

# Sovereign Grace Church

## *“A Happy Life” outline*

January 8, 2017

### Psalm 1

*This morning we will consider a topic that resonates with the American mind....what does it mean to be happy? The three prominent God-given rights mentioned in our Declaration of Independence are the rights to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.*

*However, there has not been a lot of popular discussion on the meaning of the term “happiness” as used here. Does it mean what we tend to think of today as a buzzing feeling of positive pleasure...as one gets from scoring a touchdown or being praised for doing a good work? If so, then the same feeling can be gotten from smashing someone's nose or snorting cocaine (or so I'm told!).*

*But is this what happiness really means? It is what it means today but this is historically a rather novel understanding. Up until the 17/18<sup>th</sup> century to be happy meant to live a well-lived life, full of wisdom and character. Such a state of happiness could and often did include much pain and suffering. Psalm 1 talks of the blessed (or happy in this second sense) man & his formation. We all desire our children to be happy and this is fine....so long as we're thinking of happiness as conveyed in the first Psalm. The odd thing is that to pursue happiness in the first (modern) sense is to pretty much guarantee not getting it....whereas to pursue happiness in the sense of Psalm one will often get the first sense of happiness thrown in as a by-product. Do you want to feel good about yourself? Then you will have to deny yourself! Diamonds aren't made without a LOT of pressure!*

#### 1. The Happy person Resists Wickedness or Evil v. 1

- He does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. Gen. 3:6
- He does not stand in the path of sinners.
- He does not sit in the seat of the scornful.

#### 2. The Happy person is Immersed in God's Law. v. 2

- He delights in God's law. Rom. 3: 20
- He meditates on God's law.

- 3. The Happy person is Stable and bears Fruit v. 3  
John 15:5**
  
- 4. The Happy person's Way is Known by God. v. 6a**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 5. What about the Unhappy (ungodly) Person? vv. 4-5, 6b  
Prov. 14:12**

#### **Questions for Discussion**

- 1. Are you a happy person? What do you mean by happiness? Is it primarily a feeling or a state of being? What is the difference between these two? Is it wrong to feel happy? Can you get it by pursuing it? Why or why not?**
- 2. How can one have a positive or good self-image and deny oneself at the same time? Does this make sense? Read Luke 9: 23-26. What does this mean?! What are ways you have applied it in your own life? What have been the results? What was your motivation in applying it? How might your motivation make a difference?**
- 3. What are the two versions of happiness discussed in the sermon? Which is prominent today? If one interprets happiness in the first way...what becomes of the “right” referred to in our Declaration of Independence? How does this difference in interpretation affect our interpretation of what it means to be free? Are there any limits to freedom if happiness is defined as merely self-gratification?**
- 4. How can we leave a legacy of genuine happiness in the sense of a life well-lived to our children? What are you doing right? What needs to change?!**