

**Definition of Authentic Happiness:** A lasting and settled well-being of the soul that is not conditioned upon the favorable happenings of people and circumstances but the favor of God that comes in multifaceted ways in the good and bad situations of life.

**I. Implications of Authentic Happiness**

- A. Authentic happiness is a condition based on the favor of God, leading to one being called fortunate.
- B. Authentic happiness is contingent upon one's mind being fixed on the truth about God and His will.
- C. Authentic happiness is contingent upon one's life being guided and guarded by the truth about God and His will.
- D. Authentic happiness is experienced in the context of both good and bad life experiences.
- E. Authentic happiness transcends life experiences.

**II. The Standard Deviation from Having Authentic Happiness:  
Step 1 - Walking in the Counsel of the Wicked (v1)**

- A. You will deviate from authentic happiness when you choose to develop a lifestyle according to the direction of people who live unethical lives.
- B. The more you listen to the advice and direction of people who live unethical lives, the more your life will reflect the lifestyle of the unethical counsel you have listened to.
- C. In essence, you will not experience a lasting and settled well-being of the soul if you begin to order your life around unethical counsel from unethical people (Walking in the counsel).

**Key Point:** "Many Christians, though they would deny it in horror, live as if God means nothing more to them than going to church a couple of hours on Sunday. For all practical purposes, they have all but divorced Him from the rest of life. Consequently, they live a life not too different

from the life of the unbeliever. That is because they follow the counsel – i.e., the advice, directions, principles, practices, and the example – of the world.”<sup>1</sup>

**III. The Standard Deviation from Having Authentic Happiness:  
Step 2 - Standing in the Path of Sinners (v1)**

- A. You will deviate from authentic happiness when you chose to support and live a life associated with people who are clearly living a life of ungodliness.
- B. The more intimate you are with people who are clearly living a life of ungodliness, the more you will imitate or follow in their footsteps.
- C. In essence, you will not experience a lasting and settled well-being of the soul if you start to settle into an ungodly lifestyle demonstrating the influence of the ungodly people you are connected to (Standing in the path).

**Key Point:** “As a result of this wayward course he soon finds himself standing in the way (path) of sinners, which is the second stage mentioned by the Psalmist as he describes a person’s descent into the depths of unrighteousness. At first, like Lot, he merely pitched his tent toward Sodom by listening to and beginning to heed wicked counsel. At that point, he is said to be ‘walking’ in this counsel. That is to say, he pays enough attention to it that he buys into it so as to end up following it. At first, this ungodly counsel seems strange, perhaps even contradictory to what he reads in Scripture. But the longer he listens to it, and the less he reads his Bible (and frequents the preaching of the Word), the more it seems to make sense..... Soon, he develops friendships with other worldly Christians and unbelievers who reinforce his errant beliefs by their counsel. And so it goes, until sooner or later he is on the same road as hardened ‘sinners.’”<sup>2</sup>

**IV. The Standard Deviation from Having Authentic Happiness:  
Step 3 - Sitting in the Seat of Scoffers (v1)**

- A. You will deviate from authentic happiness when you choose to settle in and make yourself at home around people who disrespect, dishonor or ridicule God and His Word.
- B. The more you make yourself at home around people who promote an anti-God message, whether directly or indirectly, the more you will reflect and demonstrate an anti-God life, resulting in laughing at what God hates and endorsing what God rejects.

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<sup>1</sup> Jay E. Adams, *The Road to Happiness* (Memphis, TN: Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 16, Kindle.

<sup>2</sup> Jay E. Adams, *The Road to Happiness* (Memphis, TN: Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 19-20, Kindle.

- C. In essence, you will not experience a lasting and settled well-being of the soul when you reside in your dwelling place around people who, either directly or indirectly, live a lifestyle of rejection of God and His Word (Sitting in the seat).

**Key Point:** “Don’t fall for the ‘sophisticated’ Christian who thinks that he can linger among unbelievers as friend and recipient of worldly wisdom with no adverse effects. Take heed, rather, to 1 Corinthians 15:33: ‘Don’t be misled. Bad companions corrupt good habits.’ Notice, the verse says that even when one has acquired good life patterns, they may be torn down by following the ways of bad companions.”<sup>3</sup>

#### V. The Devastation of the Wicked Sinners You Choose to Hang Around (v4-v6)

- A. The wicked are like chaff – Unbelievers will have unstable and unproductive lives. Their lives are shallow, worthless, and unstable, bringing no value to God’s agenda as they continue to drift into meaninglessness as a result of rejecting God and His Word. “*The wicked*” (same as verse 1) are compared to the worthless *chaff*, which in the process of winnowing grain was blown away by the wind. After the cut grain stalks were tramped and crushed on the threshing floor, they were pitched into the air by use of a winnowing shovel. The grain fell to the ground and the chaff (or straw) was blown away. The main point of the comparison is the worthlessness of *chaff*, which is allowed to be blown away because it is of no value whatsoever. The translation of *chaff* presents no problem in cultures where grains are grown. Elsewhere it is often necessary to use a descriptive phrase which indicates something light and of little value that can be blown by the wind; for example, “dry grass” or “dry leaves.”<sup>4</sup>
- B. The wicked will not stand in the judgment nor sinners stand in the assembly of the righteous – Sinners will be condemned; they will not be with God’s own people.<sup>5</sup>
- C. The way of the wicked will perish – The sinner’s path of life will end in death and utter destruction because he or she did not trust in the person and work of Jesus Christ, which resulted in living a life that is ungodly. The sinner will burn in hell for eternity as a result of rejecting God.

**Key Point:** “Because they trust in the counsel of others like themselves, the wicked know nothing of the liberating and joyous teachings of God’s Torah. This directive law, unknown to them, does not guide their feet as it does the feet of the godly person (cf. Psalm 27:11; Psalm 119:105). As a result, their feet are often found in slippery spots (Psalm 73:18). Their path is full of difficult and dangerous hills and valleys over which the traveler must find his own

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<sup>3</sup> Jay E. Adams, *The Road to Happiness* (Memphis, TN: Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 23, Kindle.

<sup>4</sup> Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reyburn, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 20.

<sup>5</sup> Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reyburn, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 21.

way with no trustworthy guide to depend upon. He is on his own in this confusing world of sin! He has nothing more than the counsel of other unsaved persons like himself. He makes decisions, but is never absolutely sure that they are the right ones. He turns to the right and to the left, only to find them false ways that he must re-travel back to the main road again and again. He is “lost,” as Jesus put it, with no one to save him from destruction. There are, of course, happy times buoyed up by the waves of new and exciting things. But, like waves, they have no substance; they do not last. They ever change from day to day, leaving but their flotsam upon the foam spewed upon the shore of his life. The pleasures of sin are short-lived, as we noted earlier in this book. So, the weary traveler, plods his way from birth to death, never knowing why he is here, what he should do and where he is headed. It is a fearful existence; indeed, it can be called little more than that – a mere existence. The unsaved have no future: ‘the lamp of the wicked will be put out’ (Proverbs 24:20).”<sup>6</sup>

### The Standard Deviations from Authentic Happiness



Walk



Stand



Sit

**Summary:** “So, the warning exists: there is a progression into evil that begins with heeding the counsel of the wicked, next moves to becoming involved in their sinful teachings and activities, and finally ends up with scoffing at truth. Every Christian is susceptible to such influences (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:33). So, ‘let him who thinks that he stands [in biblical teaching], take heed lest he fall [into error].’ Here, in the Psalm, it is absolutely plain that the brother or sister who chooses the counsel, way, and seat of the wicked has missed the road to happiness. Notice the negative: happinesses come to those who do not walk in the counsel, stand in the way, or sit in the seat of the unbeliever. This negative says it all. Happiness comes by following other counsel, standing in a different way, and sitting in quite a different seat. The person who chooses God’s way is the one who comes to know true happiness – the lasting happiness of God. Indeed, this felicity is not merely lasting—it is everlasting!”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Jay E. Adams, *The Road to Happiness* (Memphis, TN: Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 41-42, Kindle.

<sup>7</sup> Jay E. Adams, *The Road to Happiness* (Memphis, TN: Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 21-22, Kindle.