

Title: SEVEN KEYS TO A HAPPY AND BLESSED LIFE

Text: Psalm 32:1-11

Intro: Generally, Asians foolishly rely on weird superstition and rituals designed to "attract" blessings and happiness. The Bible gives us seven principles and promises to remain truly blessed. The word blessed=happy (Hebrew *asher* and Greek *makarios*).

I. BLESSED ARE THEY WHO ARE FORGIVEN (Psa. 32:1-2). David, having received God's forgiveness, expressed his joy over that fact. Here, "*blessed*" is used of one who was forgiven. God forgives fully for He does not count a repentant person's sins against him (**Rom. 8:1**). Illust.> the Turkey.

II. BLESSED ARE THEY WHO ARE MERCIFUL (Matt. 5:7). It is a principle that God shows mercy to one who has regard for the weak, poor and needy. This attitude wins divine pleasure (**Psa. 18:25**). It is a principle violated by the proud and wicked to their own destruction. Illust.> Lion & Mouse.

III. BLESSED ARE THEY WHO AVOID THE INFLUENCE OF THE WICKED (Psa. 1:1). Being blessed demands non-conformity with the world, its system, and its people. Here, the ungodly, the sinners and scornful who make up the majority of the worldly people are clearly marked like danger zones by scripture (**I Cor. 15:33**). The progression starts from casual influence and ends in full participation. **EXPLAIN.** (**I Tim. 5:22**)

IV. BLESSED ARE THEY WHO TRUST THE LORD (Psa. 34:8). America was blessed as a nation because it was founded by Bible-believing fathers who patterned their Constitution upon biblical principles and whose coinage bears the slogan "IN GOD WE TRUST." Sadly, modern Americans like many other people have made gods out of money, power, entertainment, sports, education, ambition, pleasure, and men. All these are cheap substitutes for the Lord, the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

Some Christians trust God in theory but not in practice! Some professed to have entrusted their souls to God for eternity but find it hard to entrust their bellies for now! It is better to trust a loving unchanging God who is not only willing but able to aid us to the utmost than unstable and lying men who may be willing but not able or vice-versa (cf. **Psa. 40:4; 118:8**).

V. BLESSED ARE THEY WHO FEAR THE LORD (Psa. 112:1). The man who fears the Lord is truly a wise man (Prov. 9:10). He is made safe by keeping God's commandments and walking in the ways of the Lord (Psa. 128:1; Eccl. 12:13). To the contrary, the man who does not fear God is like an animal without understanding. He merely lives for the present; he is often enslaved by his lusts and appetites – eating, drinking and merrymaking. He lives a life devoid of purpose and meaning!

VI. BLESSED ARE THEY WHO ARE CHASTENED OF THE LORD (Psa. 94:12). Chastening is not always punishment brought about by sin in the believer's life. It is also God's way of disciplining His children through training in righteousness in the midst of afflictions and hardships. Illust.> Bonsai Culture. To the Christian who is responsive to the Lord's discipline, it proves two things: His love and our sonship (Heb. 12:5-6).

No chastening is enjoyable to the flesh because it is for our spiritual profit. More than any good earthly father, our Heavenly Father wants his children to be righteous, mature, obedient, patient, responsible, reliable, and trusting. We benefit in all these ways when we willingly accept chastening. This is God's blessed way of teaching us in His University of Christian Life.

VII. BLESSED ARE THEY WHO LABOR FOR THE LORD (Luke 12:43; I Cor. 15:58). We are first SONS of God, then SERVANTS and STEWARDS of God. It is required of servants and stewards to be found faithful and labouring where the Lord designated them. Each Christian is endowed with at least one spiritual gift that he can use for the edification of the church. Others have multiple God-given abilities which rather benefit the secular world rather than the church. It is so tragic that the church is suffering from manpower shortage because the world has monopoly on Christians who could have otherwise been in the ministry! Should the Lord come soon, where and what will He find you doing for the most part? May He find us faithfully toiling and occupied so that we can say as in **Luke 17:10**.

Conclusion: The Lord has given us seven keys to unlock doors of blessedness. May we ever realize that God's blessings are not always in finances and materials but more importantly spiritual!