

What God Says It Takes for You to Be Happy

Are you a happy person? Do you have pleasure, enjoyment or contentment with your life today?

If you'd like to increase your happiness, this devotion explores eight Bible verses about what God says it takes for a person to be happy. I recommend using them as a checklist. Meditate on each one and ensure that you are practicing the principles.

Since you only go around in this life once, then why not do what you can to make it a good one? Notice that none of these principles are dependent upon your outward circumstances, but on your inward decision of the heart daily.

The eight happy Bible verses are below:

1. Proverbs 3:13 – “Happy is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gets understanding.” According to Proverbs 9:10, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” I define the fear of the Lord as honoring, reverencing and respecting the Lord enough to first pay attention to what He has to say and then to do what He says.

Imagine you have authority over someone. If that person disobeyed your instructions constantly, would you say that person honored and respected you?

In the Lord's case, His desire is to work all things together for your good. If you really believe God's intentions toward you are good, then why deprive yourself of that good? Obedience is good, even if that obedience may feel uncomfortable to your flesh in the short-term.

The other specification for happiness is knowledge of the Holy One. As you walk with God in your daily life, your relationship with Him deepens. You grow in knowledge of His character, not just His acts. Growing in the knowledge of God is the essence of eternal life that Jesus died to give us.

It always amazes me that the same God who created the earth, the moon, stars and mountains wants me and you to know Him personally.

2. Deuteronomy 33:29 – “Blessed are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help, who is the sword of your majesty! Your enemies will cringe before you, and you will tread upon their high places.”

You become happier when you meditate upon your identity in God through Jesus Christ. You have been saved from the wages of sin, which is death. You are no longer a slave to sin.

Sin does not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under God’s grace (see Rom. 6:14). God’s grace gives you power to overcome. Hallelujah! Once you believe you have all power over the enemy through Jesus according to God’s Word, then you have power to tear down any “high places” in your life.

In the Bible, the high places were those places used to worship idols. Today, I think of the “high places” as mental strongholds comprised of any thoughts you have failed to take captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ. I also think of high places as anything in your life that you put before God.

Even something good, like food, can become a high place if you find yourself running to it for safety and comfort rather than running to God.

It is hard to be happy when you feel out of control in any area. But the good news is through the Holy Spirit, you have the fruit of self-control. But like any muscle, you need to

exercise self-control to make it stronger. You can't just wish for it; you need to work for it. Your recipe for ultimate success is to start with something small and then build upon that.

3. Psalm 146:5 – “Blessed is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.” The God of Jacob is a God of blessing. Genesis 32:22-32 records the story of how Jacob wrestled with God and said, “I will not let You go, unless You bless me” (Gen. 32:26c). Today, we don't have to wrestle a blessing out of God. God's blessings are bundled in His Word, in His promises.

You are happier when you acknowledge God as the source of your blessing and your help. So you seek God first through effective prayer whenever you experience fear and distress in your life. And you have strong confidence that He will respond to your faith.

4. Proverbs 3:18 – “She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy is everyone who retains her.” The “she” this scripture is talking about is wisdom. Are you sensing a theme here? Scripture says wisdom is a tree of life. I find it ironic that the enemy told Eve in the Garden of Eden that eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would make her wise. But the truth was, she already had the source of wisdom available to her—God.

All Eve had to do was ask Him and He would have given it to her, for James 1:5 promises: “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally and without criticism, and it will be given to him.”

In the natural, wisdom is the ability to select between two or more choices and then take the best course of action. You don't consider just what you think is good now; you are able to consider the future at the moment of decision.

If you are making unwise choices in any area of your life and

you know that, then you cannot be happy. Ask God for wisdom through prayer and He will teach you wisdom.

5. Proverbs 14:21 – “He who despises his neighbor sins; But he who has mercy on the poor, happy is he.” God commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves. In addition, 1 John 4:20 challenges us with a critical question: “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar. For whoever does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?”

So again, if you have hate in your heart towards anyone, you are disqualified from being a happy person.

This Scripture says you can be happier through having mercy on the poor. If you see a person in need and have the resources to help that person, through prayer and/or supplying their material needs, your care and generosity to them can increase your own happiness.

6. Proverbs 16:20 – “He who handles a matter wisely will find good, and whoever trusts in the Lord, happy is he.” Because the Lord magnifies His word above His name (Ps. 138:2), I believe the highest respect you can give the Lord is to honor and obey His word. Jesus Himself is the Living Word, so you honor Jesus when you abide with Him through hearing and doing the Word.

That is why it is critical that you take time each day to study God’s Word, meditate upon it and do it until it becomes part of you. You are called to renew your inward man day by day (see 2 Cor. 4:16), and you only do that by renewing your mind through God’s Word.

God’s intent for His people is that we bring glory to Him through reflecting His character to others. It is a high calling indeed. Deuteronomy 4:6 says this about God’s Word: “Therefore, keep and do *them* [His commandments], for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations

which shall hear all these statutes, and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people."

Evidence of trusting in the Lord is obeying the Lord. As Pastor Charles Stanley says, "Obey God, and leave all the consequences to Him."

7. Proverbs 28:14 – "Happy is the man who is always fears, but he who hardens his heart will fall into mischief." Reverence is a sense of deep respect for the Lord. It is recognizing with humility that you serve One who is greater than yourself. In old movies when a person entered the presence of the king, they would bow before Him and address Him as "Your Grace."

I love how someone once defined humility: "Humility is bowing low enough to allow the Lord to work on you." Specifically, the area God wants to work on is your heart. Scripture says that every issue we have originates in the heart.

Most people don't want that. They want God to fix their outward circumstances and get them out of pain, while leaving their hearts untouched. Why? Because sometimes God's heart surgery can hurt.

But that is the very thing you need if you want God to heal your life. Sometimes you can resist doing the thing that you need to do the most.

If you harden your heart to God's Word and refuse to receive from Him, your destiny is calamity, not happiness.

8. Proverbs 29:18 – "Where there is no revelation, the people perish; but happy is he who keeps the teaching." With revelation comes illumination. You need God's viewpoint on situations because without it, you are left to your own understanding. Your own understanding will most often lead you to acting without any self-control, just doing what feels good to you at the moment regardless of future consequences.

So it is wise to ask God for revelation if you lack restraint in any area.

Finally, Scripture says you are happy when you keep the law. Jesus fulfilled every requirement under the old covenant. But Romans 13:10 tells us what we do to keep the law in the new covenant: "Love works no evil to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."

You are happier when you love people. Again, we are called to love our neighbor as ourselves. So you can only love your neighbor to the degree that you love yourself. And you can only love yourself when you can receive God's love for you and believe the truth of your identity in Him.

In summary, you can see the pattern for God's way to happiness. Again, none of these are dependent upon your outward circumstances, but on your inward decision of the heart daily:

Gain wisdom and understanding, which is found in honoring, reverencing and respecting God; Find your identity in God and trust in Him as your source; tear down high places in your life; exercise natural wisdom and self-control; love your neighbor as yourself and show mercy to others; heed and obey God's Word.

Attend to these principles each day consistently and greater happiness will be yours. {eoa}

*Once 240 pounds and a size 22, **Kimberly Taylor** can testify of God's healing power to end binge eating. She is an author and the creator of the Christian weight-loss website . Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.*

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