

# Things I Can Control

(Compiled by Paul R Blake)

## Introduction:

- A. Matt. 6:25-34
- B. People spend a lot of time anxious about things they cannot control
  - 1. Teenagers worry about what they will look like as adults
  - 2. Older adults worry about aging
  - 3. Nearly everyone worries about their future income and the nature of the world around them
  - 4. Even the things we think we can control because of talents or skills are not fully in our control - Ecc. 9:11
  - 5. We can make plans, but ultimately we must acknowledge our limits
    - a. James 4:13-15

## **I. WE CANNOT CONTROL EVENTS OR PEOPLE, BUT THERE ARE THINGS WE CAN CONTROL**

- A. Enjoy what we have - Ecc. 9:7
  - 1. We are sojourning in this world - 1Peter 2:11-12
  - 2. Take time to enjoy the blessings God has given us - Ecc. 9:8
    - a. Clothing was very expensive, so most people wore basically the same thing every day. But for truly special occasions, a person would make sure everything was well washed and bleached.
    - b. Perfumes were oil based, and the ingredients were expensive, used for special occasions. God's people view every day as a special gift from God and rejoice as if they were celebrating a special occasion.
    - c. We have reason to celebrate - 1Thes. 2:19
    - d. Dirty clothes, unwashed bodies, and unkempt hair are signs of mourning (dust and ashes on the head, torn clothes)
  - 3. When God is before all other things in our lives, God facilitates all other things falling into place; there is no need to worry about what only God can control - Matt. 6:31-33; 1Tim. 6:7-8
- B. Enjoy our families - Ecc. 9:9; Prov. 18:22
  - 1. Enjoy our children - Psalm 127:3; Prov. 17:6
  - 2. We make ourselves miserable because we think it will be better if we could just change this or that about our mates and children. Find a way to appreciate and love them for who they are and what they can be.
  - 3. We will not enjoy our families if all we do is worry about what could happen; stop fretting!
- C. Enjoy our life's work - Ecc. 9:10
  - 1. Young people dread going to school; adults dread going to work
  - 2. We have to go to school and work; it is as much a part of life as eating, sleeping, growing up, and growing old. We cannot stop it or avoid it without becoming a burden to family or the community.

3. What we can control is our attitude toward it; find a way to enjoy it. Life is too short to be miserable, even while earning a living.
  - a. Work as for the Lord - Col. 3:22-24
  - b. The day will come when you will want to do some work, but will be unable due to economy or health
- D. Enjoy our service to the Lord
  1. We need to take advantage of the opportunities we have when we are able - Eph. 5:15-16
  2. When we have opportunities to serve the Lord directly, we should eagerly give our all
  3. 1Cor. 9:24-27; Ecc. 12:1; Rom. 12:11; Zech. 8:20-23

## **II. WE ONLY CONTROL OUR SPIRIT, CHOICES, WORDS, AND ACTIONS**

- A. We can choose to be miserable, or we can choose to enjoy life as it comes.
- B. Events will happen to us that we cannot stop, things completely out of our control or oversight
- C. We can only control our attitudes, spirits, words, and actions.
  1. You cannot control others. "You can change only what people know, not what they do." Scott Adams
  2. You cannot control circumstances. "He lives a tragic life who bases his happiness on things entirely out of his control." Laura Munson
  3. You can control yourself. "Happiness is an attitude. We either make ourselves miserable and weak, or happy and strong. The amount of work is the same." (Francesca Reigler)
  4. Start believing in your ability to control yourself. "The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any." (Alice Walker)
  5. And stop blaming everyone else or the circumstances around you. "If you could kick the person in the pants responsible for most of your trouble, you wouldn't sit for a month." (Theodore Roosevelt)