

God's Recipe for True Happiness

Intro: Someone quipped, happiness is seeing your husband's old girlfriend and she's fatter than you. But really, what it is that would make us happy? We seem to be looking for it all the time, so let's follow this next idea in our pursuit of this seemingly elusive desire.

It has been said, happiness is like your shadow, Run after it and you will never catch it, but keep your face towards the sun and it will follow you. So let's turn towards the bright sunshine of God and see what He says are the primary components of true happiness.

First, to be happy we need to

A. Pursue closeness, familiarity and growth with other people

Jesus was proactive when it came to community. He poured His life into a faithful band of followers and developed an intimate circle of 12 men. Then through those men, He established the church. The early church was really all about community, intimacy, personal and corporate growth.

Hear what Acts 2:44-47 says about being involved with other people: *And all the believers met together constantly and shared everything they had. They sold their possessions and shared the proceeds with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity-- all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.*

Man was created to be a social creature but for whatever reason, some people desire or choose to remain alone and they may even claim to be happy. So what we know as a hermit, is an anomaly or abnormality from God's original intention. And if the truth be known, they are not really happy either. They just exist because they choose to live for and with themselves, or they lack sufficient social skills to interact with society on a deep and fulfilling level.

So to find true happiness, learn adequate social skills, avoid selfishness, and then get involved with the people around you and find happiness in the beauty of God's creativeness and diversity when it comes to other people.

But you may be saying, you just get hurt when you deal with other people. That's true but don't forget, we may be hurt, but there are just as many times that we are the ones doing the hurting as we are being hurt. We just seem to not notice, if we are the ones doing the hurting

Secondly, to find happiness

B. Avoid judgementalism

Happy people don't judge themselves by what others do or have. That is, they don't compare themselves with others. The Bible is clear that we are not to measure ourselves by the yardstick of others, only by the Word of God. As we obey God's Word and choose to please Him, blessing and contentment follow.

II Corinthians 10:12,13 says Oh, don't worry; I wouldn't dare say that I am as wonderful as these other men who tell you how important they are! But they are only comparing themselves with each other, and measuring themselves by themselves. What foolishness! But we will not boast of authority we do not have. Our goal is to stay within the boundaries of God's plan for us, and this plan includes our working there with you.

You will never be happy if you try and please your critics. You will never be happy if you try and live up to your unreasonable expectations of your self. You will never be happy if you try and keep up with some other guy who is actually no better than you are. You see, each of us has our own skeletons but we keep them hidden so others may think we are okay and then they try and keep up with us

But, you will be happy if you just be the best you can be and obey and grow in God's word and work in your life. **Someone said** it like this: A really contented man has his yesterdays all filed away, his present in order, and his tomorrow subject to instant revision.

Then we can find true happiness if we

C. Avoid excessive materialism

Materialism is poisonous for happiness. The passage in Matthew 19:16-21 bears this out. Despite this man's riches, he wanted something more -- eternal life. Jesus stressed the importance of keeping the commandments but told him something more was required.

He must sell his possessions and follow Him. Sadly, the young man chose material possessions over Christ and walked away feeling "sorrowful." He died an unhappy man. You see, Joy is not in things, it is in us. **Someone observed** that: though a man without money and/or possessions is poor, a man with only money and/or possessions is poorer.

Then to find true happiness

D. Remain optimistic

Optimism is important, even in dark times. Remember, in Christ, hope abounds. Jeremiah 32:17 proclaims, *"O Sovereign LORD! You have made the heavens and earth by your great power. Nothing is too hard for you!"* Job 42:2 says *"I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you."*

From these verses we see that nothing, not even our pessimism can stop God from fulfilling his plan for us. Over and over, we are given biblical examples of people who refused to be downtrodden because of circumstances or events. Their hope was in the Lord. The end result is rest and peace.

Acts 16:19-26 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities, 20 and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, "These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, 21 and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans." 22 And the crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them, and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. 23 And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; 24 and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks. 25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 26 and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains were unfastened.

Their happiness was evident in their singing. They had remained optimistic no matter what disaster had come their way. People don't get weak eyes from looking at the bright side of life so remain optimistic my friend. It is one of the keys to true happiness.

The next ingredient in the recipe for true happiness is

E. Remain active in the service of others

Actions matter. It's not just what we believe or our outlook on life that contributes to happiness. People who give to others and aren't self-absorbed are more satisfied with life. Giving is a biblical principle whether it involves finances, service, food, shelter, time or talent.

The result of giving is blessing. And the reward of blessing is happiness. We make a living by getting, we make a life by giving. **Question:** Are you simply making a living or are you finding happiness in making a life for yourself?

Then next we need to

F. Know ourselves

Romans 12:3 says *For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment*

We need to be honest about our strengths and our weaknesses and once we are comfortable with who we are, as God created us to be, we will be well on the road to true happiness. Unhappiness comes when we try to be what God did not intend us to be. He created you to be just who you are, so why not just be happy with you just like you are?

Next,

G. Exhibit gratitude or be thankful

People who feel gratitude are happy. We are eternally grateful for Jesus and His sacrifice and for all God has done in our lives. Out of that genuine gratitude flows happiness.

Ephesians 5:18-20 reminds us: *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks **for all things** in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.* Here we see it is being thankful for all situations;

I Thessalonians 5:18 says *in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.* Here we see that it is being thankful **in everything**

Thought: An ungrateful person is like a hog under a tree eating acorns, but never looking up to see where they came from. So to find true happiness, enjoy the acorns of God's blessing but be sure to stop gruntin and rootin, long enough to look up and be thankful.

Finally in this recipe we find this one last ingredient and it is to

H. Practice forgiveness

The strongest link to happiness is a willingness to forgive others. The bigness of any man and a large key to his happiness is manifest in the number of little things he is able to overlook in others. For the believer, forgiveness is not an option; it is a command from Jesus. We forgive others because He forgave us. **Remember**, no matter how long we nurse a grudge it will not get better, and in that nursing process, It will rob us of much happiness.

In reality, the search for happiness will fall short if it doesn't lead to the One in whom contentment can be found. Authentic happiness really is unrelated to events, money, power, fame or anything else our culture associates it with. Happiness is a choice, as the Scriptures declare: *Happy are the people whose God is the Lord"* (Ps. 144:15).

So the conclusion is this; If we have God as our Lord and we do as he directs, that elusive desire called true happiness will follow our footsteps. May your week be filled with opportunities to practice this recipe and in the mixing process may your week be filled with happiness

Happiness is like your shadow, Run after it and you will never catch it, but keep your face towards the sun and it will follow you. So keep you face toward the Son of Righteousness and enjoy all He has for your life.

Maybe you are reading this and you have never looked toward the Son of Righteousness to get you on the right track towards true happiness. If that is you, why not read a few more lines, think it through and follow the directions and take another step with your face to the SON.

Realize you are a sinner Romans 3:23

Understand that the payday for sin is death or eternal conscious separation from God.
Romans 6:23a

Know that there is a way of escape for you. Romans 6:23b and John 1:12

Desire to escape and pray this or a similar prayer.

"Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins, and I confess them all to You [name them]. Lord Jesus, forgive all my sins and come into my heart as my Saviour and Lord. I receive You right now. Help me from this time forward to live for You. Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen."

On the _____ day of _____ I became a Christian by inviting Jesus Christ into my life to forgive my sin.

Signed: _____

If you have further questions or have chosen to do this, be sure to let us know so we can help you, pray for you and encourage you in your new life.

You can reach us at lapeerchurch@gmail.com Subject line: (Salvation)