

Southern Adventist University
Knowledge Exchange

The Main Thing Devotional

Chaplain's Office

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Fall Week of Prayer Edition

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You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. - Psalm 16:11

Our happiness and our holiness are not two separate things; they're the same thing. Fall Week of Prayer concluded last Friday focusing on the theme, The Gap. One of the week's highlights was the baptism of two beloved students who visited with campus chaplains in preparation for their public commitment to Christ. The week of prayer saw other students take their next step of faith by committing to Bible study, baptism, pre-marriage counseling, and service.

On Friday night, Pr. David Asscherick passionately spoke about the paradox of choice. He shared that, "As the number of choices grows further, the negatives escalate until we become overloaded." In other words, we would naturally think more choices would liberate us but paradoxically it leads to tyranny. When the world tells us that God's Law limits our freedom, the opposite is profoundly true. God's Law is not designed to limit our happiness, it is designed to bring the greatest measure of joy to our experience. The psalmist reveals that life's fullest joy can only be experienced in God's presence since He leads us to the greatest level of satisfaction.

In our pursuit of happiness, we can be tempted to think that happiness and holiness are two separate things when they are actually the same thing. Like two sides of the same coin, happiness and holiness cannot be separated from each other – trying to do so simply reduces the value of the experience. Ellen White writes, "The pleasures and amusements of the world are never satisfying, or healing to the soul... When tempted, just say, He cares for me, He makes intercession for me, He loves me, He has died for me. I will give myself unreservedly to Him" ^[1] God is more than enough to satisfy our emptiness; there is not gap in Him!

Reflection:

The enemy seeks to create a false dichotomy by provoking us to choose between holiness and happiness. The reality is we do not have to choose between Jesus and joy, Christ and church, doctrinal beliefs and devotion to God, the Law and freedom, holiness and happiness - it is both; there is no gap! Is there a choice paradox that is making you feel anxious? Is it possible that you do not need to choose, it is both/and? Write down the choice you need to make and ask God for the clarity you need.

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for the gift of Your Law that frees me to experience the fullness of Your joy. I often feel anxious by the myriad of decisions I face each day; help me hold onto You and the safety found in Your promises. Remind me that no gap exists between my holiness and my happiness; they are the same in Christ Jesus.

RESOURCES

- HURRY! Through the generosity of a donor, those who attended Fall Week of Prayer can purchase the elegant set of *The Conflict Beautiful* for just \$100 (compared \$179). Simply go to typesandsymbols.store and use discount code SAUWOP at checkout. This promotion ends this week and is exclusive to Southern students!

- If you missed any of the Fall Week of Prayer worship services, you can still watch them at <http://southern.edu/vespers>
- Follow **@ministryandmissions** on Instagram for updates on events and programs as well as encouraging messages and [check out our website](#) for many new resources.
- If you may be feeling anxious or have recently experienced loss or grief, call 423.236.2782 to talk to a counselor on campus! (This is a free service for Southern students.)
- Talk with Chaplain [Anna Bennett](#) or [Joseph Khabbaz](#) if you need someone to pray with or have a desire to grow spiritually.
- **Join us for vespers at Collegedale Church or online this Friday at 7:30 pm.**

^[1] Ellen Gould White, *Reflecting Christ* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1985), 109.