

## The Habits of Happiness

### *Rely on Jesus*

**Intro:** Who do you rely on? We all rely on other people in some way or another. I rely on Jeremy that he and the worship team will be ready to lead worship / I rely on Karen and her production team that they have the sounds – lighting – slides -cameras and live stream will be happening. I rely on Joanne and her team to have the Kids Church ready to receive all the children we have every Sunday. This list could go on and on. Many of you rely on your morning cup of coffee to even function so you can come to church. We all rely on someone or something. There is nothing wrong with this. BUT...do we also rely on Jesus? Is this a daily habit not just a cliché? Learning to rely on Jesus is our next habit of happiness.

**Phil. 3:2-3** *“Watch out for those dogs, those people who do evil, those mutilators who say you must be circumcised to be saved. <sup>3</sup>For we who worship by the Spirit of God are the ones who are truly circumcised. We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. We put no confidence in human effort,” (NLT)* (Summarize vs 4-6) He followed all the religious rules of the day and exceeded everyone else around him. Paul was a Pharisee – religious ruler of his day. He had quite the spiritual pedigree.

**Phil. 3:7-9** *“I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. <sup>8</sup>Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ <sup>9</sup>and become one with him.” (NLT)* Paul went from relying on himself, his works, his religion, and his efforts to total dependence on Jesus. Here he is writing from a Roman dungeon yet completely relying on Jesus and finding joy. How do we do this?

**Definition:** RELY - to be dependent / to have confidence based on experience /to depend on with full trust or confidence.

What a great word that should describe our relationship with Jesus! If we say we are followers of Jesus, then learning to rely on Him (depend on) is an essential habit to learn and practice. Do we truly depend on Him? How do we develop this habit?

### **1. Rely On Jesus Not the Opinions of Others**

*Vs, 2 “Watch out for those dogs, those people who do evil, those mutilators who say you must be circumcised to be saved.” (NLT)*

I realize this is very strong language but let’s understand what was taking place historically. Paul would travel from town to town sharing about Jesus and starting churches. After he would leave, Jewish people (often from Jerusalem) would travel to these churches and tell the people they had to be circumcised in order to be truly saved. They would tell these new believers they had to follow the OT law as well.

So how does this relate to us? How do we rely on Jesus and not the opinion of others?

- Keep your faith simple

*II Cor. 11:3 “But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.” (NASB)*

I have been guilty of making my relationship with Jesus very complicated. I went to Bible College and Seminary where I was constantly listening to the opinions of others. Sometimes I think the purpose of Seminary was to take something simple and make it complicated. It took me years to get back to the simplicity of following Jesus.

- I think churches can be guilty of the same thing. We stress over self-made rules – (how many chapters to read each day / how long I was going to pray / how many people I could invite to church – how often do I serve – am I giving enough - soon we’re stressed out by my own rules that define our salvation.

*John 10:27 “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” (NLT)*

- I love the simplicity of this verse. If I just listen and follow Jesus in this life that’s enough. I’m pretty sure if I do this well I can stand before Jesus with confidence He’ll be pretty pleased with me. Following Jesus is not a list of things we do.
- Is your faith simple or complicated? Is it based on rules or simplicity? Are you letting others complicate your faith?

- Value what Jesus says more than others

We live in an age where we have access to everything. We can listen to, watch and read what other Christian leaders say all over the country and world. Now, we have Christian superstars. We have Christian celebrities. We have Christian influencers. Social media has given everyone a platform and made everyone an expert.

- Because of this, believers spend more time quoting their favorite spiritual leader’s opinion rather than Jesus. Christian culture is consumed and driven by the current spiritual celebrity and what they say.
- People ask me; “Pastor, have you heard “so and so”? When I tell them NO they look at me like something is wrong with me. Then they tell me this person has millions of followers.
- We all can learn from others. But are we truly learning anything of value or simply being entertained by the next sound byte of information that is designed to capture our attention and keep us distracted.
- How can I listen to Jesus’ voice when all my attention is given over to all the influencers of my faith? Are they asking you to follow Jesus or follow them? (You see the irony of this...right?)
- In order to value / depend on what Jesus said, we first have to know what Jesus said. In 1899, the first NT was printed with Jesus’ words in red. All the words of scripture are inspired by God. BUT, the red letters helped identify quickly Jesus’ words.
- Here’s an assignment for you. Go read and reflect on Jesus’ words. You can Google this – use AI – you can buy a red-letter addition in modern translation. Let the words of Jesus influence you more than all other opinions out there.

If we're going to rely on Jesus, we're going to have to stop being so influenced by the opinions of others. Let's be influenced most and rely on Jesus most rather than others.

## 2. Rely On Jesus for Your Salvation not Works

Vs 3 "...We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us." (NLT)

Historically, there were people adding conditions to salvation during Paul's day. It became a message of Jesus + works / Jesus + circumcision / Jesus + OT Law. BUT, if we're not careful, we can fall into the same trap. How do we guard ourselves from this?

- Rely on what Jesus did for you was enough

Jesus died on a cross to pay the penalty for our sin. His death satisfied the justice of God on our behalf. Because of Jesus, we have been spiritually acquitted and have been justified...which means, to be declared righteous before God. There is nothing left to be done!

- The reason some of you struggle having confidence in your relationship with Jesus and struggle finding joy in this relationship is you're not convinced what Jesus did was enough for you. You struggle relying on Him spiritually.
- Sometimes this is driven by our guilt and shame from the past. How can I be completely forgiven for what I've done? Surely God can't forgive this?
- It is absolutely essential for us to trust what Jesus did for us on the cross was enough.

*Rom. 4:5 "But people are counted as righteous, not because of their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners." (NLT)*

*Rom. 3:25 "For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood..." (NLT)*

- You and I can't add anything to what Jesus did on the cross for us. No sacrifice you can make will add to the sacrifice of Jesus. Your relationship with Jesus isn't dependent on you. It's dependent on Him! Now trust Him!

- Rely on what Jesus continues to do for you is enough

What does He continue to do? He continues to expand your experience of your salvation. He grows your experience with Him in this life. We rely on Jesus to get saved but we also rely on Jesus to experience our salvation.

*I Peter 2:2 "Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation..." (NLT)* How does Jesus help us experience more of our salvation?

- Jesus continues to forgive you

This is one of the most encouraging truths we experience in this life. I don't have to be perfect for Jesus to continue to accept me. His forgiveness is ongoing. His ongoing forgiveness isn't an excuse for bad behavior. It's the hope that I can always start again...always start over...always have hope.

- Haven't you been so discouraged spiritually you want to quit. "Why try, I'll just fail again!" What's the point, I just can't seem to overcome this!" Even Paul felt like this.

Rom. 7:15 *“I don’t really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don’t do it. Instead, I do what I hate.” (NLT)* Here is the tension every believer in Jesus feels.

- Jesus’ ongoing forgiveness is one of the most powerful realities that I have relied on over the years that has changed my life. I would have given up a long time ago.
- It is not the fear of punishment that changes our lives. It’s His unconditional love – His unending grace – His compassionate mercy – His boundless forgiveness.

Rom. 2:4 *“Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?” (ESV)* Explain

➤ Jesus continues to protect you

John 10:27-29 *“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, <sup>29</sup> for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father’s hand.” (NLT)* What beautiful imagery.

- Jesus is actively protecting your salvation. It wasn’t your works that got you saved and it’s not your works that keep you saved. This truth removes the fear that if my performance isn’t good enough, I lose my relationship with Jesus. Salvation is NOT about works
- This does not create a license to sin it creates security that we are loved! Love is a much greater motivator for behavior than fear! Some of you are driven by fear in your relationship with Jesus rather than love. That’s why you have no joy! You’re relying on yourself (your works / performance) for your salvation not Jesus.

### **3. Rely On Jesus for Your Confidence not Human Effort**

Vs 3 *“...We put no confidence in human effort.” (NLT)*

Vs 7 *“I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done.” (NLT)*

Paul had quite the list of accomplishments. His human efforts were pretty impressive. BUT, compared to Jesus they weren’t worthy of his trust. It’s easy to have confidence in our efforts. It’s easy to trust in what we can do. So, how do we rely on Jesus and not ourselves?

- Increase your skills without decreasing your trust

There is natural tendency of human nature that I want to explain. It is something that God has shown me about my own life. Let me explain using my own spiritual journey as an example.

- When I first started in ministry at 20 years old, I had very limited skill sets / lacked experience and therefore, lacked confidence. God used these early seasons of my life to develop my reliance on Him. (explain)
- Over time, my skill sets increased / my experiences increased / confidence increased – Guess what began to happen with my reliance on God? (Explain)

- It's not that human confidence is a bad thing. We should develop confidence that we can be competent. BUT, no matter how much we feel confident, human confidence cannot substitute for Godly trust. This is where we begin to deviate from following Jesus.
- We all have this tendency in us. "I got this God." We need to be able to grow both over the course of our lives. Keep learning and keep growing in our trust. HOW
- Develop a dependent life "Humble Confidence"
  - As your skills increase give the credit to God
  - As your confidence increases, stay humble before God
  - As your influence increases, use it to serve God
  - As your blessings increase, make sure you thank God
  - Watch your spiritual barometer throughout your life. What's this? Your prayer life. If you are truly depending on Jesus you will pray. If you are depending on your efforts you won't. Your prayer life will be the biggest evidence of who you trust and the biggest influence on your trust.

#### 4. Rely On Jesus to Experience Oneness with Him

*Vs. 8-9 "For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ<sup>9</sup> and become one with him." (NLT)*

Paul knew what the greatest gift in this life was. It wasn't his accomplishments. It was experiencing Jesus. It was gaining Him and experiencing oneness with Him. Compared to this, everything else was considered garbage. In fact, the Greek word used here for garbage is manure. Compared to Jesus, everything in this life I can do is a big pile of manure. Our dilemma is that because we lack the oneness with Jesus, we don't value Him like this. Because we have so rarely relied on Him, we've never really experienced the incredible value of this oneness. How?

- Realize you are missing out on something  
Whenever we try to explain something to another person who has never had the same experience, it's tough. It's like me trying to explain Guatemala to many of you...or paragliding...or the thrill of fishing (Explain)  
It's like this with experiencing oneness with Jesus. Some of you know what I'm talking about and some of you have no idea.
  - Some of you are missing out on the greatest ongoing experience in this life. You are missing out on something that makes everything else garbage in comparison. Isn't this something worth pursuing?
- Trust Jesus and see for yourself  
*Ps. 34:8 "Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!" (NLT)*
  - Some of you have never trusted Jesus for your eternity
  - Some of you have never trusted Him to follow daily

- Some of you have never trusted Him outside your comfort zone (money / serving / mission trip /) Because of this, you've never seen Him come through.

Dependence = Oneness which = happiness. (Believing in and depending on are not the same!) Some people have never experienced the exhilaration of swimming. WHY? Because they never get in the pool. Some of you have never experienced the joy of Jesus in your daily life because you just won't get in the spiritual pool with Jesus. You won't rely on Him. You won't trust Him. You won't see for yourself. How about today?

Who do you really rely on?

- Are you relying on Jesus or the opinions of others?
- Are you relying on Jesus for your salvation or your own rules and performance?
- Are you relying on Jesus for your confidence or your own skill sets?
- Are you relying on Jesus so you can experience a oneness with Him?