

## The Search for Happiness

*“For in the end, the things that matter most, are not things.”*

Today, we are seeing a revival of the back- to- nature movement; with love for mountains, seashore and farm. Some believe this harks back to when our first parents enjoyed a sweet fellowship with God, along with a depth of pleasure and joy that is hardly imaginable today. I strongly believe that our happiness would've been much greater if we had remained within God's will in Eden's unspoiled Paradise. Let us look at one formula people follow in their pursuit of happiness:

$$H=M+I$$

HAPPINESS=MONEY + PLUS LEISURE TIME

This sounds good, but before you stake your life on it, check the records. The direct opposite has been proven true: Jay Gould, the multi-millionaire said, “I am the most miserable man on earth.” Ivan Krueger, wealthy head of the world's largest monopoly, committed suicide. Billionaire J. Paul Getty said, “I'd trade my fortune for just one happy marriage.”

A famous film star broke down and cried, “I have money, beauty, glamour and popularity. I should be the happiest person in the world, but I am miserable! Why?”

Listen to the man who won a \$5 million lottery a few years ago: “It was fun at first but looking back, I have a lot of regrets. We were as close as a family could get, and now we don't even talk. We are torn apart by greed and jealousy.”

Happiness remains elusive. At a county fair, with all the rides and other amusements, a mother stood with her eight-year-old son. As he cried uncontrollably, she was shaking him saying, “You wanted to come, and now you're going to have a good time if it kills you.” Like that boy, are we killing ourselves trying to have a good time?

Why are people of all ages restless and discontent? Every year we spend billions of dollars on new fads, furniture, appliances, sports equipment and other gadgets all designed to make life more comfortable and pleasurable. Yet, the hallmark of our times remains – the tragedy of broken hearts and homes, drug addictions, suicides, mental breakdowns and unrest.

Certainly, there are many experiences and pastimes that can give us momentary happiness. However, they do not have the substance or depth to bring lasting joy and satisfaction. A voice within keeps nagging, “You were not created to be this way. You were meant for something higher and more meaningful.”

In my own experience the happiest moments of my life had a spiritual – relational component. A personal God, who is both loving and holy, longs to have a relationship with his children. He has reached down in the person of Christ to bring us abundant life now and eternal life forever. C.S. Lewis shares with us one of his profound convictions: *“God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.”* (To be continued).

