

PSALM 32, "THE PURSUIT OF UNHAPPINESS"

¹Blessed is he
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.

²Blessed is the man
whose sin the LORD does not count
against him
and in whose spirit is no deceit.

³When I kept silent,
my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

⁴For day and night
your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was sapped
as in the heat of summer.

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.

I said, "I will confess
my transgressions to the LORD"—
and you forgave
the guilt of my sin.

⁶Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you
while you may be found;
surely when the mighty waters rise,
they will not reach him.

⁷You are my hiding place;
you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.

⁸I will instruct you and teach you in the
way you should go;
I will counsel you and watch over you.

⁹Do not be like the horse or the mule,
which have no understanding
but must be controlled by bit and bridle
or they will not come to you.

¹⁰Many are the woes of the wicked,
but the LORD's unfailing love
surrounds the man who trusts in him.

¹¹Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you
righteous;
sing, all you who are upright in heart!

Discussion Questions (Choose a manageable number to discuss)

1. The title Dr. Duane Litfin assigned to his message refers to the Declaration of Independence phrase about the rights of all to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." What did the "pursuit of happiness" mean to the drafters of the declaration?
2. Contrasted to external sources of happiness, what (vv. 1–2) did David understand to be the source of ultimate happiness?
Dr. Litfin said that our culture is in utter denial of its fundamental need for forgiveness. What evidence would lead you to agree or disagree?
3. David's understanding of true happiness, Dr. Litfin asserted, was a "slate wiped clean." How prone are we to try reversing roles with God, assuming the judge's bench ourselves and—in the words of C.S. Lewis—putting God "in the dock"?
How does this skew our "pursuit of happiness"? (See Proverbs 28:13.)
4. What sin ruptured David's relationship with God?
(See 1 Kings 15:5; 2 Samuel 11 & 12.)
This major transgression consisted of what individual specific sins?
What (vv. 3–4) were the results of David's attempt to ignore his sin?
(See also Psalm 51.)
5. What restorative steps did David have to take (vv. 5–7) to be enabled to once again sing songs of deliverance?
6. Are you confident that your "slate" is currently wiped clean?
If not, what response (v. 5b) is now required of you?
7. What factors lie behind our mule-like tendency (vv. 8–10) to resist God's readiness to provide us with instruction, guidance, and protection?
8. Is your outlook more one of groaning (v. 3) or rejoicing (v. 11)?
How are you experiencing the Lord's unfailing love surrounding you?