

Does Your Happiness Matter to God?

Does God want you to be happy?

This question of happiness can lead to a contrasting set of extremes among Christian beliefs. On one hand, God is a cosmic killjoy who delights in our suffering. On the other hand, God wants everyone to live in prosperity with no trials or sickness. I have often found the truth of the Bible is usually in the middle of two man-made extremes.

Pastor Daniel Fusco is on my podcast this week, and he discusses his new book, *Crazy Happy: Nine Surprising Ways to Live the Truly Beautiful Life*. Daniel even talks about how the title alone drew criticism among other Christians. Even one of his close friends admitted to not wanting to read it until someone recommended that he at least read one chapter, after which he understood Daniel's heart for writing the book.

As Christians, we have to redefine what happiness as God defines it versus what the world defines as happiness. In the Beatitudes in Matthew 5, Jesus started 9 statements with "Blessed are ..." Basically, blessed are you when the opposite thing happens to you compared with what we think would be the blessed life. "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:10, NIV). We know from the Bible that it is not just a matter of if persecution and trials come but when. Our joy in the Lord should not be situational; we should have the blessed hope of eternity that keeps us grounded. Even though we may be sad, joy is a deeper realization that God will never leave you nor forsake you.

As Christians, we have to understand that our attitude reflects the joy that is inside. Those who are not Christian

are constantly watching us to see how we react to the things this life throws at us. If we do not have joy and happiness, if we are grumpy and mean, we diminish our witness to those who fail to see Christ in us.

If we stay grounded in the Word of God and spend time building our relationship with Jesus, we will be able to face trials because our foundation is unshakeable. If we only turn to Jesus when things go wrong, it is much easier to give in to fear and doubt that steals our joy.

Social media can also steal our happiness. Comparison kills contentment, and when we see what someone else has that we do not, we can become discontented with the blessings God has given us.

Isolation can steal our joy as well. We need to be in community with a body of believers who can spur us on in our Christian race. We can't do this alone, and even if you have been hurt before by Christians, it doesn't mean that you should eliminate fellowship with all believers because of one incident where someone didn't look like the Jesus they claim to serve.

For more on happiness, be sure to listen to my full conversation with Daniel Fusco on *Everyday Discernment* on Charisma Podcast Network now. {eoa}

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Tim started the ministry of *Discerning Dad* as a way to write and encourage Christians to grow in discernment and make better decisions that honor God. He has a book called *Everyday*

Discernment: The Importance of Spirit-Led Decision Making as well as multiple YouVersion Bible Plans. Tim also hosts a podcast called Everyday Discernment, which is a top-ranked Christian podcast on Charisma Podcast Network and Edifi Podcast Networks. Tim lives with his wife, Jamie, and their two children in Arizona.

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