The Problem of Happiness, Lesson 10

John 17 – Architectural Overview:
  o Jesus’ high priestly prayer is helical, cyclical, multilayered, and rich, so it is easy to lose one’s way amid its compounding petitions (illustrations: helix/ DNA models).
    • The Lord’s purposes behind this complicated architecture are also illustrated by the design of a common cable (illustrations: wire assembly/cable).

    • Initially the individual strands of wire are visibly distinguishable, but once interwoven, the distinct wires become more challenging to identify, as collectively, they’ve become a cable.
      ▪ Moreover, what is true of the interwoven wires visibly is also mirrored in their functionality: the specific purposes of the individual strands assume a place in the background, and the cable’s general purpose takes over the foreground.
        ➢ In other words, the wires collectively become a cable with a larger purpose (e.g. for HDMI connectivity).
      • Each individual, color-coded strand of wire is still critical, and each still serves a specific purpose (e.g. power, neutral, ground, switch, or relay).
      • However, while each single strand of wire has its own individual purpose, once interwoven and connected, the strands also collectively serve larger, more significant purposes.
        ▪ Some other larger, more significant purposes might include: operating the electric windows in one’s car, or utilizing a thermostat to change the heating or cooling conditions in one’s home.
      • Likewise, Jesus’ high priestly prayer, spiraling and multilayered, is also richly purposeful on multiple levels:
        ▪ Its distinct strands of truth are critical, and each serves a specific purpose.
        ▪ While each single strand of truth has an individual purpose, once interwoven, the strands also collectively serve larger, more significant purposes.
  o Jesus’ high priestly prayer should be read and studied in light of its purposefully complex architecture (Jn 17:1-26).
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- Some of the individual truths in John 17 that we’ll be exploring that have critical, specific purposes (in the order that they are first introduced in the text):
  - Intra-Trinitarian intimacy, fellowship, and planning (vss. 1-26)
  - Giving and receiving glory (vss. 1, 4-5, 10, 22, 24)
  - Eternal life (vss. 2-3)
  - Knowing and loving God (vss. 3, 7-8, 23-24, 25-26)
  - Keeping, receiving, and believing God’s word/truth (vss. 6-8, 13-14, 17, 19)
  - Sanctification and consecration (vss. 9, 17-19)
  - Marital oneness (vss. 10-11, 20-24, 26)
  - Vulnerability, danger, cross-bearing, and adversaries (vss. 11-16)
  - Fulfilling joy (vs. 13)
  - Church’s commission and mission (vss. 18, 20-23)
  - Ultimate joy and blessedness (vs. 24-26)

- Some of the collective truths in John 17 that we’ll be exploring, that have larger, more significant purposes:
  - John 17 is the consummate conclusion of the Farewell or Upper Room Discourse (Jn 13:31-17:26).
  - It is the prayer of an ultimate high priest who is reconciling a sinful people to a holy God, so it presumes an imminent and ultimate atonement.
  - It is a peek into a heavenly master plan, the intra-Trinitarian Covenant of Redemption, a plan that was conceived in eternity past and extends into eternity future.
  - John 17 reveals that relational love defines the new creation order (something that either implicitly or explicitly informs every sentence).
  - It serves to instruct believers regarding what to expect, how to pray, and what they should strive to be as they live amid two ages, simultaneously.
    - In Ecclesiastes, the “present evil age” was in the foreground and the “age to come” was in the background, but in John 17, the “age to come” is in the foreground and the “present evil age” is in the background.
      - Per the Farewell discourse, the values of the “age to come” are what believers are to be known for in this world.
        - A new, distinctive emphasis that should be clearly prominent in our lives, corporately and individually.
  - It brings to light the sources, features and dynamics of supreme happiness, a not-yet reality that is to be partially realized in the already (our primary focus).

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1 Gal 1:4
2 1 Cor 10:11; Heb 6:4-8; 9:24-26; Mk 10:29-30