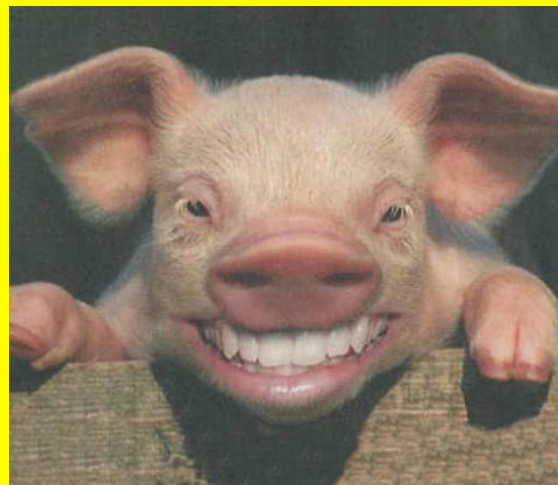




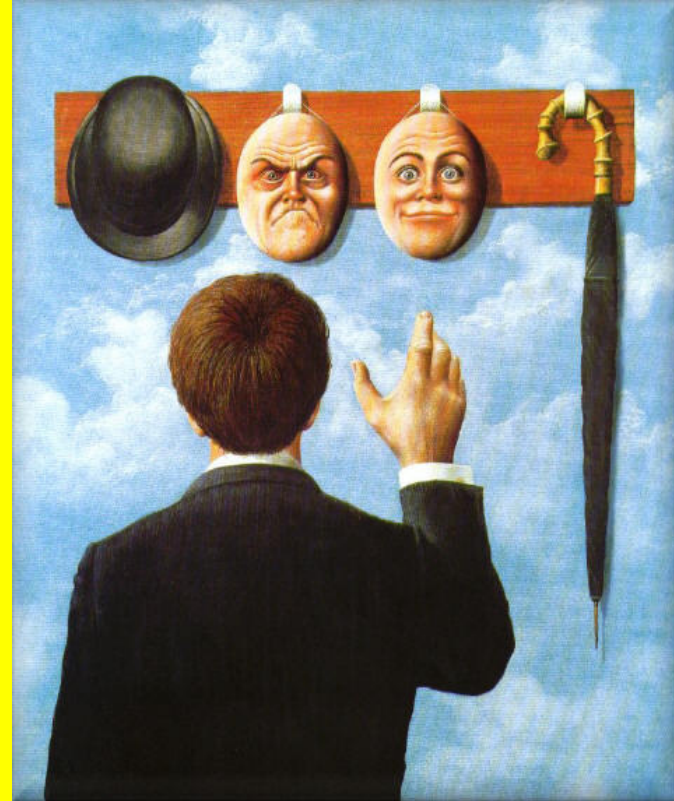
How to Be Happy

(Or at Least Close to It!)



**Everyone wants to be
happy.**

**But what is
“happy”?**



True Happiness...

“The beatitude we are promised confronts us with decisive moral choices. It invites us to purify our hearts of bad instincts and to seek the love of God above all else. It teaches us that true happiness is not found in riches or well-being, in human fame or power, or in any human achievement—however beneficial it may be—such as science, technology, and art, or indeed in any creature, but in God alone, the source of every good and of all love.” (CCC #1723)

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Not to be confused with...

Contentment



Not to be confused with...

Laughing all the time



Not to be confused with...

“Busy” -ness



Not to be confused with...

Pleasure



Ecclesiastes

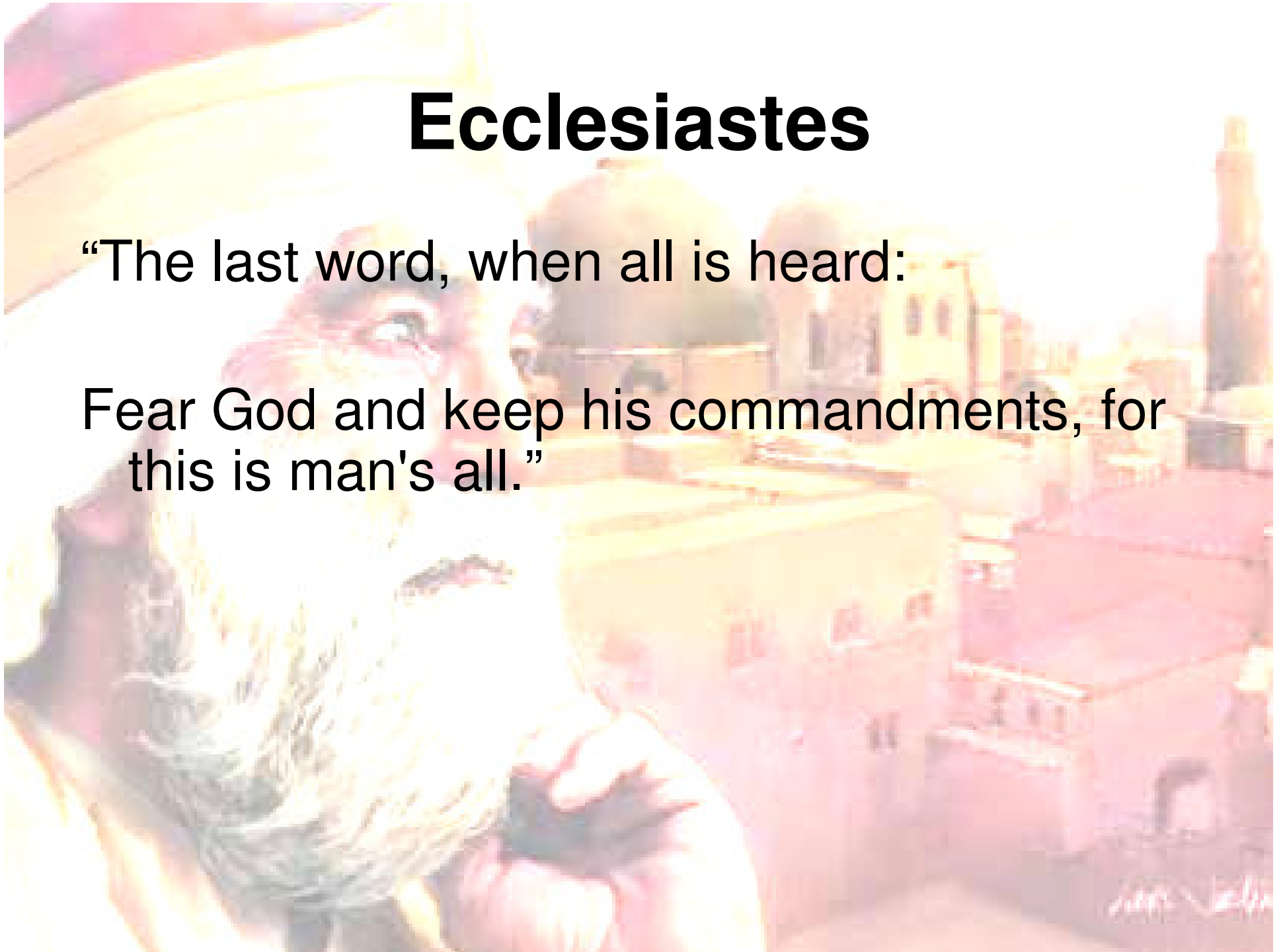
“I applied my mind to search and investigate in wisdom all things that are done under the sun...until I should understand what is best for men to do under the heavens during the limited days of their life...

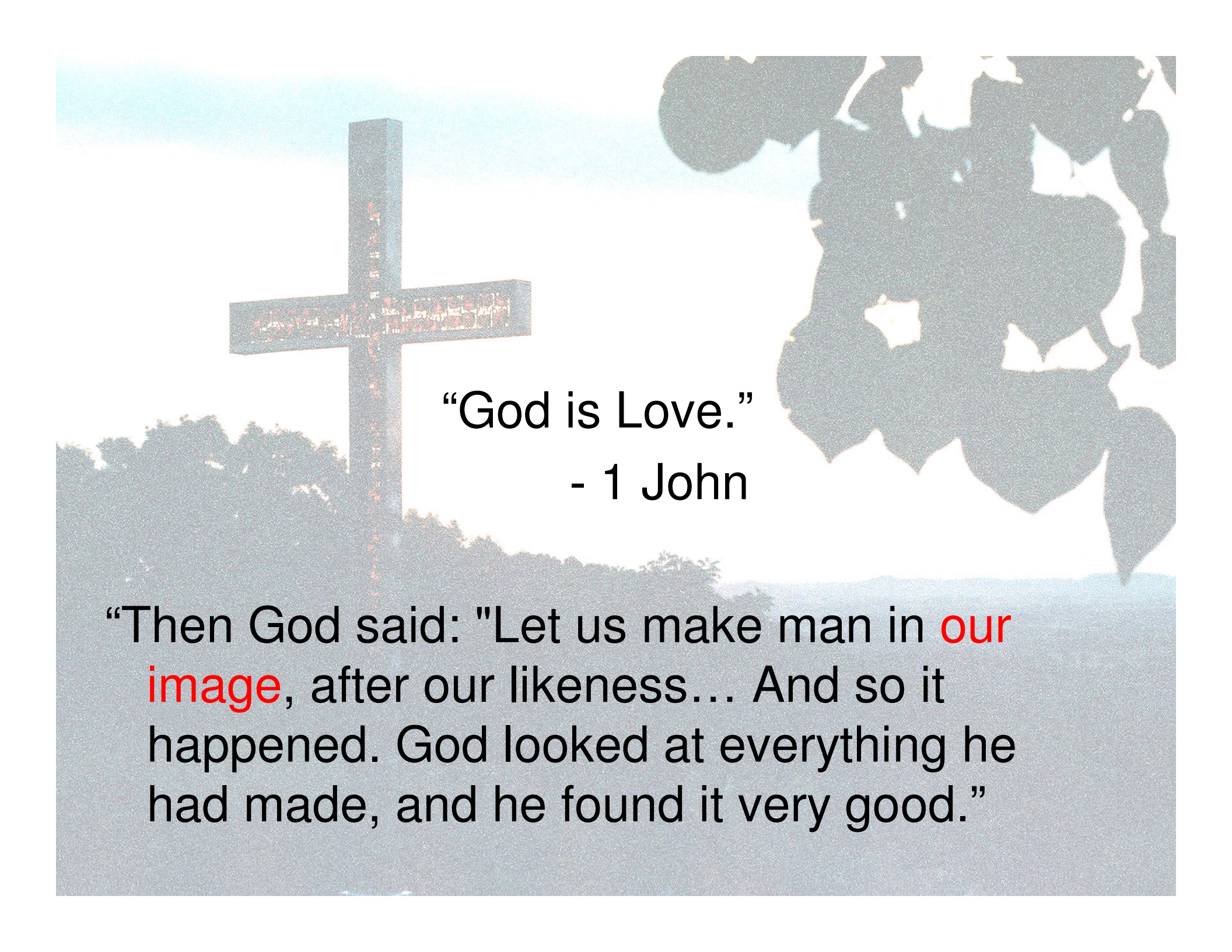
But when I turned to all the works that my hands had wrought, and to the toil at which I had taken such pains, behold! all was vanity and a chase after wind, with nothing gained under the sun.”

Ecclesiastes

“The last word, when all is heard:

Fear God and keep his commandments, for
this is man's all.”





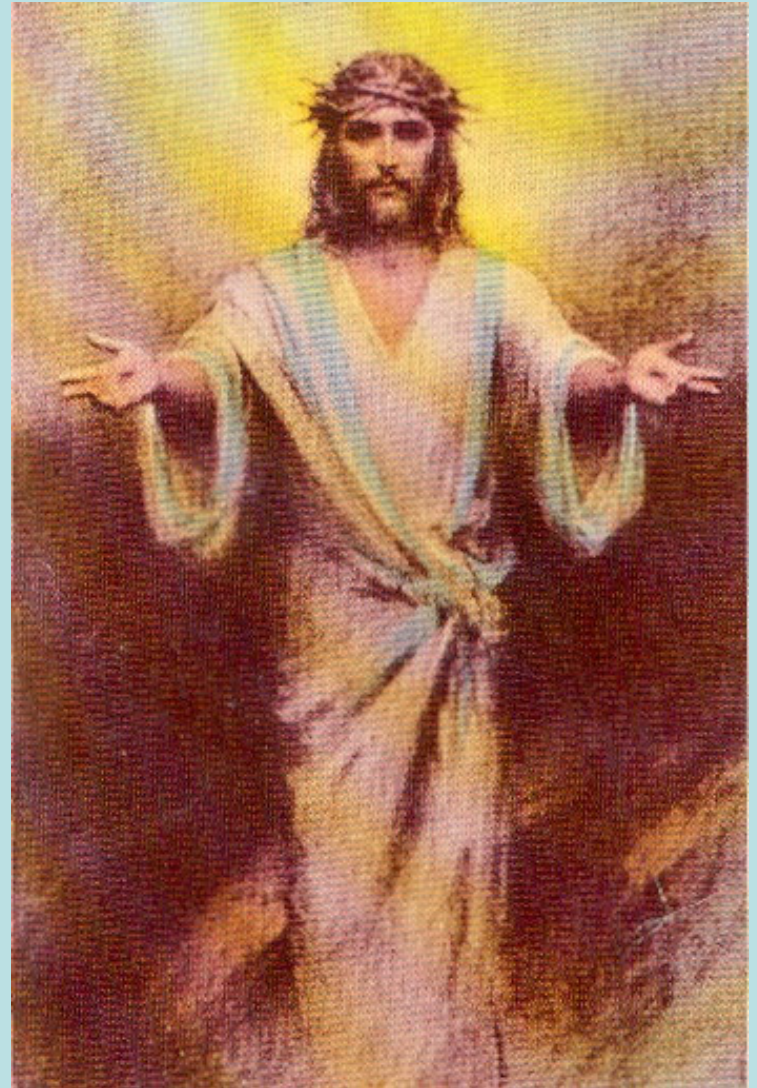
“God is Love.”
- 1 John

“Then God said: “Let us make man in **our image**, after our likeness... And so it happened. God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.”

Does God want
us to be
happy?

John 15:10

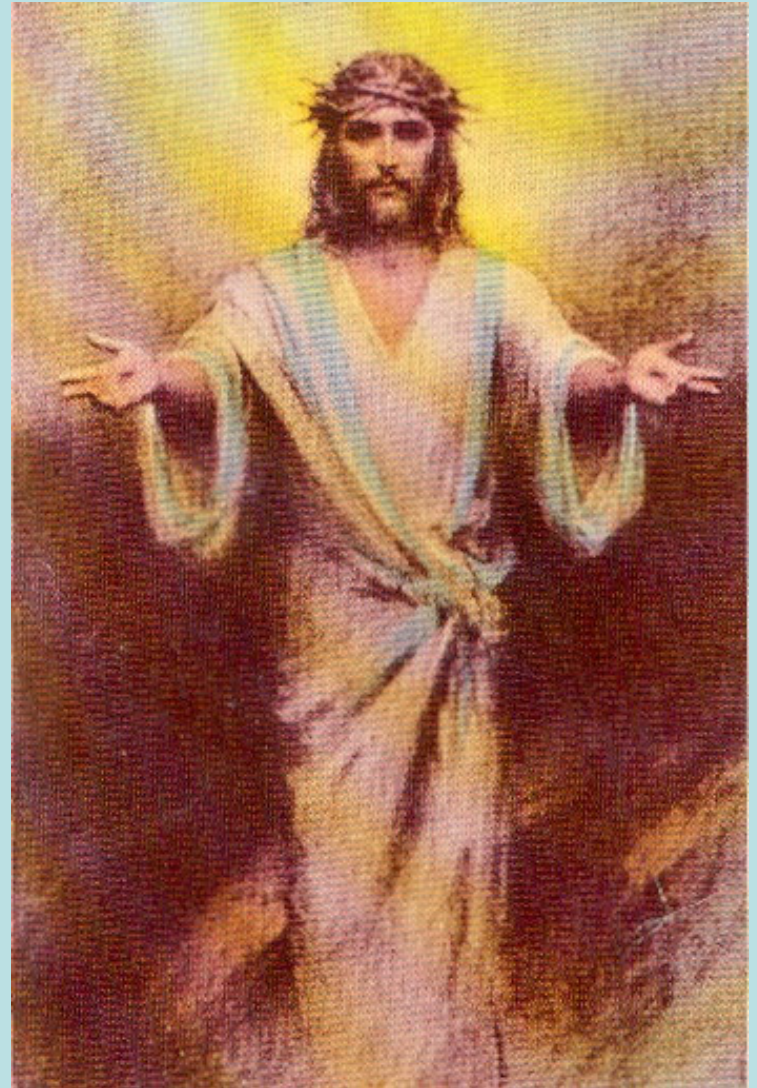
“If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love...”



John 15:11

“...I told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete.”

John 10:10 “I came so that they may have life and have it more abundantly.”



The Formula for Happiness

- To be happy we must love and be loved.
- To love and receive love we must be free.
- To be free, we must obey God and cooperate with His grace.

What Love Is

- Unconditional good will; the wanting and doing of what is ultimately best for someone regardless of what they want and do for us. (Greek: agape)
- Not to be confused with:
 - Affection, which is a feeling (Gk: philia)
 - Physical attraction (Gk: eros)
 - Pleasure of someone's company

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Impediments to Freedom

- Ignorance (“The truth will set you free)
- Physical Limitations
- Fear
- Oppression/Destitution
- Addiction
- Sin (the big seven and all their derivatives)



The Seven Capital Sins

- Pride
- Avarice (greed)
- Envy
- Wrath (vengeful anger)
- Lust
- Gluttony
- Sloth



Sin and love...

- “Mortal sin is a radical possibility of human freedom, as is love itself. It results in the loss of charity...” (CCC #1861)
- “Venial sin weakens charity... ‘Venial sin does not deprive the sinner of sanctifying grace, friendship with God, charity, and consequently eternal happiness.’” (CCC #1863)



The Beatitudes

Happy are those who...

- Are poor in spirit (Luke just says 'poor')
- Mourn
- Are meek
- Hunger and thirst for righteousness
- Are merciful
- Are pure of heart
- Make peace
- Suffer for the sake of justice

Those who are poor in spirit...

- More than just *detachment* from material things
- Knowing, embracing and living according to the truth that *we have no righteousness of our own and we own nothing. Everything is God's. It's all grace. "The Lord's are the earth and its fullness."*
- This gives us the freedom to live the law of love as led by the Spirit with our "possessions"

Those who mourn...

- Who have “painful sorrow”
 - For loss of loved ones
 - For personal sin
 - For the sin of the world
- Those who are able to do this are not afraid to be vulnerable, and therefore are more able to love freely
- The same defenses which are meant to protect us from this kind of pain also keep us from loving

Those who are meek...

- Not having to get “what we want” or have “our way” through domination, coercion or manipulation
- When we dominate, coerce or manipulate, we are not loving, and, therefore, cannot be happy
- Meekness is not to be confused with weakness, or being a doormat

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...

- A loving, reconciled, right relationship with God is the source of all happiness
- “*Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be yours besides.*”
- This frees us from the priorities of the world, freedom to love God with all our heart, soul and strength.

Those who show mercy...

- Mercy is to give people what they ultimately need in spite of what they might deserve.
- To be confident of the mercy of God in our present lives and our final judgments is a peace that frees
- Unforgiveness and revenge are terrible slaveries that greatly restrict our ability to love

Those who are pure of heart...

- To live according to your conscience
- When one's eye is only on Jesus, one can see God in themselves and in others
- A pure heart makes us at peace with ourselves and able to enjoy being alone with God.

Those who are peacemakers...

- “If you want peace, work for justice.”
- It is a joyous thing to cooperate with Jesus in his work of reconciliation.
- Making peace, in all its forms, is a work of love , and therefore a great source of happiness

Those who are persecuted for the sake of justice...

- “So they left the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name.” (Acts 5:41)
- But rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice exultantly. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”
(1 Peter 4:13-14)

Those who are persecuted for the sake of justice...

- The prophets
- Archbishop Oscar Romero
- Gandhi
- Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Anyone who threatens the power of the oppressor with a message of justice
- "...because your reward will be great in heaven."

Other Beatitudes

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is **more blessed to give than to receive.**' (Acts 20:35)

Other Beatitudes

Then he said to the host who invited him, "When you hold a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment. Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; **blessed indeed will you be** because of their inability to repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

- Luke 14:14

Other Beatitudes

Blessed are they who wash their robes so as to have the right to the tree of life and enter the city through its gates.

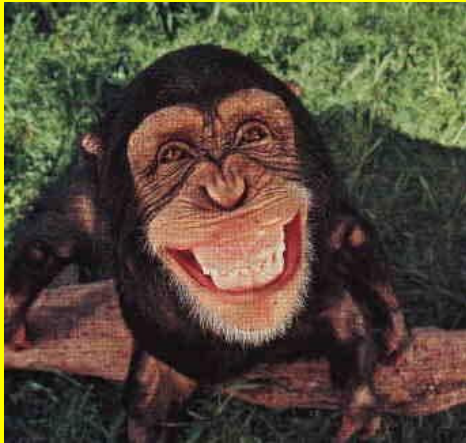
- Revelation 22:14

My own thoughts...

- Sing a lot. Sing songs of praise and thanksgiving from your heart.
- Have grandchildren and spend a lot of time with them. Play with them and tell them about Jesus.
- Eat, drink and enjoy your friends.
- Do manual labor and exercise often.

How to be happy...?

- Let yourself be loved.
- Love yourself, love others (including your enemies) and love God in every way - every chance you get.
- Every time you find it difficult to love, identify the obstacle, pray for God's grace, and do everything in your power to get the obstacle out of your life.
- Help others be more free to love.



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