

Rom. 14:19
So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.



John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

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Control the Influences in Your Life

Jim Stauffer

Prior to Josiah becoming King of Judah, both his father and grandfather had ruled before him. His grandfather, Manasseh, was initially supportive of idolatry and unfaithful to Jehovah. However, when he was imprisoned by the Assyrians he soon realized his error and prayed to the God of heaven and was reconciled to Him, serving faithfully until his death.

The same cannot be said of his son, Amon, who followed in his father's footsteps as an idolater, but did not repent but instead, *multiplied guilt*. He was 22 years old when he began to reign and could remember the idolatrous years of his rule over Judah. He only reigned in Jerusalem for 2 years before his servants conspired against him and killed him.

This is the point when the boy king, Josiah, began to rule at the age of 8 years. Apparently he did not hold his father's rule in high esteem for it is said, he *walked in the ways of his father David and did not turn aside to the right or the left.* (2 Chron. 34)

Josiah at 8 years of age was able to accept the guidance provided by prophets of God and look to the example of David, the King God compared all kings to as the pattern for his life as the King of God's people. Scripture tells us this pursuit of David's example began in earnest when he was 16 years of age.

Many, today seem to think a young man of 16 years is still a child and offers no value as a servant of God. Quite the contrary, even young people can lead others to the right source for truth. What must happen is for them to have the right influence in their lives. Then, *in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, the carved images and the molten images.* (2 Chron. 34:3) I have heard it said that Lincoln had some quote in reference to the fact that we take on a part of everyone we meet. His point was we are affected by relationships established. That most certainly was the idea being warned against by the apostle in, **1 Cor. 15:33** *Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."* Josiah certainly avoided the problems of listening to

bad advice.

We must not allow ourselves to become what we do not wish simply because those influences were present in our lives. We must make the choice to follow the righteous or just influence and not just whatever is placed before us. If an 8 year old can recognize justice and integrity, we, as adults certainly can. That is the implication of the speech of Joshua we often quote.

Josh. 24:15 *"If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."* He clearly sets forth the idea it is a choice and not just something we mindlessly do by following the footsteps of parents or others who have made the wrong choices.

The primary example we are to follow is Christ, **1 Pet. 2:21** *For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,* and the purpose of that is clearly stated by both the Psalmist and by the apostle to the young preacher Timothy. **Psa. 40:10** *I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have spoken of Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great congregation.* **1Tim. 4:12** *Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.*

Young Josiah led a nation of people back to God. It is imperative that our lives must be guided by the truth of His word, but also we are to be a benefit to those who would look to our example, and be influenced by our choices in life.

Realize when you allow yourself to be influenced by those in your life who have made poor choices, you run the risk of leading those under your influence to make similarly poor decisions.

EVANGELICALISM AND SALVATION

It is the purpose of this article to delineate some of the important aspects of salvation as it pertains to the teachings of Evangelicalism. Evangelicalism is broadly defined as a religious movement that is committed to the proclamation of the good news, through which men and women are converted by faith to Christ.

Evangelicalism recognizes the necessity of the cross and has a commitment to the authority of the scriptures. Importantly to our subject, evangelicalism dominates most of the religious denominations that dot our religious landscape. What does this mean?

Sin breaks our relationship with God. When Adam and Eve violated God's will, they died spiritually; they were expelled from the Garden of Eden; their pristine relationship with God was altered. Isaiah said: *"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear"* (59:1-2). Sin is not what God expects of us. Adam and Eve had their eyes "open" after their sin. They were guilty and had a sense of having violated God's will. If not, why did they try to hide from God?

An integral aspect of evangelicalism's teaching about sin and man's relationship to sin is total hereditary depravity. That is, a person is born totally or completely depraved. This depravity is inherited from or stems from Adam—Adamic sin. Human nature is changed; every human being *tends* toward sin. The person who is completely depraved cannot save herself. She cannot make any kind of good response to God in the matter of salvation. The result of this is that she must be operated upon by God in order to have salvation. It is true, in one sense, that we cannot save ourselves. That is, we cannot merit our salvation; sin has made that impossible. We have sinned and deserve death (Romans 6:23). But we can decide that we will obey God; we can respond to His will; when we do so it is a function of our free will; it is not the function of the Holy Spirit circumventing our free will and saving us regardless of our desires either way.

An essential teaching of evangelicalism is salvation by faith alone. While faith is essential to salvation (Hebrews 11:1,6), is man saved at the point of faith? Can you be saved without faith? No! Can you be saved without baptism? Can you be saved without repentance, or confession? If you can be saved by one thing alone, which one do you choose, and why? The problem with false teaching is that by picking and choosing one commandment over the other always leaves the possibility of eliminating something the Lord doesn't want eliminated. Why not study and then do what the Lord said to do, as He said it, and be content with that?

Randy Harshbarger

The Final Purpose of the Seventy Weeks

Finally! We come to the last purpose to be fulfilled by the Seventy Weeks: *"To Anoint the Most Holy"*. The word 'place' does not seem to be found in the original though many good translators deem it implied in the original construction. I'm not saying they are wrong but the two bedrock examples of the English Bible, the KJV and the ASV of 1901 both omit the word.

So, what does it mean? I can think of three possibilities in descending order of likelihood:

1. Jesus anointed as Messiah, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Son of God. Read **Matt. 3:17 & 17:5**. The Father owned Him as His Son. **Acts 4:26f** declares He was the anointed. Paul refers to Him as the King of Kings etc., in **1Timothy 6:15, 16**. He is the most holy because it is impossible to live better than *"without sin"* **Hebrews 4:15**. The Cross sealed his kingship in blood and the Resurrection was the final declaration of His Son-ship, **Romans 1:4**. In the Old Testament it was the Anointing which declared to all the world that a man had become a High Priest or a King, **1 Samuel 9:16**.
2. The church for which Jesus died, **Acts 20:28**. **Ephesians 5:25-27** describe Christ's view of the Church, His Bride. Peter says we are an *"elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession"* (**1 Peter 2:9**).
3. The Heavenly Tabernacle in **Hebrews 9:22-26**. Possible but I think not.

Here we have it, then. All six purposes of the Seventy Weeks have been fulfilled within the Seventieth Week and by the exact same event, The Cross of Jesus. This is the central and Pivotal point in the history of Mankind.

Cleveland Reddinger

God's Will and My Happiness

Be warned, this is a sensitive subject. It is sensitive because it gets to something that is hard for us to view objectively or to sacrifice, namely, our own sense of happiness.

Let's begin by noting that happiness is a legitimate, Biblical facet of a good, godly, life. Happiness is one of the things God wants for us.

But here's the problem: immediately, upon hearing this, we think that we know what this happiness is, because we have become accustomed to believing that my happiness is determined by me. If something makes you happy, good for you, but it might not necessarily

make me happy. Therefore happiness, for me, is what I decide it is. The conclusion, then, is that 1) if God wants me to be happy, and 2) if I decide what makes me happy, then 3) God wants me to pursue what makes me happy. I see and hear this idea often. It makes up about 50% of what you find on Facebook. I suggest, however, that it is only self-centeredness clothed in religious garb, passing itself off as if it were Christianity.

A moment's reflection should reveal that a me-centered approach cannot be the path to happiness, for at least one simple reason: what one person pursues to make them happy will, inevitably, conflict with another person's pursuit of happiness. So what happens then? Either the two people must learn to compromise and get along – at the expense of some amount of the happiness of both of them, or one will be able to achieve his happiness and the other will not. Either way, this way of thinking about happiness and how to pursue it must inevitably lead to conflict with others and puts one into a competition with others, with the result that all the things that come with competition – jealousy, slander, envy, gossip, hatred, malice – are born and flourish. Living in constant competition, with jealousy, etc. cannot be the way to happiness! Much less is it what God wants for me. (And let me suggest that if someone's happiness lies in being jealous, malicious, slandering, etc., then something is really wrong with them.)

There is another reason this cannot result in happiness for everyone: it is that happiness is, to a large extent, learned. That's right, happiness is not necessarily innate, it is not "natural." It is learned. Why are some people thrilled by roller coasters and other people are frightened by them? Because that is how they have learned to react to them. Why do some people exhibit road rage and others never do? Because they have learned these things.

The fact is that our emotions are not supposed to be our masters. We are to be the masters of our emotions, and that includes teaching ourselves to like some things and to dislike others. *"I have learned, whatever state I am in, to be content"* (Phil 4.11). Did you hear that? *"I have learned."* We can put this another way: if we begin with the flawed idea that my happiness is determined by me, and that I naturally know what makes me happy, what we have done is put selfishness in the driver's seat of our lives. The flesh is now in control, and this is exactly opposite of the way a Christian is supposed to live (Romans 8, Galatians 5, etc.). Starting with a self-centered idea of happiness will only make us worldly people, and being worldly will not make us happy.

But let's get back to this idea of learned happiness. From the time we are young we are taught, in many ways and from many sources, that happiness lies in the flesh, that it lies in selfishness, that it lies in me. All of us learned that idea and we have spent much of our lives believing

it. But one of the Bible's purposes is to teach us the truth, and one of the truths it has to teach us concerns what makes us truly happy. The Bible wants us to know that our true happiness lies not in ourselves, and surely not in the world, but in our relationship with God. Our true happiness consists of knowing that we are in a right relationship with God.

Now here's the thing: we have to learn this, and that means that we have to un-learn the lie (which we have believed) that says my happiness is determined by me and me alone. Let's be honest: how often have we said "I know, happiness is about being right with God," but we still think and act as if that were not true (and we're still not happy)? The reason we continue to look for happiness in other things is because we are just not yet convinced that happiness really does lie in our relationship with God. We haven't learned it enough, we haven't un-learned the world's idea of happiness.

It is precisely because Paul re-learned what true happiness is that he could say that he was content in any circumstance. His happiness was not determined by his physical circumstances. It wasn't even determined by his own feelings of happiness. No, Paul had come to learn that real, true happiness is being right with God; and if we have that, nothing else really matters (hence his ability to be content with anything in life).

When we learn what real happiness is, then some amazing things happen. We stop the competing, the jealousy, etc. that goes with the selfish idea of happiness. Immediately life gets much easier because none of those things which we thought were essential to our happiness matter very much to us any more. The burden of satisfying the unsatisfiable god of selfishness is lifted. And once our mind is taken off of ourselves, we are open to grow as Christians in our relationship with God (which makes us even happier!) and with others.

Yes, God wants us to be happy, but He (i.e., not me) is the one who knows what will make us truly happy. I have to learn it from Him, and if I will do that, I will be happy.
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To ask that God's love should be content with us as we are is to ask that God should cease to be God: because He is what He is, His love must, in the nature of things, be impeded and repelled by certain stains in our present character, and because He already loves us He must labour to make us lovable. We cannot even wish, in our better moments, that He could reconcile Himself to our present impurities--no more than the beggar maid could wish that King Cophetua should be content with her rags and dirt, or a dog, once having learned to love man, could wish that man were such as to tolerate in his house the snapping, verminous, polluting creature of the wild pack. What we would here and now call our "happiness" is not the end God chiefly has in view: but when we are such as He can love without impediment, we shall in fact be happy.

C.S. Lewis

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10