

MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

Happiness | Psalm 1:1-3

Overview: The idea of “happiness” permeates our society. Think how often it appears as a movie line by a parent saying to their child, “As long as you’re happy.” We also have the popular songs “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” by Bobby McFerrin and “Happy” by Pharrell Williams — the Williams song has over a billion views on YouTube. The “pursuit of Happiness” even made it into our *Declaration of Independence*. But is “happiness” a Biblical idea? Isn’t the Bible more interested in giving us rules and regulations to follow? More like towing the line and doing what is pleasing to God. The book of Psalms gives us some great insight this topic.

Why I Picked This Verse: 1) The time of the year (*Holly, Jolly Christmas*) 2) My wife suggested it.

Video: Core 52 Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHxzofb6cxo>

Segment Questions: (References are on back)

- What are some of the things in your life that bring happiness?
- In what ways do you see the three areas of 1) relationships, 2) using your gifts and 3) feeling valuable a part of what you just described?

Read John 10:10

- When you think of the idea of “an abundant life”, what comes to mind? Think of it first in the non-Biblical sense? But then also in the Biblical sense of what abundant means.
- Why do you think a thief’s purpose is contrasted against what Jesus came to do?

Review Psalm 1 and think about Mark Moore comments

- What do you think about his connection between how God hard wired the brain and what Psalm 1 says?
- Walk through each verse of this Psalm and reflect on how each verse speaks to you.

Read Philippians 4:4 & Psalm 97:12

- In what ways do these verses express God’s perspective on happiness?
- How is joy the same or different than happiness?

Action Questions:

- In what practical way can God’s word help you during times you are not feeling happy?
- What are things you can do to help ensure that your pursuit of happiness is being guided by God and not the world’s view of happiness? Take it one step further than “reading the Bible” (that is not a wrong answer, it’s the best... but I want you to go one step deeper.)

Closing Personal Prayer:

In a world surrounded with the pursuit of happiness, help us hear your voice Lord in the midst of all of the noise. May we pursue holiness as model by the character of a happy God. Help us to be students of your word in a way and people who talk to you regularly. May our joy truly come from you and your gifts to us.

Introduction

There have been times in my Christian experience where I have felt that the message is “God calls us to holiness, not happiness.” Gratefully, those times have been infrequent and not common. But when confronted with that perspective, it tends to suck the life right out of you. Why is that so?

I think Mark Moore nails it by saying that it goes against God’s character. That is not how God wants us to live. Yet why is it that some see being holy at odds with being happy. I think Randy Alcorn from *Eternal Perspective Ministries* explains it well in this paraphrase from an article.

Christians and non-Christians alike pursue what they think will make them happy — and they fall headlong into sexual immorality, alcoholism, and materialism. As a result, the lure of happiness seems to be at odds with holiness. So, to suppress these indulgences, the very idea of things that bring happiness are all denounced in the name of a higher good of holiness. It all sounds so *spiritual*.

But that teaching is wrong. God’s nature is to be happy (Psalm 115:3). The more like him we become in our sanctification, the happier we will be. Forcing a choice between happiness and holiness is utterly foreign to Scripture. If it were true that God wants us to be *only* holy, wouldn’t we expect Philippians 4:4 to say, “Be holy in the Lord always” instead of “Rejoice in the Lord always”?

Mark Moore helps take this a bit deeper for us by taking us to Psalm 1 and how it ties into our 1) Relationships; 2) Work and 3) Being valuable to someone.

Verse	Chemicals in Brain	Survey of Happiness	Psalms 1
1	Oxytocin: The chemical of comfort. Causes you to trust people.	Relationships that make you feel you are wanted.	Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.
2	Dopamine: Chemical of adventure – adrenaline.	Working on something that leverages your giftedness.	They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.
3	Serotonin: The chemical of significance. Causes you to feel important.	When you are of value to someone else.	But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night.

I love the way Moore closes by helping us see that the more we allow our happiness to come from the ways that God designed us to operate, with a focus on worshipping him, the more addictive Godly happiness will become.

Psalms 115:3 | Our God is in the heavens, and he does as he wishes

John 10:10 | The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

Philippians 4:4 | Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice

Psalm 97:12 | May all who are godly be happy in the Lord and crown him, our holy God.