

*greatest among you shall be your servant”* (Matthew 23:11).

How can we have this attitude? The only motivation is love. We can do things out of love that we would do for no other reason. In John 13:1 we find that Jesus loved His disciples to the end, that is, His love knew no limits. Thus, we will be willing to serve others to this degree only out of love. Furthermore, notice John 13:3. In summary, we might say Jesus knew three things that allowed him to have this attitude. **He knew who He was.** He was the Son of God. **He knew where He had come from.** He had voluntarily left all the glories of heaven. **He also knew where He was going.** He was going back to live with God forever. As Christians, we know the same three things. We know that we were once lost in sin. We know that now we are adopted children of God, and we know that we are going to God to be joint-heirs with Christ. This should make us the most secure people on earth. Only the most secure individuals will be able to serve others.

Others have also realized this to be the key to happiness. Albert Schweitzer was a world renowned musician and theologian. At age 30 he entered medical school. After graduation, he traveled to Gabon, Africa, spending most of the rest of his life serving the medical needs of those peo-

ple. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1952 and used the prize money to enlarge his hospital in Africa. Undoubtedly, he sacrificed and suffered many hardships living in the jungles of Africa. Nonetheless, near the end of his life he made this statement, “I don’t know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know; the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found a way to serve.”

Are you truly happy today? The key is found in humble service. In addition, this key is available to everyone. It matters not how rich or poor you are, educated or uneducated, or what country you call home. Happiness comes to those who are willing to serve God and others out of love. Live as a servant, and you will find the inner peace, happiness, and contentment that everyone desires. So promises God Almighty. Do you believe it?

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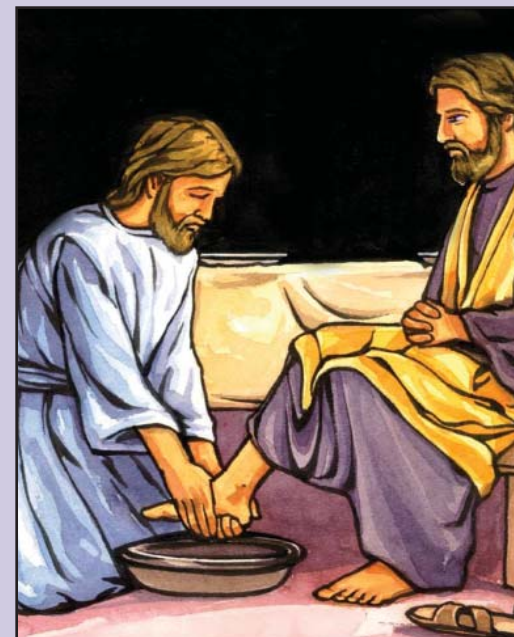
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## The Key to Happiness

Jerry Bates



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Happiness is a state of mind that almost everyone in every culture seeks. Every survey that I have seen indicates that the main goal of most people is simply to be happy. Yet, while everyone wants to be happy, it seems that relatively few actually achieve that goal. Yes, many have happy times, do scores of things that bring temporary joy, appear to be very blissful on the outside, yet inwardly are filled with discontent, hopelessness, or uncertainty. Why is it that even as everyone seeks happiness, the world is filled with so many unhappy people?

The answer is really very simple. People look for happiness in the wrong places or in the wrong ways. Most of us would think that happiness can be found in material wealth; however, material wealth cannot truly bring lasting happiness. Look at the lives of the rich and famous. They appear to have it all — fame and fortune. They live in the most luxurious surroundings imaginable, wear expensive clothes, and enjoy lavish parties. Life appears to be good to them. Nevertheless, when they talk candidly, they admit that their lives are not what they appear. We read of their struggles with depression, drugs,

alcohol, the need for privacy, marital problems, child rearing problems, etc. Often it seems they simply go from one problem to the next. Surely, this is not the key to happiness.

You might agree that such an extravagant lifestyle does not necessarily result in happiness, but surely an above-average income and lifestyle would achieve the goal. As long as a person has enough wealth to live comfortably, he can enjoy life and be happy. The problem is that one almost never has “enough”. As his income grows, his needs and desires grow. One survey concluded that regardless of whether a person's income was large or small, his perceived income level necessary to have a comfortable lifestyle was double what he was earning! Thus, inner contentment and joy seem always to be just beyond our grasp.

In John 13, Jesus gives us the key to genuine happiness; however, it is completely different from our human perception. The occasion is what we call *the Last Supper*, when Jesus instituted His memorial supper and plainly told His disciples that He would soon die. Indeed, within twenty-four hours, He would be dead. During the course of the meal, Jesus does the unthinkable. He takes a towel and washes the feet of His disciples. In those days, the people

wore sandals, and their feet would become dirty as they walked on the dusty paths. Thus, a good host would wash the feet of his guests, an exceedingly degrading task. It was normally done by a slave, if the host was prosperous enough to have slaves. In this case, there was no host, and none of the disciples were willing to demean themselves by washing feet. As a result, the room was filled with proud hearts and dirty feet. Jesus then arose and gave an example for them to follow. The King of Kings was performing the lowliest of tasks. The 21st century equivalent is being willing to serve others — no matter who they are, no matter what the cost, no matter how unpleasant the task.

The key to happiness is found in John 13:17: “*If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.*” The Greek word for blessed is difficult to accurately translate into English. The word closest in meaning is *happiness*, which describes a state of inner joy that is not dependent on outward circumstances. Jesus was telling us that true happiness can be found only in serving others. This does not make sense to us. We normally do not think happiness can possibly come from being a servant. The opposite makes much more sense to us. But not so, according to God. Jesus also said, “*The*