

The Secret to Discovering True Happiness

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 have wrong mindsets and attitudes.

But through studying God's Word, I've discovered how to overcome the hindrances to true happiness.

It's All in Your Mind

Happiness can be defined 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.

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. It's so important to understand that you can choose your thoughts; you don't have to just think about anything that drops into your mind.

Proverbs 23:7 (AMPC) says, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he." I like to say it this way: Where the mind goes, the man follows. And Romans 12:2 (NIV) teaches us not to "conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will."

When we choose to think the way God thinks, our mind is renewed and we can have the "*same attitude* and purpose and [humble] mind" that Jesus demonstrated for us (Phil. 2:5 AMPC,

emphasis mine). THIS is the secret to experiencing real happiness and joy.

It's All About Attitude

Your attitude is your thought life turned inside-out. It's the mental posture you take toward whatever is happening in your life...how you decide to approach your circumstances and think about them. The good news is you can change your whole life by simply changing your attitude.

Here's a personal example that demonstrates what I'm talking about. One morning I woke up with a headache due to sinus allergies and I just wasn't feeling great. I got up and my thoughts went something like this: "My head hurts. This is a workout day and I don't want to do that..." I got that far when I realized I wasn't helping myself by being negative and I needed to turn my attitude around.

So I started saying, "Thank You, God, that I can walk even though my head hurts and that I can still work out today. Thank You for my home, thank You for my family and for all You're going to do in me and through me today!" You know, it only took a few minutes for my whole mindset to change and I felt better.

I believe it's God's will for us to be the same whether our circumstances are easy or hard, comfortable or painful. And we can do it if we choose to trust Him and believe that no matter what's going on, He is with us, He has our best interest at heart and He will cause all things to work together for our good in His way and His time (Rom. 8:28).

It's a Choice You Can Make

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 away our hope in Christ if we don't let them.

Viktor Frankl, survivor of a Nazi concentration camp during World War II, said, "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

Maybe you have an attitude of self-pity because your life has been hard and you've suffered injustices. Maybe you've been stuck in the pain of a past experience because you've refused to forgive the one who hurt you. Or maybe you have a tendency to be negative, rather than a person who naturally has a more positive temperament.

I used to be very negative and I've had to work at having a good attitude. But I've learned that instead of blaming other people or things for my problems, I have to give them to God and take responsibility for my attitude. When I started doing this, then I began to experience changes in my heart and mind that have brought genuine peace and happiness to my life.

I want to encourage you to spend time in God's Word, discovering the truth about His love for you and all Jesus has done for you. Choose to believe what God says about you as His unique masterpiece that He created (Eph. 2:10; Ps. 139:13-14), and about who you are in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17-21; Eph. 1).

This is the key to true happiness in your life!

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