

Happiness and laughter

The contemporary definition of happiness may imply any degree of well-being, from mere contentment or the absence of sorrow to the most intense experience of joy or fulfillment. A fuller description of the content of happiness is found in the Scriptures and is verified through human experience.

From a biblical point of view happiness is always the by-product of something with a greater value. Any person who makes his own happiness to be the top priority of his life will experience only frustration. Jesus clearly indicated that anyone who selfishly grasps his own life actually forfeits any chance of experiencing real life (Matt. 16:25). What are the greater values that carry with them both contentment and joy?

Happiness, according to the Psalmist and others, comes to those people who allow the living God to be God in their life (Ps. 144:15; Prov. 16:20). Man, being finite, must find an infinite reference point for his own existence or else his life will ultimately be absurd. Man was created in God's own image and made for fellowship with him.

True happiness becomes a real possibility only when a man is properly adjusted to the justice of God. Happiness never comes to those who have no moral base (Prov. 29:18; Ps. 128:1). To live without a moral base is to live on a subhuman level. God has not left mankind scrambling in the dark for moral absolutes.

He gave the Ten Commandments as the basis for mental, moral, and spiritual health. Happiness comes only to those who learn how to relate well to others (Ps. 133:1; Matt. 19:18-19). It may be said that a person is as rich or as poor as the quality of his personal relationships.

The Judeo-Christian faith has always been relational, God relating to us by grace through faith and enabling us to relate to one another in love. Without caring relationships we remain alone and discontent.

Happiness comes to those who have mercy on the poor (Prov. 14:21). Generosity breeds contentment.

To have the kind of compassion which compels one to respond to the needs of those who are dispossessed and who cannot give anything in return is to taste the quality of life that God himself possesses.

Happiness comes to those who see their work as a gift from God (Gen. 2:15; Prov. 12:27; I Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:6-13). From the beginning it was intended that mankind would participate in a productive manner in the life process. God gave Adam, the first man, a place and a task. His place needed his work.

Man's labor actually was an expression of his affinity to God. With the fall of man came the distortion and drudgery of work (by the sweat of your brow you will eat your food, Gen. 3:19); yet God, in his redemptive activity, purposed to redeem man's work as well as man himself. It can rightly be said: happy is the person who thoroughly enjoys his work.

Happiness comes to those who possess true wisdom (Prov. 3:13). Wisdom is the spiritual and intellectual ability to integrate truth as a whole. Wisdom begins with God who has clearly revealed himself in history (Prov. 9:10). The person who possesses wisdom will reflect a wholesome balance in his life (Phil. 4:5-9). Genuine happiness and inner peace are the results of mind occupied with the Person of Christ.

A balance in life will include a profound acceptance of one's self, of others, and of life itself (Phil. 4:12). The wise person does not give himself to peripheral issues nor is he caught pursuing tangents (Matt. 23:23). His is a life of faith, confidence, gratitude, and hope, which produces an enthusiasm for living and opens the door for happiness.

The spiritually and mentally healthy person has the greater potential for true happiness. A physically sick person has the potential for genuine happiness regardless of his pains and sufferings.

A person so preoccupied with his own safety, his own anxiety, his own depression that he cannot lay aside his defensiveness sufficiently either to form deep friendships or to respond to life spontaneously will experience little or no happiness at all. Healthy people do not distort reality to fit their wishes.

True happiness must be reality-based, it is not an illusion. Happiness does not exclude pain or grief, but only depression and the sense of worthlessness. The person who is in the process of actualizing his own unique potential will have the greatest opportunity for experiencing happiness.

The possibility for happiness is greatly increased when there is the freedom to learn through experience, the openness to change, and the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances. Rigidity blocks the life process. The psychological necessity which is most important to every human being is love. From birth to the grave, being loved does more to fill the psyche with a sense of well-being than anything else.

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Happiness is always connected to love. Genuine happiness is a by-product of grace orientation in the life of advancing believers. The grace of God fills the emptiness in the soul through the resident Bible doctrine or epignosis.

Sharing the happiness of God has nothing to do with our surroundings or circumstances like the details of life. It is the result of knowing God and being saturated with divine thinking. The more we know God, the more we know His thinking. The more we know His thinking, the happier we become.

Inner happiness is the result of continuous spirituality and spiritual advancement toward maturity of the believer. It is not based on our present conditions, surroundings or situations in life. Inner happiness is based on Bible doctrine resident in the soul called epignosis and not on our emotional conditions, surrounding circumstances or material prosperity. Inner happiness is dependent on our relationship with God and our spiritual standing not on our success in life.

Our material, physical, sexual, and emotional conditions have nothing to do with true happiness. Inner happiness surpasses all human understanding because the believer can possess it even in the midst of severe sufferings and crisis. Inner happiness is a sign of spiritual maturity and spirituality not a sign of outward joy. It is peace within the soul and mind of the believer.

Inner happiness is not boasting of self or man but of Christ. Not of the great things you wanted to do for God but of things Christ has done for you. The unspiritual and immature believer cannot fake the inner happiness that comes from God. No amount of prayer or fasting can produce it.

Laughter is not inner happiness for several reasons:

- First: Laughter is an expression of ecstatic delight but inner happiness is not an ecstatic experience [Psalm 126:2].
- Second: Laughter is often the expression of disdain or derision against somebody rather than expression of inner happiness. Our God is not a God of laughter [Psalm 2:4].
- Third: Laughter can be a manifestation of deep sorrow [Proverbs 14:13] or an expression of rebelliousness or defiance of the soul [Job 5:22].
- Fourth: Laughter can be an expression of joyful wonder [Genesis 17:17] or disbelief [Genesis 18:12].
- Fifth: Laughter is easy to fake, easy to emote or imitate, it is inherent from mankind.

The counterfeit inner happiness of the cults is mostly shown outwards. They spiritualize almost everything. The speaking of tongues and holy laughter are not manifestation of the genuine inner happiness. They have programmed and animated smiles the reel type of happiness, one that comes out from their defiled souls as commanded by the old sinful nature.

Their smiles and laughter are all hoaxes. The pseudo-inner happiness does not have degrees or categories. All of them can instantly reach the peak of ecstatic joy as they follow the mood of the praise and worship leader.

In eternity past God desired to share His happiness with man in time. To do so, God must share something of His character with man and this is only possible through regeneration and perception of the Word of God (Nehemiah 8:10). This is only accomplished through the principle of grace. In grace God found a way to share His happiness with the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. This included the availability of the Word of God, the intake of the Word of God, and the maturing of the believer in Christ.

Such happiness is confined only to the plan of God, and man enters into the plan of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, the possibility of inner happiness begins at the cross. There is no instant or automatic happiness in the Christian life here on this Earth. Certain conditions must be met, the filling of the Holy Spirit and consistent intake and application of the Word of God in your life.

All happiness prior to the cross is not only superficial, but temporary and non-sustaining in adversity. Human happiness is unreal, unstable, depending on pleasant circumstances and the acquisition of the details of life. Details such as money, success, pleasure, social life, friends, loved ones, health, sex, materialistic things, status symbols. Human happiness is according to happenings. All happiness of the believer is based on his relationship with the Word of God. This means both intake and application of the Word to your every experience based on residual doctrine in the soul.



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