

Want to be Happier?

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One might think that happiness was the most common thing in America today. We have advanced our knowledge through research. We have advanced our technology through innovation. We have made every job easier and every activity more obtainable. With our great advances we should be overflowing with happiness, right? According to a Gallup Poll published in the TIME Magazine website, we are not even among the top ten statistically happiest countries. In fact, we are in 12th place.

We may wonder why this is the case. Maybe it is the failed American family structure—the divorce rate is sky rocketing and the number of single parent homes is increasing constantly. Maybe it is the national debt burden—immense amounts of money; we could not even imagine twenty years ago; are now a daily reality. Maybe it is the daunting economic forecast—many are wondering when our money will be worth something again.

Perhaps it is far deeper than all of those things. All the causes of our noticeable lack of happiness are things that we could not define by this one sermon. It may be uncertain why people are not happy today but we do know a couple of things about happiness that are certain: God wants us to be happy and He shows us the proper way of achieving happiness. His advice for happiness has been around for thousands of years. Let's open the scriptures today to consider God's plan for happiness.

Happy is the Man who finds Wisdom (Prov. 3:13). The search for wisdom is a centuries old venture that still continues to fill hearts in our modern day. There are many areas of wisdom for which one might search but we know that with God this wisdom in particular would be based on the applied knowledge of His will. Many people in search for wisdom other than with God have found themselves rather the opposite of happy. The pursuit of worldly wisdom in vain and empty since it does not begin to compare with God's wisdom (1Cor. 1:20-25).

We know that God does not suggest the pursuit of human wisdom; He wants us to be happy so we need something better. Proverbs 3 tells us that the wisdom God intends for us is: better than silver or gold (v.14); better than any material thing to be desired (v.15); and a source of real happiness (vs. 16-18).

Each of us needs to know that wisdom is obtainable. No one is happily frustrated; we need to know the satisfaction of real discovery. Knowing that wisdom is "applied knowledge" we must get the first part right to arrive at the right result. The word of God is the information we need. We need the word of truth (John 8:31-32); the source of faith (Rom. 10:17); and instructions from God (2Tim. 3:16-17). We must properly apply His word, knowing that it will result in the wisdom we are seeking (1Tim. 4:13, 15-16).

Happiness is ours when we know what God desires from us—and we have done it (Matt. 7:13-14; 21-23). Happiness will be ours when we know that we have obeyed Him and have the true hope of salvation (1John 5:13). Happiness is certain to those who are assured that righteousness will not be without reward (John 14:1-6; Rev. 21:1-4).

Happy is the Man whose God is the Lord (Psalm 144:15). The most intrinsically valuable part of human life is our freedom to choose for ourselves. Just as Joshua proclaimed, "Choose for yourselves this day who you will serve", we have always had the ability to make just such a choice (Joshua 24:15). Man has used this freedom to put many things in the place of their Creator. Some worship carved or molded images (Deut. 5:7-9; Acts 17:22-23). Some worship themselves rather than their Creator: pursuing perversions (Rom. 1:20-32); being determined toward self-interest (Phil. 3:18-19); and led by the next lust (1John 2:15-17). Some worship money (1Tim. 6:9)—making all their decisions, even to stray from the faith, based on how it will affect their checkbook (1Tim. 6:10). None of these replacements can bring any true happiness.

When we put God first in our lives we will be happy: knowing we will have the things we need (Matt. 6:32-33); knowing the spiritual hope of God's promises (Rom. 6:23); and knowing we are in a victorious relationship that will carry us through this life (James 1:17-25) into life everlasting (Matt. 25:46; John 4:13-14)

Happy is the Man whose Hope is in the Lord (Psalm 146:5). Ephesians 1:18 speaks of God's "hope" and says that it is part of God's "calling". God calls us to leave sin. He calls us out of the world and away from its hopelessness (1John 2:15-17). The "world" is a description of a state without God wherein we are enslaved to sin (Rom. 6:16) and lost in darkness, away from God's true light (Col. 1:13).

God also calls us to change. He calls us to a change of life. We must change to become as He wills (Rom. 12:1-2) by putting off the acts of darkness (Rom. 13:12-13) and our old sinful way of life (Eph. 4:17-25; Col. 3:1-10). God calls us to the hope of salvation. Leaving behind sin and changing our ways, is for the hope of salvation (Rom. 5:8-10).

Are you hearing the call to hope? The scriptures reveal "how" we are called. 2Thessalonians 2:14 says, that God calls us, "through the word of the gospel". God calls us by the gospel to a true hope: The hope of freedom from our own sins (Rom. 6:17-18); the hope of a righteous life (2Tim. 3:16-17); and the hope of an eternal relationship with Him (John 1:12; 1John 3:1-3)—in Heaven (John 14:1-6). That is happy hope!

Statistically we are not a happy nation. There may be many factors contributing to this problem but one thing is for certain; the further our fellow man runs away from God the farther away the hope of happiness remains. Each of the three points of advice for real happiness from God took us right to His word—seeking His wisdom; His Lordship; and His hope.

Are you happy? Travelling through this life without God is never going to bring you true happiness. God wants you to discover His plan for true happiness, will come to God in full-obedience today. The opportunity is yours right now come to God in full obedience; find His wisdom and hope; let Him rule your life. Happiness can be yours, starting today.

Strong Tea

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom..." (Col. 3:16). "...As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby..." (1Peter 2:2). "Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

Consider the difference between a strong and weak cup of tea. The same ingredients--water and tea--are used for both. The difference is that the strong cup of tea results from the tea leaves' immersion in the hot water longer, allowing the water more time to get into the tea and the tea into the water. The longer the steeping process, the stronger the cup of tea.

In the same way, the length of time we spend in God's Word determines how deeply we get into it and it gets into us. Just like the tea, the longer we are in the Word, the stronger we become. (From 1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, p. 31)

A Moments Wisdom

- Some professed Christians want to live like goats and die like sheep.
- Televangelists: The WWF pro-wrestlers of religion.
- If psychics really have the ability to "see," why do they ask you for your name?