple, by living & walking with the Master, learning His ways and how His promises work in real life.
- c. The overriding principle of God’s Plan for the Church Age Believer is taught in (Rom 8:28) – God is working everything for divine good.
- d. Therefore, we learn through the word & through the personal experiences of walking with God that whatever He allows in the bel’s life is intentional and is part of the divine purpose – (James 1:2-4) Count it all joy. (Rom 5:3-5) Rejoice
- e. The secret is that when God allows us to be in humble means, it is for His purposes and when He allows us to enjoy earthly prosperity it is for His purposes. He is in control of our circumstances & (+H) [See Intro] is not dependent on them
- f. The secret is that (+H) is based on a surrendered love relationship with Him, knowing that He is in charge of our circumstances, gratefully playing the part He allows us to play in the drama of the Angelic Conflict
- g. We begin with discontent because initially our human logic tells us to believe that happiness is based on some form of earthly prosperity.
- h. Spiritual knowledge of Church Age doctrine learned and then applied enables us to lay aside false ideas of (+H) based on circumstances, freeing us from being dependent on prosperity to be happy.
- i. Only those who are free from their worldly ideas about (+H) are able to remain stable if / when all earthly blessings are removed.
- j. The secret: systematically remove every belief that tells you that (+H) is based on any earthly blessing & replace them with (+H) based on God’s love for you.