

Happiness Is Giving Up Everything

I have discovered over the years that people almost always seek God at the point they are experiencing great pain at the deepest level. People might seek God on other occasions but most people do not get serious until they are in pain and only then when they are unhappy. Maybe they lost a job, maybe it's a financial crisis, maybe it's a crisis with a husband or a wife, maybe it's a loss of a dear friend, maybe a close friend, maybe they've been abandoned, maybe divorce has occurred in the home or maybe there is rejection from a child or from a parent or maybe there is a medical crisis. I don't know what crisis would seriously impact you. I'm only giving examples but on goes the list of crises that motivate people to eventually seek God.

SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS. Sometimes Christians are so comfortable with the idea that they are forgiven and going to heaven that they give little thought to their behavior until faced with a serious trial. Most people do not get serious about seeking God until they are unhappy. At the moment of crisis or soon afterwards they start seeking and what they seek is happiness. That's an interesting idea. We become unhappy so we start looking for happiness. We want to fill that unhappiness void. We want to fill that part of our being that is unhappy. We want to eliminate that hurt. What we want is, we want to be happy. So, that is what we look for.

We pursue happiness and we find it in food, drink or some relationship. Some find it in sex and on goes the list of things that people seek to fill the unhappiness void. On some occasions, we try to influence others to meet our needs. It's amazing what we do to make ourselves happy. People of Jesus' day weren't any different than we are today or put another way the people of Jesus' day are just like us today. Human nature has not changed. If we look at the gospels we

will see ourselves in the gospels.

In Mark 1, for example we discover that Jesus is in a synagogue and has just healed a demon-possessed man. Those in the synagogue saw the miracle and the people were stunned at the miracle. The demon-possessed man was freed of a demon and we are told in the passage that the people were impressed with Jesus' teaching. In verse 22 we're told that they were amazed at his teaching for he was teaching them as one having authority and not as the scribes. In verse 27 the idea is repeated and we are told that,



They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." Mark 1:27 (NASB)

The people were stunned at what they were seeing and experiencing. So what happened? Verse 28 says,

Immediately the news about Him spread everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee. Mark 1:28 (NASB)

News about Jesus just went everywhere. Subsequently, the gospel records that massive crowds came to Christ.

TWO DISCIPLES SEEK JESUS. In Matthew 4:24 we're told,

The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan. Matthew 4:24-25 (NASB)

People were coming from everywhere to find Jesus. Why were they doing that? I'll tell you, they didn't come just because He was passing out candy canes. In Matthew 8:1 we're told Jesus went down from a mountain and large crowds followed Him.

If you go to Matthew 19:2 you'd find out that everywhere Jesus went crowds recognized Him. On occasions when He tried to rest people would not leave Him alone. People were looking and searching for Him. In fact, the gospels tell us that the crowds were coming for healing and the teaching. People came to have the dead raised. On one occasion we are told that one woman reached out and touched Jesus to steal a Healing. That's why she came. On another occasion we're told that a woman was willing to be called a dog in order to have her daughter healed. On five different occasions at least people begged for Mercy. They begged and begged for mercy. People wanted to see a sign. They wanted to see a wonder. They wanted to get healed. The massive crowds did not come unless there was something in it for them. The massive crowds did not come unless they wanted something.

The only reason they came from long distances to Jesus is that they want something. Right? That's why you come and all of us share that one thing in common. We have needs just like they did. We could put it another way. They had needs just like we do. We want those needs to be filled too. Why do you think that when Jesus was talking to Nicodemus He told Nicodemus that God loved him? God gave His unique Son so that whoever is believing in Him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). It is interesting that Jesus was

talking to Nicodemus who was a leader in Israel. Jesus tells this adult man, this leader of Israel, that God loves him. Why do you think Jesus told this leader that God loved him? The answer is because he needed to know that. I think Jesus told Nicodemus that God loved him because Nicodemus had a need to know that God loved him.

Can I ask you, do you have a need to know if God loves you? One of my favorite songs is "Jesus Loves Me This I Know For The Bible Tells Me So." I like to sing it as an adult. Do you know why? Because even adults need to know that God loves them. That's what Jesus did for Nicodemus. He told Nicodemus, "Jesus loves you for the Bible says so." Or, how about John 7:37-38 where we are told that Jesus on the last day of the great feast stood and He cried out saying, "If anyone is thirsty" (John 7:37). What does that imply? Jesus knew they had a need. I have a need! You have a need and you want your need to be filled. He went on and said,

... let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, "From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water." John 7:37-38 (NASB)

Now I'll tell you if Jesus promises you that you're going to get rivers of living water flowing from your inside out, what does that sound like if you're thirsty? It sounds good. It sounds great! Jesus was talking about the fact that we all have a need. If you are truly honest with yourself, you have a need inside that's not filled, even if you are a Christian. Deep inside there is still something that you want and need. In John 14:11 Jesus is talking to His disciples. He's talking to the twelve apostles, the twelve disciples, in the upper room. It is the last day before He's going to die on the cross. You know what He tells them, He says,

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. John 14:27 (NASB)

Why did Jesus tell them that He's going to give them peace? The answer is they had a need. How about this one?

These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. John 15:11 (NASB)

Why did Jesus say that? Because the disciples wanted joy and we want joy. Jesus offered it to His disciples, to the twelve men that He's about ready to leave. That's why He said that. It's incredible to us that Jesus knows our deepest need.

DISCIPLES COME SEEKING. I want to take you on an interesting journey. I want you to see the lives of four apostles, four disciples. I want to start the journey by going to John 1:35. In John 1:35 you're going to find that John the Baptist is with two of his disciples. Verse 35 says this,

Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples . . . John 1:35 (NASB)

You'll discover shortly that one of the disciples is Andrew. The other one happens to be the apostle John. In the gospel of John, John never refers to himself. Therefore, we conclude that John is the other disciple. There are two disciples one is John and one is Andrew. In verse 36, John the Baptist said,

"Behold the Lamb of God." John 1:36 (NASB)

The Greek text is rather helpful at this point. Because the impression that we are left with is that John the Baptist sees Jesus at a distance and Jesus is walking towards them. John the Baptist apparently points to Christ for his two disciples and says "Behold the Lamb of God. That is who is coming."

In verse 37, we are told that the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Christ. Apparently, as Jesus walks by John the Baptist, the two disciples follow Christ. Verse 38 says,

And Jesus turned and saw them following, and *said to them, "What do you seek?" John 1:38 (NASB)

The idea is that Jesus actually pivoted about and He looked right at them. He asked this incredible question, "What do you seek?" Now I think Jesus knew exactly what they were looking for. But I want you to notice the word seek. Don't

miss the word seek. They were seeking something. They were looking for something, and they said to Him,

". . . Rabbi where are you staying." John 1:38 (NASB)

Translated we want to spend some time with You.

In verse 39 He said to them,

"Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. John 1:39-40 (NASB)

What happened? Jesus invites them. They spend the day with Him. You know what they discovered? They discovered that Jesus is the Messiah. They discovered that He was the Christ. Verse 41 says,

He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. John 1:40-41 (NASB)

He brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter)." John 1:42 (NASB)

Jesus changes his name.

In verse 43 we are told,

The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." John 1:43-45 (NASB)

In other words the message was, we found the Messiah! Nathaniel said to Him,

"any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him,
"Come and see." John 1:46 (NASB)

We are told that Nathaniel went and saw Jesus -- saw him from far away. Verse 50 says,

Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these." John 1:50 (NASB)

What we find out in these few verses is that two men find out that Jesus is the Messiah. They are so eager. They are so excited about what they have found that Andrew runs off, and finds his brother Peter. He tells him that he found the Messiah. Then we find out that Jesus finds Philip, and Philip is so excited that he gets Nathaniel. Very quickly there are five disciples. Incredible! Just an incredible set of events -- so quick, so fast.

Do you know why that happened? They were looking for something. They were looking for the Messiah. They had a need. They were seeking, and looking. They wanted something, and they found Jesus. They were excited. They found the Messiah. They found the Christ (John 1:41; 4:25).

JESUS AT THE WEDDING AT CANA. The gospel of John records the life of Christ in chronological order. It is not like Matthew which skips all over the place and orders the events of Christ's life topically. Here in John we find out that Jesus and then went to a city called Cana of Galilee. In Cana of Galilee there was a wedding. At the wedding, the people ran out of wine and Jesus' mother encourages Him to turn water into wine. But what is amazing, if you look at verse 11, is that this the beginning of signs that Jesus performed. In other words, when Jesus turned water into wine, it was the first miracle He did that is recorded in the gospels. It is the first miracle Jesus performed. Now look at the rest of the verse. It says,

... Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. John 2:12 (NASB)

What we discover in verse 11 and it is repeated in verse 12,

is that the disciples are with Him. You know what these men did? Do you know what John, Andrew, Peter, Philip and Nathaniel did? They followed Jesus after they found Him. That's what He had commanded them to do in verse John 1:43. We are told that Jesus said to them, "Follow me" and they did that. They're doing a great job. They are being faithful. They are following Christ. They are doing exactly what Jesus asked them to do.

JESUS WITH WOMAN AT THE WELL. The next thing we are told in John 4 is that Jesus and His disciples go to region called Samaria, and why? Because He wanted to find a woman at a well. He wanted to introduce her to Himself, to the Messiah. She ends up asking about the Messiah and Jesus offers her water. What's amazing about the passage is not that the woman and Jesus are there. Notice what is amazing. In verse 27 of chapter 4 it says,

At this point His disciples came and they were amazed that He was speaking with a woman. John 4:27

Now I am not interested that you see they were amazed that Jesus is talking to the woman. I want you to notice that the disciples are there with him.

The disciples are with him. Again, in verse 33 we are told,

So the disciples were saying to one another.

The point is the disciples are there. The disciples find Jesus. They go with Him to Cana of Galilee. Then they go down to Jerusalem which we didn't talk about in chapter 2. Then they end up going with Him up to Samaria where Jesus finds this woman at a well. Now we find something interesting. If you look at the chronological events of the different gospels we can figure out exactly what Jesus did next in the chronological sequence. I want to make a point again that each of the gospels do not necessarily give you the next chronological event. But if you take all the gospels together, and compare them, we can figure out exactly what happened next. The next thing that follows is that Jesus goes to Nazareth.

JESUS & DISCIPLES SEPARATE. Jesus leaves Samaria and goes up to Nazareth. Then what did the disciples do? They

did not follow Him. You know what the disciples did? They went to Capernaum. Why did they do that? They just found the Messiah. They just found the Christ. They followed him faithfully. They went to Cana of Galilee, then they went down to Jerusalem and then they went to Samaria. Now they go to Capernaum, but why aren't they following Christ? They didn't. It will become obvious that they didn't. Now go to Matthew 4:18. We will find that Jesus comes looking for them.

JESUS CALLS FOUR DISCIPLES TO FOLLOW. Jesus eventually makes a trip to Capernaum and while He is in Capernaum, He walks on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. We are told in Matthew 4:18 that He saw two brothers.

[Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Matthew 4:18](#)

It is not too hard to figure out what's going on here. Jesus comes walking along the shore. He finds Peter. He finds Andrew, and we are told that they are casting nets. I want you to notice what they are doing. Because in a few minutes we are going to be looking at another account that would appear to be a duplicate of this one but it is not the same event. I will want you to notice, that they are not the same events.

I will want you to notice is that this is not a duplicate of our next passage. I want you to notice that here they are casting a net. In verse 19 we are told,

[And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Matthew 4:19-20](#)

I love this account. Jesus comes to these men and He says, "Follow me." Actually, the literal Greek text means, "come get behind me." "Follow" is not the normal Greek word for follow. There are actually two different Greek words that can be translated as "follow" and this one actually means to come, get behind Me. That is, they were to walk behind in His footsteps. Immediately they left their nets, and they followed Him. Do you know what's interesting about this

passage? What is interesting is how these men reacted to Jesus. Jesus comes to them. Then He says, "Do you want a ministry? Do you want to be able to help men and women come to know Me - Christ? Do you really want a spiritual ministry? Do you want to be able to do something for God? It is as if Jesus said, "Do you want to serve in the church" and immediately we are told that they followed Him. They followed Him! They wanted a ministry. They wanted to be fishers of man. That's why they followed Him. They wanted to be fishers of men. I have a question! Why do some people get involved in service in a church? Why do some people become elders? Why do some people become deacons or deaconesses? Why do some people get involved in a teaching ministry or a serving ministry or whatever the ministry might be? The answer is, they have a need and these disciples had a need. There was some need these disciples had, and doing a ministry meet that need. You might say for yourself, "Well, is there another reason why they would want to do this?" Let's keep reading. Verse 21,

[Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. Matthew 4:21](#)

That is, Peter, Andrew, James and John followed Him. What did these men want to do? These men want to catch men. They want to be fishers of men.

Now at this point someone's probably going to say, "Are you sure that they did not just want to serve Jesus in whatever way that Jesus wanted them to serve?" Then let me ask a question and answer the question. Why is it that after Jesus leaves for a ministry tour around Canaan to preach the gospel, that these four men go back to their boats and do not follow Him? Why did they do this if they wanted to serve Jesus? Jesus just told them to "follow Me" in verse 19 and in verse 21 He told them to do the same thing again. We are told that He called them to follow. So question, if they wanted to serve Jesus, why didn't they stay with Jesus? Why did they start with Him and then go back to their boats?

Why did they do that?

I'm going to tell you why they did that. They did that because that's what other Christians do today too! We believe in Jesus. We start to follow Jesus and then for some reason all of a sudden Jesus is not that important to us and our boats are more important. All the fish, all the nets and all the stuff is what is more important to them. Their desire to serve Jesus is not about Jesus but about a need deep within.

THIRD CALL TO FOLLOW. Now go to Luke 5. In Luke 5:1 it would appear that this is the same set of events we just experienced in Matthew 4:18-22. But if we compare the details of this event with the one in Matthew 4 you will find that they are different events. They are not the same events. This time, Jesus comes back to them. For some reason they left Jesus. They went back to their boats and Jesus has to come find them again. How that occurred we are never told but that's what happened. Luke 5:1,

Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret . . . Luke 5:1

Gennesaret is another name for the Sea of Galilee. Here we discover that Jesus is walking on the shore and the crowds are pressed around him. The Greek text has the idea that they're actually squeezing against him. They were so eager to be with Him and to hear what He was teaching. He was teaching the word of God. Now this event is not about healing. This is not about signs. This is not about wonders that they're looking for. They are hungry for the Word of God to hear Jesus. Verse two,

. . . and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. Luke 5:2

We are told that Jesus sees two boats. The fishermen have gotten out of the boats and what are we told this time? We're told that they're washing their nets.

Remember what we were told they were doing in Matthew 4? What were they doing? They were casting and

mending. Now they are not casting and mending. They are washing their nets. This event is different. This is a different event. Verse 3,

And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the people from the boat. Luke 5:2

Now at first you might say, "Why did He get in the boat and move out?" Well, if He could get away from the sea shore, then He could speak to all people along the sea shore. They would be able to see Him and hear Him speak. In Jesus' day the rabbis would actually sit when they taught and so Jesus sits to teach.

Jesus is sitting to teach with the boat out from the shore so that everyone can hear Him. Verse four,

When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Luke 5:4

Now it is important to see what's going on here. Jesus has just finished teaching and the He says, Okay Peter I want you to do something, I want you to go out where the water is deep and I want you to let down your nets. Peter lets down the nets and in verse 5,

"Simon answered and said, 'Master, we worked hard all night . . .'" Luke 5:5a

I didn't read that right. The Greek word for "worked" has the idea of very painful work. Peter is saying that we worked and we worked hard all night and got nothing. We caught absolutely nothing. Then Peter says,

. . . but I will do as You say and let down the nets. Luke 5:5b

Now I can't help but wonder, what was Peter thinking? Jesus was only a carpenter, Peter was actually the professional, wasn't he? You will find out in a minute that they actually were running a business, a fishing business. Peter had been doing this for a living, Peter was no dummy. Peter was not

stupid, Peter was not inexperienced, Peter knew the fishing business. That's why it was called a business. He had been fishing all night and was trying to catch something. How much did they catch? Nothing! Nothing! We can just imagine what Peter was thinking. I am the professional. Jesus - You are a carpenter. You do not know anything about the fishing business. You don't even have a business dealing with fishing. What did Peter do? Peter calls him Master.

Now at first you might think that " Master" is a great word. Well, actually " Master" just means somebody of a higher rank than Peter. That's all he said. He said, "Okay, we'll do what you want." I can just imagine what Peter was thinking to himself, "This is really stupid Jesus. But okay, okay, I'll go do what You want. It that is what you want me to do, then I will do it. But this is really dumb! Now verse 6,

[When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break . . . Luke 5:6](#)

Their nets began to break. What does that imply? There were so many fish that the nets could not hold all the fish. Verse 7 says,

[. . . so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink. Luke 5:7](#)

What happened? Not only were there so many fish in the net that the net began to break but now the boats are beginning to sink. Unbelievable! What do you think Peter's thinking? The answer appears in verse 8,

[But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!" Luke 5:8](#)

The word for "Lord" in this verse is different than the Greek word for "Master" in verse five. This time Peter uses the word *kurios* which is the normal word for "Lord." This reveals that now Peter has a different attitude. When Peter saw this miracle he fell down at Jesus' feet saying, "Go away from me Lord."

One would have thought that Peter would have said, "Hey Jesus, look at all these fish. This is the greatest catch I have ever caught in my whole life." You would think that Peter would have been absolutely thrilled with what had happened. But the first thing he said was, "Go away from me Lord." Why? He says, "I'm a sinful man." What an incredible response. Peter in his professional expertise realized that this wasn't a fake miracle. Peter understood what Jesus had just done, was a real miracle and only God could have performed it. That's what he realized. Verse 9,

[For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken . . . Luke 5:9](#)

There were so, so many fish and this was so incredible. The four disciples could not believe what had happened. Verse 10,

[. . . and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men." Luke 5:10](#)

I want you to notice something very important now. What did Jesus just tell them? Do remember in Matthew 4 that Jesus said, "If you'll follow Me, I will make you fishers of men?" That's not what Jesus says this time. Did you catch it? Jesus doesn't say, "Hey, if you follow Me, you will be fishers of men." What does He say this time? He says, "From now on you will be catching men." Something has changed. It is important to notice that something changed. It is not that you will become fishers of men. Now Jesus says, "You are fishers of men."

THEY LEFT EVERYTHING. A change has occurred. You say, "What change?" Verse 11,

[When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him. Luke 5:11](#)

What did they do? They left everything. The change was that they were now willing to leave everything. Someone will say, "Oh they only left all their fishing stuff, that's what they

left.” No, no, check out Matthew 19: 27. There we are told,

Then Peter said to Him, “Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?” Matthew 19: 27

Now Peter did not say this at the time of the encounter at the Sea of Galilee. He said it later. He responded with, ”Jesus, we left everything for you.”

Do you know what the disciples did? Finally, they left everything. Because they were willing to leave everything for Christ, Christ says that they were ready to be fishers of men. That’s what Jesus wanted all along. Jesus called them to follow Him, and He called them and called them. At first they just believed, and followed. They were willing to follow Him for only a little bit and returned to Capernaum. Jesus had to find them again. Jesus found them on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Then He went someplace else to minister but they did not follow. He had to come back to them. Jesus wanted them to follow but they didn’t. What Jesus was looking for and waiting for was a moment in their life when they were willing to leave everything for Him.

Can I put it this way? Finally, they were no longer preoccupied with themselves. The ministry was no longer about what they could get and do. The ministry was no longer about them or some prestige. The ministry was no longer about them becoming fishers of men. The ministry was about Jesus. Edmond T Walton in his book called *Motives* he writes,

Idols are the way we try to satisfy our heart desires.¹

May I ask you, “What is your heart’s desire?” What motives you? You know that there are some Christians who want to hang on to all the stuff in their lives and then they wonder why they are unhappy. Now, I want to make a point. Happiness is giving up everything – and I left two words out of the title of this study. The two words are “for Jesus.” Happiness is giving up everything for Christ. That’s the real title. Happiness is giving up everything in your life for Christ. When you do that you will find true happiness. You see, we come

to Jesus initially. We come seeking something. We want to be forgiven and to go heaven. We started to follow and then we stopped. Jesus knew that you did that. Then we are not very happy, and we will not be happy until we are willing to give up everything for Him.

I would suggest that if you are unhappy, there is something missing in your life. If there is some big hole or some big void, I would like to suggest that the reason you are that way is that you are looking for the wrong thing in life. You are looking to remove that unhappiness. You’re looking to remove that void. Maybe people make you unhappy. Maybe it’s an illness that is making you unhappy. I don’t know what you are seeking but you can figure it out. The Holy Spirit will reveal to your heart what you are seeking. But the only way that you going to find real, true happiness is absolute, unconditional commitment to Christ and to do whatever He wants you to do in life and nothing less.

CONCLUSION. Jesus said He came to give us peace, and give us joy and that’s not hollow. Those words are not hollow. In the gospels it is interesting that Jesus called His disciples to give up everything. Did you notice that? In Luke 14:33 for example, we are told,

So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. Luke 14:33

I wanted to show you this verse just in case you thought I was just pulling something out of the air. I want you to notice that in the gospels Jesus communicates the same message again and again. He says it in different ways.

Do you know what Jesus wants you to do? He wants you to give up everything for Him. For who? For Him! Now how about Mathew 5:6? It’s interesting what He says here. He says,

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied. Matthew 5:6

Do you know what we do, when we are unhappy or are not satisfied. We pursue happiness. We pursue satisfaction. We pursue happiness, and we want to fill that void in our life.

1. Edmond T Walton. *Motives*. R&R Publishing, p. 14.

Jesus tells us that is the wrong way to become happy. We do become happy by pursuing happiness or the pleasures of this world. Happiness comes when we hunger and thirst to be righteous, and who is righteous? Jesus! If you pursue to be like Him, happiness comes for free. Happiness is a side benefit, but that's not what we do.

Some years ago I ended up in a hospital in Glendale, California. I had a blood clot in my right armpit and it extended through the subclavian vein about third of the way across my chest. It was an elongated blood clot in the subclavian vein. The way I discovered it, is I was working on the foundation of my house with a hammer and chisel and I was trying to put on a flashing wall. I was working on Thanksgiving Day, before we had our dinner. I was chiseling away and all of a sudden I noticed my arm was flush red and enlarged a little bit. I thought, "This is a problem. I wonder what's going on?" So I quit and I went into the house. We called our doctor and we told him what was going on. He said, "Oh you are probably okay. You are probably working too hard." So, I quit for the day and the next day I went back out to work again. All of a sudden, Boom! My arm inflated quick. I was greatly surprised. It was very red this time.

We called the hospital and they said, "Get in here now." I went to the hospital and they ran some tests and said, "Welcome to the hospital. You are staying for the night." The next day they ran another test and they informed me that I had a blood clot in my armpit. I remember that night they gave me my meal, and a sedative. Almost right away I went to sleep. They put me to sleep.

They apparently wanted me to be still, in bed and not doing anything. So they made sure that's what happened to me. About ten o'clock at night I was awakened by a doctor. Throughout the day I had different doctors come to my room and ask me different questions. They discussed some possibilities as to how they might get rid of this blood clot in my subclavian vein. Finally, a doctor came to recommend a solution. He woke me up! I remember I was groggy because they had sedated me and I was very sleepy. He told me that they had already ruled out surgery and all of the other normal options. There was only one thing that was left. They recommended an experimental drug. They wanted me to give

my permission so that they could give me the experimental drug. Before he asked me to sign the release form, he told me all the ways I could die and the likelihood of death was very high. He added that there was no other hope for me. There was no other option. I asked, "Well, what would happen if I don't sign?" He says, "You won't live." I said, "Okay. I'll sign." My wife wasn't there. I wasn't sure what I was doing. I just knew he told me I had to do it, and so I signed the release form. At midnight that night, two hours later, the nurse came in and gave me an IV drip for the drug. I call it "Liquid Drano." The drug went through my vein eating the clot away. They told me that I could have a heart attack, a problem in my lungs, or whatever.

All I know is that a couple of days later, I was being wheeled down the hall - flying down the hall. Nurses on one side and some nurses in the front and back of the bed. They wheeled me to an elevator. We went up the elevator and into a room to tested for a potential blood clot in my lungs. They thought I was in deep trouble.

Eventually I got out of the hospital, and I visited the two doctors that had tracked me the whole time in the hospital. I'll never forget the first doctor. When I saw him he said, "You shouldn't be here." He says that I should thank God that I am alive.

I went to the next doctor, and he said almost the same words. I will never forget his words. He said, "You know, you shouldn't be here." I began to realize at that point how serious it was. I know I shouldn't be here. But I'm here by God's grace. God wants me to be here. He was and is not through with me!

While I was in that hospital, I remember telling God that if I got out of the hospital there was only one thing I wanted to do in my life. I wanted to serve Him. I didn't care what it was, I told God I was going to give up everything for Him.

That's what Peter did. It's what the disciples did. They gave up everything for Christ. It's at that point that I found joy in my life as a Christian - a whole different perspective. Do you remember that Paul said, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Now I want to close with two comments. First of all, true happiness is not found in marriage. True happiness is not

found in a husband, or a wife, home, or a job, education, or parent, or a child, or a friend, or a close friend, or health, or anything else.

The second comment is that real happiness is found when you give up everything for Jesus Christ, period. Can I ask you? Who are you living for?