

Joyce Meyer: What You Must Do to Be Truly Happy

Matthew 6:33 (NIV) says, “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” The key to living the abundant life God has for us is learning to make Him our *first* priority.

Yet many people seek the “things” first, things like jobs, houses, cars or other material things.

To *seek* means “to crave, pursue, to make sacrifices to get, to go after with all of your strength and all of your heart.” It is a mistake to crave and pursue possessions, believing they will give us the lasting peace, joy and contentment that only come from God’s presence in our lives.

Take a moment and ask yourself, “What am I seeking? What do I spend most of my time thinking or talking about? How do I invest the majority of my energy?” These are important questions you need to answer from your heart.

Deep and Wide

I got to a place in my life some years ago where I had lots of material things, but I still wasn’t very happy. Have you ever been in this place? Maybe you’ve wondered, *What’s wrong with me?* as I did. Well, when I asked God that question, His answer to me was, “Joyce, you’re shallow. It’s time to step out into the deep.”

That was a wake-up call. I was a shallow Christian. I wanted the fruit of God’s Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience—and all operating in my life, but I wasn’t seeking that, so my roots weren’t very deep at all. I had it backward ... as many of us do at times. We want the money, the house, the platform or whatever our “thing” is. So, we pursue that rather than the

true treasure of God's presence.

Just as a tree needs roots to go down deep and spread wide in the soil for it to grow strong, healthy branches that can withstand the elements, Christians need to develop deep spiritual roots in Christ. Our lives need to be deeply rooted and grounded in the Word of God and in His love—not our stuff; otherwise, we soon find that out when the storms of life come, our things don't make us so happy anymore.

That's because those things can't give us what we truly need. And it doesn't matter how much stuff you have if you're miserable.

Don't get me wrong ... I'm not saying it's bad to want nice things or to desire a good life. But we need to examine our priorities when it comes to those things. We need to learn to seek God's face and not His hand. If we will seek His face, His hand will always be open to us.

Cultivate

You may wonder what it means to seek God's face. Maybe you aren't used to hearing that term. It just means we need to take time to cultivate a relationship with God ... to get to know Him. We need to learn who we are in Christ and trust what His Word says about us. And with prayer, Bible study and *time*, we will.

We are to pursue God in prayer, crave time in His Word and go after a relationship with Him with all of our heart and strength, even if it means sacrificing some of our desires. Because the Bible never tells us to seek things, but instead, "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt. 6:33).

The Bottom Line: What Really Matters

It seems that so much of the time, we get it the other way

around, going after possessions as if we'll never get what we want if we don't. But I encourage you to think about what it will be like at the end of your life. I know that's not a pleasant thought, but do you really think you'll be concerned about your stuff? Or do you think you'll want family near?

We must establish our lives in Christ. If we are to be truly happy—with or without all the stuff—we must learn to trust our lives to God. If we will pursue His kingdom and His righteousness, we will see what it means to be content in life. As the apostle Paul said, "... I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content" (Phil. 4:11b, NKJV).

The key is to seek the kingdom first. Pursue God; seek His face and go after a relationship with Him as if it is *everything* to you! You will find that if you seek His face, His hand will always be open to you. So, learn to be content in your relationship with God—He knows exactly what you need.
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For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-teaching CD series Pursuing What Matters Most. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting .

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