

Discover the Happiness You Really Want in Your Life

What do you really want in life? I believe that most people would say they just want to be happy, and this is God's will for us. John 10:10b (AMP) says Jesus "came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows]."

The kind of happiness Jesus offers is not simply an emotion based on what's happening in our lives; it's something much deeper that gives us the ability to be truly happy and to glorify God in our world.

As believers in Christ, we have been chosen by God to be holy—"[that is, consecrated, set apart for Him, purpose-driven] and blameless in His sight" (Eph. 1:4b). And 2 Corinthians 5:20a (NIV) says, "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." But we can't represent Him well if we're sad, disgruntled people with no hope or joy.

The truth is the only kind of person who can be truly, permanently happy is one who enjoys peace of mind, trusting God in every situation to make all things work together for their good (Rom. 8:28) and putting their hope in Him. Romans 15:13b says God wants to fill us with His joy and peace as we trust in Him, "so that [we] may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

I love this verse because it shows us that even if we're not happy with our current situation, we can be happy because we're full of hope, expecting good things that we don't have yet. We can have hope *on purpose* because hope in God is based on what we believe in His Word and not on our circumstances.

This means even though we can't always make our circumstances

line up with the way we want them to be, we can have hope that good things are on the way. Because hope in Christ is believing that something good is going to happen. And we can choose to be full of hope any day that we want to do so!

So the first key to increasing our happiness is to decide to be happy. We don't have to wait until something good happens—we can choose not to waste one more day being sad, negative and sour. Instead, we can believe what God says more than what we feel or think or how things look in our current situations; we can expect good things and have joy in the Lord.

I know this works because my life has been dramatically changed by learning what the Bible says about who God is, how He loves me and who I am in Christ. I used to be a miserable person, stuck in the pain of my past and the abuse I experienced throughout my childhood.

I constantly had negative, self-defeating thoughts, such as "What's wrong with me? I can't do anything right! Nothing good will ever happen to me, and I'll only have a second-rate life because I'm damaged goods." I didn't like myself, so I was difficult to get along with and unhappy most of the time.

The key to experiencing my breakthrough and having peace, joy and happiness in my life was renewing my mind with God's Word, learning how to think as He thinks. God's Word is the truth, and it has inherent power to change us (1 Thess. 1:5). Through Bible study and spending time with God in prayer, I discovered that although in myself I am nothing, I am unconditionally loved by God, I am a new creation in Christ, I have everything I need and I can do everything I need to do to fulfill God's plans for me (2 Cor. 5:17, 21; Phil. 4:13).

I can honestly say that I enjoy my life today because God's truth has set me free from the lies and negativity that used to torment me in my thoughts day after day. Jesus says in John

8:31-32 that if we will diligently study and follow His teaching, we will know the truth and the truth will set us free. That's the kind of happiness I want for you!

Start renewing your mind today with God's Word. Look up every Scripture you can find about God's love for you, what He's done for you through Christ and how much He wants to bless you and use you as His representative. Decide to increase the happiness in your life every day!