

3 Secrets to a Happier Life

I believe everyone has a desire to be happy. In fact, much of what we do is motivated by that desire, yet there are so many people who are not happy with their lives because they are striving to get happiness in the wrong way.

Through studying God's Word, I've discovered several principles we must live by to be happy or to increase our level of joy.

Make a Decision

The truth is, you'll never be truly happy if you don't make a decision to be happy, no matter what your circumstances may be. Because true godly joy is not based on what is happening around us.

One definition I've read describes happiness as the product of expecting something good to happen to you. I love this because it means that even if something good isn't happening to me right now, I can have hope and expect that something good *will* happen. We don't have to wait for our circumstances to dictate whether we should be happy or not.

I realize we can't always control our circumstances or what happens to us, but we can choose our attitude. And no one can take our hope in Christ if we don't let them. The key to this is believing what God's Word says about us, especially about who we are as His creation and through the salvation we have in Jesus. (Psalm 139:13-14, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 and Ephesians 1 are just a few great Scriptures to study about this topic.)

Live to Give

Another biblical principle that guarantees our happiness is found in Matthew 16:24 (AMPC): "Then Jesus said to His

disciples, If anyone desires to be My disciple, let him deny himself [disregard, lose sight of, and forget himself and his own interests] and take up his cross and follow Me [cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example in living and, if need be, in dying, also].”

This Scripture is saying that if you want to be happy, you have to learn to give your life away, or “live to give.” This is not easy in the beginning because we are naturally selfish people, accustomed to thinking about ourselves first. But in order to really live, you have to die to yourself first. I’m not talking about physical death, but being willing to give up what you want all the time to be a blessing to others.

I know what this is like because I used to think I was the center of my universe, and I was miserable! But when I learned the truth about what Jesus meant when He said we must deny ourselves, lose sight of our interests, forget about ourselves and take up our cross to follow Him, it was life-changing.

To forget yourself doesn’t mean you shouldn’t take care of yourself or that you never get to do anything you want to do; it just means you don’t have yourself on your mind all the time. And taking up our cross to follow Jesus is all about losing sight of ourselves and our own interests so we can say: “Here I am, God. I give my life to You and I want You to use me in any way that You want to work in and through my life.”

Please God, Not People

We also have to understand that if we let other people run our lives, we won’t be happy. God created you as a unique individual with a special plan and purpose in this world. And you have to be who He created you to be—not what others may want you to be—to fulfill your destiny.

Being yourself is all about learning to follow your heart and the leadership of the Holy Spirit in your everyday life. But many times, we find ourselves doing what others say we’re

supposed to do and worrying about what they think or what they will say.

The apostle Paul understood this. In Galatians 1:10 (AMPC), he said, "Now am I trying to win the favor of men, or of God? Do I seek to please men? If I were still seeking popularity with men, I should not be a bond servant of Christ (the Messiah)." He was saying here, "If I was living to please people instead of God, I would have lost the opportunity to be an apostle of Jesus Christ."

Refuse to give up the destiny God has for you because of a fear of rejection. Remember that God loves you and He always has your best interest at heart, so whatever He shows you to do, it's for your good. Sometimes being obedient to Him requires us to do things we don't feel like doing or that are hard to do. But if we trust Him, we'll find that doing things His way, by His grace, leads us to the happiest life we could ever have.

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times best-selling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries Inc. She has authored nearly 100 books, including *Battlefield of the Mind* and *The Mind Connection* (Hachette). She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit .