

Looking For A Spiritual Mapquest?

✖ Anyone who has traveled with a specific destination in mind knows that before you head out on the road, it helps to map out your route. If you're not lucky enough to own a GPS, then you at least need to use a road atlas or go online and map out your route using a mapping service such as MapQuest.

As many people travel down life's highway in search of happiness, they figure they'll run into it somewhere, someday. They head off in a general direction, assuming happiness will pop up on the way like a highway sign directing them which way to turn, how many miles to go, and what exit to take to get there. Happiness, however, isn't like a tourist attraction, an all-you-can-eat buffet, or a theme park.

Some people aren't even sure what they're looking for. They say, "Happiness," but they think, "No problems." They say, "Happiness," but they think, "Perfect family." They say, "Happiness," but think "Financial freedom." They say, "Happiness," but think, "Physical attractiveness." If only they can find their way to the latter the former is guaranteed.

I love MapQuest. Granted, I was pretty good at finding my way around before, but with MapQuest, I can get where I'm going in the most efficient way possible. No more wandering around streets in the general direction. Now I know not only where I'm going but also how far away it is, how long it should take me to get there, and explicit step-by-step directions on how to go each leg of the trip. If I want to, I can ask it to find the shortest route possible or the quickest route possible. I can choose to avoid highways, toll roads, even roads that are closed seasonally. I can see the traffic conditions associated with my route, real time, to be alerted to congestion and

traffic bottlenecks. I can even print a visual map, along with text instructions. Whoever thought of this was a genius.

Some people want a road map for life. They want to be able to type in “life problems” or “family problems” or “financial problems” or “body problems” as the beginning point, push a button, and—*voilà!*—have a step-by-step, individualized map created for them with “happiness” as the ending point. They want a personalized printout of how to get from their place of problems and arrive at that elusive destination of happiness.

It’s a tall order, but, yes, I can do that. Not that I’m such a genius myself. I just happen to know the Genius who created a different kind of MapQuest, a spiritual MapQuest. Like the earthbound MapQuest, access to it is free for the asking. All you need is to be connected. The spiritual MapQuest is called Scripture, and the Creator is God Himself.

But our destination of happiness and God’s are a little different. As much as I hate to admit it, my destination of happiness often reminds me of my son, Benjamin’s. For him, happiness is arrived at when everything around him is going his way and all the adults in the general vicinity are in sync with his needs. He’s 5, after all. I’m a bit older than that, but I still fight against a childish view of happiness that’s akin to the excitement and self-satisfaction of a 5 year old. This destination of happiness is about the “woohoo” rush of exhilaration and the “that’s what I’m talking ‘bout” pumped fist of fulfillment. It’s a great place to be, but it isn’t a place you stay very long.

There is a huge difference between the world’s definition of happiness and God’s. I think what it all boils down to is that the world says that happiness comes about through the correct alignment of *outward* circumstances such as no problems, good looks, wealth, health, and pleasant and satisfying experiences. The world says just line up enough of these circumstances on the left side of the equation and it’s

guaranteed to equal happiness on the right side. The huge disclaimer, of course, is that if your right side doesn't add up correctly, then it's because you didn't appropriately line up the things on the left side.

God says happiness comes about through the correct alignment of the *inner* qualities of love, faith, righteousness, peace and self-control. And the beautiful thing about God is that He doesn't expect you to find and fine-tune these qualities on your own. Instead, He gives them to you as a gift of His Spirit (see Gal. 5:22-23). Aligning yourself with God brings you closer in line with the qualities of the Spirit. When you live a life full of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, you live a happy life.

God wrote the map of your life. He knows every step of the way before you do. He knows what works and what doesn't. He knows what will make you truly happy because He made you—mind, body and soul. He knows that the best path for you to take is to follow His spiritual MapQuest. Are you following His directions?



Adapted from *Happy for the Rest of your Life* by Dr. Gregory L. Jantz, copyright 2009, published by Siloam, a Strang Company. In this book Dr. Jantz shares wisdom from the Bible along with his own personal examples and experiences to show misconceptions about true happiness, how to avoid detours that keep you from it, and how to attain and keep it. To order a copy click on this link: