

Self-satisfaction Makes a Happy Life? A Behind the Scenes Look at its Hidden Results

William Henley was a brilliant British poet who lived a short and sickly life. At the age of 12, he developed tuberculosis of the bone in his left leg. At the age of 20, he endured a partial amputation of that left leg. At the age of 53, he succumbed to the illness of tuberculosis.

During that short life, he wrote many articles, poems, and other publications. His most famous writing, however, was a poem called "Invictus." The last two lines of that poem have reverberated down through history ever since he wrote them. Here's what he wrote:

"I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul."

Those two lines have come down through history, and many people have used them as kind of the motto of their lives. In fact, in 1941, Winston Churchill, during the battle between Britain and Germany, used those two lines in a speech to his nation to encourage them to continue the fight and resistance against their enemy.

Those two lines have come down to even affect our day and age, and they affect the spirit of our age. The people in our era use it in this fashion. They say,

"I can live as I please; I will live as I please. I will seek meaning in my life through personal satisfaction, and I will resist all outside interference and attempts to control my life."

The problem is that those people who pursue self-satisfaction seldom take a look behind the scenes to see the consequences that sometimes are hidden to our eyes that come as a result of seeking and pursuing self-satisfaction. We

Genesis, we find in Genesis chapter three, the entrance of Satan who took on the form of a serpent. He spoke to Adam and Eve in the Garden in Eden and tempted them to follow his pattern of life. He chose a pattern in life while one of the heavenly beings before creation. He said,

"I will be like the most high God."

God defeated him and cast him out of the glories of heaven. He came down to earth in the form of a serpent, and tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden to follow his life and to resist and deny God's control over their lives. Adam and Eve sinned and ate of the fruit that God had forbid them to eat. When they sinned, they began to reap the consequences of their own pursuit of self-satisfaction. They sinned against God and God judged them and removed them from the Garden. He had told them that in the day that they ate of the fruit that He forbid them to eat that in that day dying, they would die. Signs of death began to consume the lives of Adam and Eve and soon their lives were filled with sin and the consequences of their self-pursuit.

It doesn't just stop there with Adam and Eve. That's just the beginning. Their children inherited that same sinful nature that came upon them when they sinned against God. A sinful nature began to consume the children of Adam and Eve, and they began to live lives just like their pursuit of self-satisfaction.

We find that the first two children of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, who inherited a sinful nature and offered sacrifices to God. Cain became a murderer in a jealous rage against his brother, Abel, and God judged Cain for his murderous act against Abel. As a result, Cain left the country of Adam and Eve and the rest of the family.

Thus, there was no line for the promised seed of the woman that God had promised in the Garden. He said that the seed of the woman will come and will crush the serpent. Well, Cain was not that line. He was a murderer. So God brought a substitute. He brought another son to Adam and Eve, Seth, in a Genesis chapter five.

We begin to read about the new line of Seth, the line through which would come, the serpent crusher, the Lord Jesus Christ. He came through the line of Seth. Seth had a son by the name of Enosh. In Genesis chapter five that at the birth of Enosh, men began to call upon the name of the Lord. They began to realize their inabilities, and they could no longer overcome the wickedness and the evil within their hearts which drove them to disobedience. So they began to call upon the name of the Lord.

Genesis chapter five records many generations of children after Seth, and it talks about death. They died, and they died, and they died. They died as a consequence of their sin disobedience from the sinful nature they inherited from

Adam and Eve.

We find one exception that occurs in Genesis chapter five, and that is the appearance of a well-known Bible character by the name of Enoch. Enoch was born as one of the offspring of Seth. We read an interesting description about Enoch in Genesis chapter five, verses 22 to 24, I'll read them for you because there are unusual. Here's what it says.

“And Enoch walked with God. All the days of Enoch were 365 years. Enoch walked with God. Any was not for God took him.”

In all of the deaths of the offspring of Seth, there's this one little exception:

“Enoch walked with God and he was not for God took him.”

God translated him up into His presence. He did not see the physical death. That was the normal result of people in those days and even in our day, dying you will die. God said it to Adam and Eve. But here we have this character, Enoch, in the midst of all of the scenes of those who living disobedient lives, lives of self-pursuit and self-satisfaction. We see this one shiny example, this one character walk with God and walked in victory over his sinful nature within him. Enoch walked with God to such an extent that God said that I'm going to bring you home. God brought him home so that he did not see the normal physical death.

We find an interesting conclusion in Genesis 6 to the era which began in Genesis 5. We read about the ultimate consequences of all of the generations of people after Seth and his line and line of Cain and their lives of sin and how they pursuing after self-satisfaction, doing their own thing, living the way they pleased, having no regard whatsoever for God. And we read a very sad story in Genesis chapter six in verse number five.

And here's the description of the era in which Enoch lived. And here's what it says.

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

In the original language, where it talks about their thoughts and the intents of their heart was only evil continually, it literally means that everything they thought they did. There was no preventing the thoughts of their minds, which were evil continually, and they fulfilled them. They pursued them until they accomplished them.

Oh, one at a time of great wickedness. In fact, we read farther on in Genesis chapter six, God destroyed all of the peoples of the earth because he only found one righteous man and his family, Noah. We will reserve that story for the consequences of all of the pursuit of self-satisfaction by the people in his era that ended up in wickedness and such vile wickedness, depravity, corruption, and debauchery , God decided He needed to punish them all and destroy everyone on the earth except Noah and his family.

Well, you might ask yourself a logical question, why would God move upon someone to write this story and to record it in scripture and preserve it over the centuries? Why would He do that, who wrote it, and who was the audience of this writing of this account in Genesis chapter five and the first part of Genesis chapter six?

Well, the writer was Moses. God inspired Moses by the Holy Spirit to write this account, and he wrote a during the time when the children of Israel progressed from Egypt towards the promised land during their 40 years in the wilderness. God inspired it for the children of Israel. They were going through some very difficult temptations and times during that wilderness journey and God had some explicit lessons that He wanted to teach them.

We and we read about the condition of the children of Israel during that wilderness time in the other four books that Moses wrote, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. When we read those books, we read about the wickedness of the children of Israel in the wilderness. They viewed themselves in the same way that the people did during Enoch's time, the pursuit of self-satisfaction. In fact, many times they wanted to return back to Egypt, but they had forgotten that they lived terrible lives as slaves in Egypt.

During those times in the wilderness, they also rejected God and denied His authority over their lives. They didn't want to submit to Him and to His plan and purpose for them. They rejected God's provision for them in leaders, Moses and his brother Aaron. They didn't want to follow them, and they were frequent uprisings against them to try and replace Moses.

They were consumed with their own personal pursuits. Like Henley's poem, they in essence said,

"I will be the captain of my life. I will do it the way I want to do it. I won't have anyone telling me what to do. The morality of my life? I will determine on what I want to establish as a rule and practice in my life and what will give meaning for me."

That describes the children of Israel in the wilderness.

It also describes people in Genesis chapter five. God had some lessons for them to learn in the wilderness, and He used this account of Enoch and his era. He wanted to teach them and to reveal some things to the Israelites about Himself, God, that He wanted them to know.

So, there is an application from this story to the children of Israel during the time of the wilderness. By using this story, God would point out to them their true sinful condition, their sinfulness, their attitude towards themselves, that they were kind of a know-it-all-inksies. "I will do what I want to do in the way I want to do it. I will seek pleasure for myself and that will provide and give me meaning for my life, and their lives became lives of wickedness, depravity, and debauchery, liable to the judgment of God because of their sin.

The story of Enoch also reveals something about God, to the people in Israel, that band of people in the wilderness, their attitude towards God as well. Just like the people in Genesis chapter five, they rejected God. They refuse to listen to Him. They did not want His law and pattern for their lives. They wanted to do things their way. They didn't want any outside influence upon them or outside power telling them and dictating to them what to do and how to live. They wanted to live according to their own desires and pursued them until their deaths and judgment at God's hand.

So, there was a similarity between the children of Israel in the wilderness and the people living in the time of Enoch described in Genesis chapter five and the first few verses of Genesis Chapter Six. God inspired Moses to write that account about Enoch and all of his posterity and those who followed him and their wickedness and their sinfulness, and their reaction and attitude towards God. He wanted the children of Israel in the wilderness to have that story as a rebuke to them as an example, as a lesson to them to drive them towards God.

Now you might say, well, what's that got to do with me? What correlation does that have to do for my life? Does that have any application to me? I can see where there was application between Genesis five and the children of Israel in the wilderness, but what about me? That was centuries ago.

Remember I said at the beginning of our video today that the statements and the lines of the poem from "Invictus" written by William Henley describe the spirit of our age. The spirit of our age is kind of encapsulated in those two lines. Let me read them for you again.

"I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul."

That describes our day today and the attitude of multitudes of people perhaps even you. There're some similarities between our day to day and the children of Israel in the wilderness and the people and the time of Enoch as described in Genesis chapter five. That story that occurred centuries ago has application for our day as well. Because the attitude of the people described in that story defines the attitude of multitudes and our day to day.

"I will pursue my own personal desires and self-satisfaction. The meaning that I somehow arrive at in life will come from what I accomplish from my own personal desires. Nobody outside will tell me what to do."

That attitude leads to a rejection of God, the refusal to listen to Him, to even accept Him and His existence, and to suppress Him in unrighteousness, even though He has made Himself known to us.

We live just like the children of Israel did in the wilderness, who lived in depravity, debauchery, and wickedness. That story has relevance to our day to day, to your life and to my life as well. We can get some examples. We get examples of what not to do. We can see how the children of Israel and those in Enoch's era ended up with the judgments that God brought against them for their attitude in life, their pursuit of self-satisfaction, and their rejection of God.

In fact, it's really interesting. We find recorded in the New Testament in Jude verses 14 and 15. We read about a message that Enoch gave during his lifetime. I would like to read for you what that message was because it has application for us today as well. We can learn from that time of Enoch that we've seen in Genesis chapter five. Let me

read these verses from Jude the second to last book in the New Testament just before the book of Revelation. It tells us what he preached during his lifetime.

Here's what it says,

“And Enoch also the seventh from Adam prophesied, saying, behold the Lord Cometh with 10 thousands of His saints to execute judgment upon all and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed and of all their hurts. Speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

Enoch preached this message in his day to the people of his era, and he told them and warned them.

“One day there's coming the Lord. The Lord is coming and He's going to come with multitudes and thousands of His saints and He's going to bring judgment upon people like you who have lived ungodly lives. Turn from your sin.”

That's the message of his day in the midst of their ungodliness, and that Lord of whom he spoke is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. We read how God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the One whom God promised in Genesis chapter three when He said he would send a serpent crusher who would defeat, destroy, and crush the serpent, the devil.

We find throughout the Old Testament and even here in Genesis chapter five, the early identification of that Serpent Crusher, that One Who would come to defeat the enemy, the devil, the Lord Jesus Christ, the One Whom God sent because of His love for people like you and me. God sent Him to be born of a virgin named Mary. He lived a sinless, perfect life. He did so that He might fulfill all of the law of God on behalf of sinners like us and meet all of God's demands as a substitute. Jesus died not because He needed salvation, but because people like you and I need salvation.

We find no possibility of overcoming the wickedness in our lives, and sin defeats us constantly. God knew that, and He made a provision in His Son, Who lived a sinless life. When he died on the cross, His death finalized the fulfillment of the life of Christ as a substitute on behalf of people like you and me, for when he died on the cross. He paid the penalty for your sin and my sin that we deserve.

God accepted the sacrifice of His Son as a substitutionary death on behalf of people like you and me. Three days after hanging on that cross and death, Jesus rose from the grave, victorious over sin and death and ascended up to heaven where He now sits at the right hand of God, the Father. One day as Enoch prophesied centuries ago, that same One will come with 10 thousands of His saints to bring judgment upon the earth.

Will you be with the saints that come with Christ or will you be with those upon whom He brings judgment?

Therefore, I ask the question, how will you respond to these truths? First of all, you might be a follower of Christ. You might be one that the scripture described as a saint, even though we live in days when we don't think we're living a very saintly life. We are called saints because we are children of God. We've trusted upon Christ, God's provision for sinners like us, and we have found new life in Christ.

We are Christ followers, but you know sometimes the world gets very strong with its temptations, and it's possible, that you have yield to the temptation of the spirit of our age, which is to live life the way of pursuing your own self-satisfaction.

I call upon you as a fellow child of God to repent, repent of that sin that is disobedience. That is not the way God designed you to live as His child. Turn in repentance, trust, faith, and renewal upon Christ. Accept His forgiveness and began to walk with the Lord like Enoch walked with the Lord.

It's possible that you're watching this video, and you are not a Christ follower who has no interest in following Christ. You have followed the example and the pattern of the children of Israel in the wilderness and you followed the pattern of people as recorded in Genesis chapter five: pursuit of your own self-satisfaction, rejecting, refusing to follow and obey God.

I remind you of the warning that Enoch gave in his day and that warning stands for us today as well. There is coming a day when the Lord of glory will come, and He will come from His seat at the right hand of the Father. He will come and bring judgment upon the ungodly. Right now, if He were to come today, His judgment would include you as part of the promised judgment because you are living a life totally consumed upon yourself and your own personal satisfactions. You have rejected God and have refused to submit to Him.

I pray that today the Holy Spirit will come to you, as He did to me many years ago as a young child, and give to you new life like He gave to me many years ago, a new birth. The Bible calls it being born again. I pray that the Holy Spirit will come to you and give you that new birth today, a new birth that will enable you to repent of your sin and turn from it.

That's what the word "repent" means, to turn from one direction and to go the other direction, so turn from your sin and turn and face towards Christ, trusting upon His life, His death, His resurrection on your behalf as your Substitute. Trust Him that His death on the cross a couple of centuries ago, that He died on your behalf. Cast your faith and trust upon Christ.

I pray that the spirit of God will come to you today and give you that kind of new birth which will enable you to turn in repentance from your sin and turn in faith and trust upon Christ as the Lord and Savior of your life, giving you new life, spiritual life, uniting you with the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. I pray that the Spirit of God will come to you today and give to you that new life.

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