

What Does The Bible Say About Happiness?

December 26, 2021

I hope everyone had a great Christmas. Christmas is a time when families get together. It is a time for good food and good memories. It is a happy time to celebrate Jesus and what God has done for us through him.

The honest truth is that for many people, Christmas is not the happiest time of the year. It is one of the most painful times of year. It is a lonely time. For some, Christmas is only memories of good times in the past because loved ones are gone and health has faded.

Since Christmas is supposed to be a time of happiness but it often filled with sadness, that began me thinking about the topic we will look at this morning. What does the Bible say about happiness?

For most people, happiness is elusive. It is based on what happens each day. Sometimes we are having a good day. Sometimes we have a bad day. Sometimes we are happy. Sometimes we are sad.

For others, happiness is something they are hoping to achieve in the future. I will be happy when I get the perfect relationship, when I graduate, when I move, when I lose weight, when I find a better job, when I get married, when I have children, then I will be happy.

I have to warn you. Happiness doesn't work that way. Changing our circumstances or improving our circumstances can help, but it won't bring us to the place where we are finally happy.

When Tom Brady was interviewed by Steve Kroft after winning yet another Super Bowl, an obviously unhappy Brady said,

“Why do I have three Super Bowl rings, and still think there’s something greater out there for me? I think ‘God, it’s gotta be more than this...’”

In other words, you can be as successful and rich as Tom Brady but you still won’t be happy. Achieving our goals does not provide lasting happiness.

That brings me to the proposition I will put before you this morning. Happiness will always escape us until we understand that true happiness can only come from God and what he has done for us through Jesus. Only God through Jesus can give us lasting happiness, a happiness that sticks and stays.

In the 1700s, George Whitefield said this about the relationship between Jesus, sin, Satan, and happiness:

“Is it the end of all religion to make men happy, and is it not every one’s privilege to be as happy as he can? Does Jesus want your heart only for the same end as the devil does, to make you miserable? No! He only wants you to believe in Him so that you might be saved. All the dear savior desires is to make you happy, that you may leave your sins, to sit down eternally with him.”

George Whitefield was aware of a truth we often fail to see. Sin always destroys happiness. Satan tempts us with what we think will make us happy when in reality, Satan knows all sin will make us miserable. God’s purpose for us through Jesus is to take away our sin and make us happy.

As we think about sin and its corrosive nature on our planet and to our happiness, look what the Bible says God has for us in the future.

The apostle John, in the book of Revelation, aided by an angel is given a vision of the new heaven and new earth that await all of us who are God’s children through Jesus. What does it say John saw?

No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. Revelation 22:3–4 (ESV)

In the future, God will re-create the universe. It will be like this universe but it will be free of sin. It will have all the beauty of this world without any of the death and pain. In addition, God will raise our bodies from the dead. Our bodies die because of sin. God will give us our bodies back but he will make them indestructible. Our resurrection bodies will live forever and never get tired or weak. God will destroy the effects of sin.

In the new creation that awaits us in the future, God will give us back the wonders and pleasure of the Garden of Eden but they will be a thousand times better. For all eternity, we will live with Jesus and with one another and be perfectly happy because there will be no more sin and we will see God face-to-face.

As Christians, this is what we look forward to in the future. This is what we should anticipate in the future. In Matthew 19:28, Jesus said it this way:

...whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. Acts 3:21 (ESV)

As Christians, we look forward to one day in the future when God will put away sin in ourselves and in every part of the planet once-and-for-all. We will be on a new heaven and earth with Jesus that will be a Garden of Eden with pleasures a thousand times better than Adam and Eve ever enjoyed. That should make us happy! We should anticipate this future with more enthusiasm than a 6-year-old waiting for toys under the tree on Christmas morning.

This is where we can find happiness in unhappy times in our lives. As Christians, we are looking at the future and have our eyes fixed on our happiness in the future. This is why Paul said these words:

...as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.
2 Corinthians 4:18 (ESV)

The only way for anyone to be truly happy in this life is not by getting our happiness from our circumstances. Good times come and go. Good times can't make anyone permanently happy. They didn't for Tom Brady; they won't for you. The only way for us to be consistently happy is to be happy in what God has done for us and look at the future of what he will do for us through Jesus. That is happiness guaranteed forever. Anyone in this world trying to find lasting happiness without what God has done for us through Jesus is like trying to get wet without water. It is like looking for light without the sun. It won't work.

God is the source of all happiness. God created happiness. Trying to find happiness without God is impossible.

Does God want us to be happy?

I think the best answer to that question came from C.S. Lewis when he said, "It is a Christian's duty to be as happy as they can be." Did you ever think of it as your Christian responsibility to be happy? Did you ever think of happiness as your Christian duty? There are many reasons for us as Christians to be happy.

1. The God we serve is always happy. If he is a happy God, to properly represent him we must be a happy people.

2. The gospel message of what Jesus has done for us is a happy message. It is a message that should make people happy. If we represent a happy message, we must be happy people.

3. Nobody will turn to Jesus if they don't believe there is happiness to be found in Jesus. People know if there is happiness in Jesus by looking at us

because we represent Jesus. Since God is happy, the gospel is intended to make us happy, it only stands to reason that as Christians, we should be happy people.

That we should be happy is not just a logical implication of the gospel. It is also directly commanded in Scripture.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Philippians 4:4 (ESV)

This could also be translated as “Be happy in the Lord always, and again I say be happy.” In this verse, Paul twice commanded us to be happy in God. This may sound impossible for some of us, but what God commands us to do the Holy Spirit promises he will empower us to do. Paul told us to be happy in God always. This is one of the most emphatic directives in the Bible. If our lives are not characterized by happiness, something is wrong. If you are unhappy today, go to God and ask him to help you see what he has done for you so there is joy in spite of our circumstances.

There are many other verses in the Bible that tell us to be happy and find our happiness in who God is, his love for us, his good gifts to us, and what he has done for us.

Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the God of Jacob! Psalm 81:1 (ESV)

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven... Matthew 5:12 (ESV)

Most of us don't realize that if we are Christians, God commands us to be happy people. God has done so much for us. Our God has been so good to us. How can we not be happy? When we take our eyes off of Jesus and look at the national debt or the rate of inflation, we will be unhappy people.

I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High. Psalm 9:2 (ESV)

Celebration and gladness have characterized the church throughout history. Scripturally the culture of God's people in the church is to be one of joy, happiness, singing, gratitude, eating, drinking, making music, and enjoying God's good gifts within the boundaries God has given us to enjoy them.

The happiest people on earth should be Christians. The happiest place on earth should be the church, not Disney World. If we realized that and let the church be a happy place filled with happy people, more people would be drawn to Jesus because everyone wants to be happy. Everyone is looking for what will make them happy. People expect the church to be a boring and somber place. When they find it is a happy place, they can't help but want to learn more about Jesus.

As Christians, we know we should be happy, but oftentimes circumstances get the best of us. They drag us down so we become grumpy, sour people after watching the evening news.

What does the Bible say about happiness in hard times? Let go back to Philippians 4:4.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Philippians 4:4 (ESV)

Does anyone remember Paul's circumstances when he wrote those words? He was in prison! He was in prison but he was reminding Christians to be happy in spite of their circumstances.

Paul said that as Christians, we are not to ignore our circumstances but we are to be a happy people in spite of our circumstances. In spite of politics and

scandals in the world, as Christians, we are happy because Jesus died for us, loves us, has transformed us, and one day will resurrect us with new bodies in the new creation. That is bigger than any of our problems on earth.

We may be living in this world but we are looking for a new world. We are happy because our God is on the throne and nothing can derail his good plans.

Baptist pastor Octavius Winslow, who lived in the 1800s, said it this way:

The child of God is, from necessity, a joyful man. His sins are forgiven, his soul is justified, his person is adopted, his trials are blessings, his conflicts are victories, his death is immortality, his future is a heaven of inconceivable, unthought-of, untold, and endless blessedness —with such a God, such a Saviour, and such a hope, is he not, ought he not, to be a joyful man?"

Why does our happiness matter?

As a church, we are about reaching people with Jesus. The problem is gloomy Christians do not win friends or attract others to Jesus. J.C. Ryle, an Anglican bishop in Liverpool in the 1800s, said it this way:

I assert without hesitation, that the conversion described in Scripture is a happy thing and not a miserable one, and that if converted persons are not happy, the fault must be in themselves... I am confident the converted man is the happiest man.

John Piper said it this way:

If you ask me, "Doesn't the world need to see Christians as happy in order to know the truth of our faith and be drawn to the great Savior?" My answer is "Yes, yes, yes!" And they need to see that our happiness is the indomitable work of Christ in the midst of our sorrow.

John Piper is pointing that our attitudes, our happiness in Christ, is one of the most powerful evangelistic tools we have as a church. If people meet us and are not interested in Christ, it may be because we are not nearly as happy and joyful as we should be.

This brings me to a side discussion that is important.

Former NFL quarterback and ESPN commentator Joe Theismann explained to his soon-to-be-ex-wife why he had an affair. He said, "I had an affair because God wants Joe to be happy." This illustrates the problem. When people want to be happy, they use that to justify sin and rebellion against God, which actually takes them away from happiness, not toward it. Once Joe Theismann's marriage was broken and he was alone, he realized sin didn't make him happy.

What people misunderstand is that the devil doesn't have a single shred of happiness to give. The devil is a liar. He is the father of lies. He is a deceiver. The devil offers us temptation. He wants us to think that what he offers us will make us happy. In reality, the exact opposite is true. The devil isn't happy. He didn't create happiness. He didn't create pleasure in this world. All he can do is distort and twist God-given pleasures in this world to use them as a tool against us.

The devil specializes in rearranging price tags, making the cheap look valuable, and he takes what will make you miserable and tells you it will be wonderful.

This past week, I looked online to see what people looked like after five years of using meth. If people could see what the drug would do to their faces in five years as the flesh begins to fall off their skulls, they would have never tried it in the first place. They thought it would bring them happiness but it only brought misery.

Being happy in God and living to please God always tastes far better than the brief joy of any sinful pleasure. Please remember, everything God says in his Word is for our good. It is for our happiness. Everything the devil promises that

bring us happiness won't. It is a smoke-and-mirror game. The devil always wants to make you miserable. The devil cannot give anyone happiness because he has no happiness to give. God is the creator of all happiness and the source of all happiness in the world.

So how do we beat the devil's temptations? The only way to beat sin and have it become unattractive to us is to realize we were made to seek happiness. Nothing Satan promises can bring happiness. God is the source of all happiness. He radiates happiness. Settle into your head that God sent his son to take us away from the misery of sin and bring us back to God so we could be happy, happy in him. Thinking on that is what makes sin unattractive and builds our appetite for God.

Anyone who tries to say no to sin, by just saying no to sin, will fail. We are created to crave happiness. The only way to beat the temporary pleasure of sin is to satisfy ourselves with thinking about how much happiness God has to give and how much happiness he wants to share with us when we go to him looking for it.

What is the difference between joy and happiness?

As I talk about the topic of happiness for Christians, I know a number of you will bristle. You were taught there is a big difference between joy and happiness. I was also taught there is a big difference between Christian joy and happiness. Many of us were told that happiness is not something for Christians. Happiness is a worldly thing we are to avoid. We are to seek joy, which is spiritual contentment in all circumstances that can only come from God. We are to keep a stiff upper lip and tell people we have joy even though we are not

happy because as Christians, God doesn't want us happy. Have you ever heard that? Were you taught that like I was?

Here comes the fun. That is wrong. I used to believe that. I spent a lot of time researching the difference between joy and happiness for the last few weeks. I want you to know that biblically, there is no big distinction between happiness and joy. You will find many people on the Internet who will tell you there is a difference. My search came up with 500 million articles on the topic. They are just plain wrong. Saying that God doesn't want you to be happy, but he wants you to be filled with stoic joy is just not true. Since it would help for you to hear from a weightier theologian than myself, here is John Piper. He says it this way:

If you have nice little categories for 'joy is what Christians have' and 'happiness is what the world has,' you can scrap those when you go to the Bible, because the Bible is indiscriminate in its uses of the language of happiness and joy and contentment and satisfaction.

In other words, joy and happiness are synonyms, not antonyms. They mean the same thing, not opposite things. Let me show you.

For the Jews it was a time of happiness and joy, gladness and honor. Esther 8:16 (NIV)

But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful. Psalm 68:3 (NIV)

...the joy of the wicked has been brief and the happiness of the godless has lasted only a moment? Job 20:5 (HCSB)

The relationship between joy and happiness in these passages refute two common claims you will often hear: (1) That the Bible doesn't talk about happiness; (2) Joy and happiness have contrasting meanings.

As I researched for this message, I learned this supposed contrast between joy and happiness is only a recent development.

If you go back more than a hundred years, you do not find great theologians making a distinction between joy and happiness for a Christian.

For example, Richard Baxter, a Puritan pastor living in the 1600s, said this:

The day of death is to true believers a day of happiness and joy.

Johnathan Edwards constantly used happiness and joy as synonyms in his writing. He didn't see a difference between the two.

I began wondering where this contrast between happiness and joy originated. It is not in the Bible. It is not in older Christian history. Where did the idea that Christians cannot be happy but can have a stoic joy from God originate?

In Randy Alcorn's book Happiness, which is a 496-page work on this subject, he says the earliest place where he finds a contrast between happiness and joy appear is in the writings of Oswald Chambers who lived from 1873-1917. Here are some of the things Oswald Chambers said about happiness and joy.

Happiness is no standard for men and women because happiness depends on my being determinedly ignorant of God and His demands... Joy should not be confused with happiness. In fact, it is an insult to Jesus Christ to use the word happiness in connection with Him... Joy is not happiness; there is no mention in the Bible of happiness for a Christian, but there is plenty said about joy.

While I mean no disrespect to Oswald Chambers, what he said simply isn't true. I already gave you three verses where joy and happiness are together as synonyms in the Bible. There are 18 additional verses that show happiness and joy meaning the same thing in the Bible.

Why did Oswald Chambers say what he said? I don't know. I think he was probably trying to fight the increased worldliness in the church of his day, but the logic he used against it by making a contrast between joy and happiness is faulty.

Oswald said the word happiness never appears in the Bible. I had no trouble finding happiness in modern translations. I thought maybe he said that because the word happiness didn't appear in the old King James translation of his day. When I went to the 1900 version of the King James that Oswald Chambers used, the word happiness is frequently found there and it describes Christians.

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. John 13:17 (KJV 1900)

Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job... James 5:11 (KJV 1900)

But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled... 1 Peter 3:14 (KJV 1900)

The Bible does talk about Christians being happy. Happiness and joy in the Bible mean the same thing. Oswald Chambers was wrong. The Bible does talk about happiness, and Christians should be happy. I am so thankful Oswald Chambers was wrong.

The honest truth is everyone wants to be happy. When we tell people that God doesn't want them to be happy and happiness is not in the Bible, who would want to become a Christian?

When we tell people God is happy and that he is committed through Jesus to taking away the misery of sin and making you and me happy people through Jesus, that is something that people want!

What role does happiness play in the gospel message?

Yesterday we celebrated Christmas. Let's read the angel's message to the shepherds at Christ's birth.

And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." Luke 2:10 (ESV)

The gospel message isn't just for some people. It is for all people. The Greek adjective "great," is the Greek word "mega." This isn't just ordinary news, it is mega good news. It is the best news that has ever been given on the planet in all history. It will always be the best news given on the planet. The one who created the world has become one of us to save us from our sin and bring us back to God. It is good news of great joy. That could be translated as good news of great happiness for all people. That is the gospel message. It is not about following my religion. The gospel message is I have good news that will take away all the earthly and eternal misery in your life and in exchange give you happiness both now and forever!

Look how Isaiah prophetically described the good news of what God would do for us through Jesus.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." Isaiah 52:7 (ESV)

Isaiah told us our mission is not just to tell everyone that Jesus saves us but to tell everyone that Jesus came to bring us happiness. Paul quoted this verse from Isaiah in Romans 10:15, where he said, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" In other words, Paul said the gospel message is about God sending Jesus to not just save us from our sin but to save us from the

misery of sin and bring us happiness. The gospel offers an exchange of misery-generating sin in our lives for happiness-giving righteousness by Jesus.

Think about this. Delivery from damnation in hell is delivery from an eternity in misery. Eternal life means eternal happiness since we will be with God, the one who created happiness. The happiness Adam and Eve lost in the world through sin is regained by Jesus and given to us as a gift through Jesus. Those who trust in Jesus are given a mind-boggling invitation.

...Come and share your master's happiness! Matthew 25:21 (NIV)

Is finding happiness in earthly pleasures unspiritual?

I have taken most of my time teaching us to find our happiness in God and what he has done for us through Jesus instead of our changing earthly circumstances. While that point needed to be made loud and clear, I do not want us to overextend it. I do not want us to become so heavenly-minded that we are no earthly good. I do not want us to ignore the pleasures God has given us in this world while we think exclusively about God's goodness to us in the future.

When God created us, why did he give us tastebuds to enjoy food if he didn't want us to find pleasure in a good meal? Why did he give us ears and the ability to enjoy music if he didn't want us listening to music? Why did he give us a longing for fun competition if he didn't want us to play sports? Why did God give us physical senses that bring us pleasure if not for the purpose of helping us know God better and love God more? If God made us disembodied spirits that couldn't enjoy physical pleasures in a physical world, we would love God less and not be drawn to love God as deeply.

All physical pleasures in life are not evil. It was God who invented water for the joy of satisfying thirst. It was God who invented food for the joy of eating. It was God who created marriage, sex, and friendship for us to enjoy and to have the enjoyment of those pleasures so that the earthly pleasures God created would cause us to thank him for them. Earthly pleasures were created by God to help us love him more and worship him more enthusiastically.

God gave us good pleasures in this world so we would be drawn to worship him through those gifts, not worship the gifts instead of God. If you enjoy sports, enjoy sports. When you enjoy them, let that joy draw you to thank God for that good gift.

Look what God says about marriage.

Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. Proverbs 5:18–19 (ESV)

Let me paraphrase these verses. God says, "I created sex. Get married and enjoy it. When you experience the joys of marriage, let those joys direct you to greater worship of me so you thank me for creating you as sexual beings and for giving you the institution of marriage to safely enjoy my good gift to you."

Today many Christians portray the Christian life as boring and lifeless. While the rest of the world is having fun with sex, alcohol, parties, sports, movies, careers, games, and concerts, we live a Christian life without enjoying any of the good pleasures God has given us. That is wrong. As Christians, God wants us to enjoy the good pleasures he has given us as long as they are taken within the right parameters for those things.

Some of you like hunting. God wants you to enjoy hunting. Don't worship hunting. Walk through the fields and the woods and thank God for the beautiful creation he has given you to enjoy. Let the joy of hunting draw you into greater worship of God for his goodness.

All the good pleasures in this world have a purpose. They are God's good gifts to us that are intended to be enjoyed so they draw us to God, not replace God.

When I was younger, I spent many summers on mission trips. They were hard, but they were good. After a summer in South America in a very poor part of the world, I came back and sat in my car. I turned the key and started the engine to go to the store. Before I put the car in gear I found myself just sitting in the car listening to the rumble of the V-8 engine. I couldn't help but put my head back in the seat and thank God in prayer for my car. What a good gift from God. That summer, I was in a place where few people had a car and if they had a car, it was old and falling apart. God's good gift of a car drew me into worship and thankfulness to him for his good gifts. That is what all of God's good gifts to us should do to us in this life. We worship God through his good gifts.

Look what Paul said to the Philippians about this.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.
Philippians 4:8 (ESV)

Paul told us to not just think about God but to enjoy good pleasures and think about good things --- things that are excellent, pure, lovely, and commendable.

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. 1 Timothy 6:17 (ESV)

Paul told the rich they can enjoy the good gifts God has given them but those gifts should lead them to have hearts filled with gratitude to God.

What does the Bible say about God's happiness?

If we are ever going to fully trust God, we must believe that God is truly happy. We must believe that he loves us. We also must believe that he also wants us to be happy. If we believe those things, we will truly want to follow God, not run from him. Let's look at what the Bible says about God and his happiness.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. John 10:10 (ESV)

Jesus said Satan came to steal, kill, and destroy your life. Satan creates misery. Jesus came that we would have life and have it abundantly. Jesus came to make us happy. He came to give us life.

The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. Zephaniah 3:17 (ESV)

While Zephaniah was speaking to his fellow Israelites to tell them how God feels about them, it is no stretch to say this is also true of us today as God's people in New Testament times. Here we get a window into God's heart toward us, how he feels about us. Here we see that God is committed to saving us. He celebrates over us. He loves us so much he sings over us!

Did anyone have the children home for Christmas? Everyone knows what happens to Mom when the kids come home. She is excited. She is thrilled to have her chicks back in the nest. She is filled with gladness, but most moms are

not so thrilled they burst out into song over their children. God is so thrilled over us, he literally sings over us! That tells us how God feels about us. That tells us why he paid the high price of sending his son to die for us to save us. God loves us. He is a happy God who is deeply committed to adopting us, taking away our misery, and making us his happy people.

God is to happiness in our world like the sun is to light in our universe. He is the source of it. All happiness in this world comes from God.

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Psalm 16:11 (ESV)

God is happy in his nature. He wants us as his people to be happy as well. He wants to be able to share his happiness with us.

When we become Christians, God sends his Holy Spirit into our lives. The Holy Spirit transforms us. Galatians 5 tells us there are nine character qualities that will come out of us when the Holy Spirit comes into us. The first quality is love. The second quality of the Holy Spirit in our lives is joy. When the Holy Spirit is in our lives we will be filled with joy. Another way to say that is we will be filled with happiness because God is happy.

What are practical ways I can cultivate happiness in my life?

Train your brain toward centering on Jesus, not the evening news.

Happiness and unhappiness are states of mind that self-perpetuate. The happier we are, the more happiness will become the default of our minds. The grumpier we are, the more grumpiness becomes the default of our minds.

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. Colossians 3:2 (ESV)

The more regularly we tell ourselves the truth of what God has done for us in Jesus, how much God loves us, and what God's eternal plans are for us, the more the default setting of our minds will be happiness, not grumpiness.

How do we train our brains to focus on Christ-centered happiness? Sometimes that begins with turning off the news. The news wants you to be grumpy and angry. That is how they motivate you to watch. The problem is the news turns us into grumpy people. As Christians, no matter what our circumstances are we must constantly turn our minds toward what God has done for us so we train ourselves to be happy people, not grumpy people.

Say "No" to worry and "Yes" to trusting in God.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6 (ESV)

Worry kills joy. Worry specializes in worst-case scenarios and experiencing the pain of what has not happened and what may never happen. We must remember why we do not have to worry.

1. God has already rescued us from the worst, which is eternity in hell. This life is as bad as it will get.
2. Even if something terrible does happen in our lives, God promises to use it for our eternal good.
3. Often bad things don't happen. Our worry proves pointless.
4. Our worry never generates anything positive.
5. The cause for all our worries is temporary and will soon be gone forever in eternity.

Make wise choices to find happiness.

Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of the evil. Avoid it; do not go on it; turn away from it and pass on. Proverbs 4:14–15 (ESV)

These verses are really about our happiness. What does sin do? It always brings distress and misery. If you choose to hang out with poor friends, godless friends, you will make unwise choices which will lead to great unhappiness in life.

Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned? Or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched? So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; none who touches her will go unpunished. Proverbs 6:27–29 (ESV)

Solomon's argument against adultery is an appeal to self-interest. He said a man who enters into an adulterous relationship will always be unhappy. Unwise choices produce an unhappy life.

The straightest path to our happiness is to devote ourselves to bringing happiness to others.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:3–4 (ESV)

Who do you think was the happiest person to ever live? It was Jesus. He devoted himself to serving and saving us. Taking away all of our sin was not just the hardest thing anyone has done in the world, but because Jesus saved us, it made Jesus the happiest person in the world.

..looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross... Hebrews 12:2 (ESV)

Conclusion

We covered a lot of ground. Let's review some of what we learned.

1. Stuff and achievements can't make us happy. No matter how successful we become, achieving our goals won't provide lasting happiness. Three Super

Bowl rings didn't make Tom Brady happy. They wouldn't make you happy. Only God, and what he has done for us and what he promises to do for us, can make us happy.

2. Sin always sabotages happiness. God is the creator of happiness and the source of all happiness in the world. The devil can't create everything but misery. He specializes in switching the price tags and telling us what will cause us misery will bring us happiness and satisfaction.
3. The good, God-created pleasures in this world should lead us back to God so we thank God for his good gifts and have greater anticipation for the new heavens and earth where God's good gifts will be a thousand times better.
4. As Christians, we have a duty to be a happy people because we represent a happy God. The happiness of God's people in spite of their circumstances makes the good news of Jesus evangelistically attractive. Christians should be the happiest people on earth. The church should be the happiest place on earth.
5. There is no difference between happiness and joy in the Bible. Don't be misled into thinking God doesn't want us to be happy. He just wants us to have a stiff upper lip and find joy. He loves us and wants us to find lasting happiness in him.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, and time with his family. Feel free to contact him at www.Christ2RCulture.com (www.c2rc.com)

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