

Doctrine of Happiness

1. Introduction:

1.1 David Hume in one of his essays has written, "The great end of all human industry is the attainment of happiness. For this were the arts invented, sciences cultivated, laws ordained, and societies modeled, by the most profound wisdom of patriots and legislators."

1.2 Contrary to many humped-shouldered Christians walking around suffering for Jesus, we are to be happy and rejoice in Him.

1.3 In fact as our prototype Jesus Himself was happy and we too should follow His example. We indeed are commanded to share the happiness of God.

Joh 15:11 "These things have I spoken unto you, that my happiness might remain in you, and that your joy and happiness might be full."

1.3.1 Jesus likewise gave us the example.

Joh 17:13 "And now come I to you; and these things I speak in the world that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves."

1.4 It is therefore understandable that a subject so important to mankind is one often treated in Scripture.

2. Definition:

2.1 Happiness has been defined as ... "the agreeable sensation which springs from the enjoyment of good: the state of being in which one's desires are gratified by the enjoyment of pleasure without pain, remorse, guilt or regret."

2.1.1 Notice the application of 1Joh 1:9 to happiness. The Holy Spirit isolates the sin, we name the sin, we forget the sin and we move on. Rebound should relieve the believer of all guilt and make for a joyful renewal.

2.2 Secularly speaking happiness is relative. It was said by the English satirist, Jonathan Swift, "one gentleman is happy at a reply, another excels in a rejoinder. Thus one might be happy with an assertion and then sad at the recipients response."

2.3 Such is not the case with happiness as defined by the Word of God.

3. Let's see what the Scripture has to say about happiness.

3.1 There is a minus happiness which represents blessing from Satan.

3.1.1 Satan, as the ruler of this world, has the power to provide a pseudo-happiness for both the believer and the unbeliever. Usually Satan provides his minus happiness to motivate people to do his will.

3.1.2 This minus happiness evaporates quickly because Satan is not interested in making people happy and he is incompetent and can't sustain his own happiness much less those who serve him.

3.1.3 This minus happiness is available to believers who are under the influence of evil.

3.1.4 This minus happiness does not sustain in times of catastrophe or pressure.

3.1.5 It is important to note however, that even the acts of Satan and certainly his subalterns are under the permissive will of God and all things for the believer and unbeliever work for "good."

3.2 There is what we might call neutral happiness which comes from the recognition and compliance with establishment principles. Unbelievers can participate in this type of neutral happiness.

3.2.1 There is also a happiness which comes from obeying God's protocols.

3.2.2 The divine institutions such as volition, marriage, family and nationalism provide a road map for prosperity and happiness for those living in a client nation.

3.3 There is a + happiness for those who take in the Word of God under the filling of the Spirit.

3.3.1 This can be said another way "we develop capacity righteousness in the soul" as we mature spiritually.

3.3.2 Psa 144:15 tells us that "Happy are the people of whom this is true; happy are the people whose God is their Lord."

4. I have provided significant information about happiness. What about unhappiness and its effect on both our personal and our national life. Dennis Prager, a radio talk show host and author has written:

"For much of my life I, like most people, regarded the pursuit of happiness as largely a selfish pursuit. One of the great revelations of middle age has been that happiness, far from being only a selfish pursuit, is a moral demand. With some exceptions, happy people make the world better and unhappy people make it worse. This is true on the personal (micro) and global (macro) planes.

“On the micro plane, consider the effects of an unhappy parent on a child. Ask people raised by an unhappy parent if that unhappiness hurt them. Consider the effects of an unhappy spouse on a marriage. Think about your work environment. An unhappy worker can have devastating effects on an entire work force. Perhaps you have been there and suffered because of a vocal malcontent.

“I know a couple that has four middle-aged children of whom three are truly extraordinary people, inordinately well-adjusted and decent. The fourth child has been unhappy most of his life and has been a never-ending source of pain to the parents. That one child’s unhappiness has always overshadowed the joy that the parents experience from the other three children. Hence the saying that one is no happier than one’s least happy child.”

“We should regard bad moods as we do offensive body odor. Just as we shower each day so as not to inflict our body odor on others, so we should monitor our bad moods so as not to inflict them on others. We shower partly for ourselves and partly out of obligation to others. The same should hold true vis-a-vis moods; and just as we avoid those who do not do something about their body odor we should avoid whenever possible those who do nothing about their bad moods.

“The flip side of the damage unhappy people do when they subject others to their unhappiness is the good that people do when they are, or at least act, happy. Just think of how much more you want to help people when you are in a particularly happy mood and it is then you realize how much more good the happy are likely to do.

“On the macro plane, the case for the relationship between happiness and goodness is just as apparent. It is safe to say that the happiest Germans were not those who joined the Nazi Party. Nor did the happiest Europeans become Communists. And happy Muslims are not generally among those who extol death. The motto of Hamas and other Islamic groups engaged in terror, ‘We love death as much as [Americans and Jews] love life,’ does not appeal to happy Muslims.

“Cults, hysteria and mass movements all appeal to the unhappy far more than to the happy. It is one more example of the genius of America’s Founders to include “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” in the Declaration of Independence. This American belief in the moral and societal merit in pursuing happiness is a major reason America has developed differently than Europe.

“The pursuit of happiness is not the pursuit of pleasure. The pursuit of pleasure is hedonism, and hedonists are not happy because the intensity and amount of pleasure must constantly be increased in order for hedonism to work. Pleasure for the hedonist is a drug. But the pursuit of happiness is noble. It benefits everyone around the individual pursuing it, and it benefits humanity. And that is why happiness is a moral obligation.”

4.1 When we think of character traits most of us think of honesty, integrity, moral courage, and acts of kindness. Few people include happiness in any list of character traits or moral achievements.

4.2 But happiness is both a character and a moral trait.

4.3 Happiness—or at least acting happy, or at the very least not inflicting one’s unhappiness on others—is no less important in making the world better than any other human trait. I have been blessed from time to time by being around happy people. They are such a blessing—they help make my day!

4.4 Consider the effects of a brooding associate or colleague in an academic institution or a disconsolate teacher and how they bring a cloud to each classroom session; and then there is the pain of working for a moody employer. You never know where or how you stand because outside troubles often invade the workplace when he brings “Mr. Unhappy” to work.

5. Etymology:

5.1 In the Hebrew the word **Asher** is often used for "a state of happiness.”

Gen 30:13 And Leah said, "Happy" am I, for the daughters will call me "blessed": and she called his name **Asher**.

5.1.1 In Proverbs 9:6 we have **Asher** used for “going straight.” It is used to describe the person who is happy because he has done the right things and thus attained happiness.

Pro 9:6 Forsake the foolish, and live; and **go** in the way of understanding.

5.2 There is a Hebrew word **Samach** meaning to rejoice.

Pro 13:9 The light of the righteous **rejoiceth**: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

5.3 There is an interesting Hebrew word **Gil** which means to dance around in a state of rejoicing.

Pro 23:24 The father of the righteous shall "**greatly rejoice**": and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy (**Samach**) of him.

5.4 Habakkuk in Hab 3:18-19 closes out his book with the use of **Gil** in conjunction with another Hebrew word **Alaz** translated "joy." These are words of praise response from the great prophet.

Hab 3:18 Yet I "will rejoice"(**Gil**) in the LORD, I "will joy"(**Alaz**) in the God of my salvation.

Hab 3:19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places ..."

5.5 The primary Greek word for happiness is **Makarios** and it is often in the KJV translated "blessed" or "blessedness" respectively.

Mat 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Mat 5:4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Mat 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Mat 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Mat 5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Luk 1:45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

Luk 1:48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

Jam 5:10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

Jam 5:11 Behold, we count them "happy" which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful (compassionate), and of tender mercy (merciful).

Rom 4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter?

Rom 4:2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about -- but not before God.

Rom 4:3 What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Rom 4:4 Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation.

Rom 4:5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Rom 4:6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the "blessedness" of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

Rom 4:7 "Blessed" are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Rom 4:8 "Blessed" is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."

Gal 4:13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

Gal 4:14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

Gal 4:15 Where is then the "blessedness" ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me ...

6. Happiness comes to parents when the kids turn out right.

Pro 23:23 Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding.

Pro 23:24 The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him.

Pro 23:25 May your father and mother be glad; may she who gave you birth rejoice!

7. A nation positive to the Lord will have happy and prosperous citizens.

Psa 89:8 O LORD God Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O LORD, and your faithfulness surrounds you ...

Psa 89:15 Happy are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD.

Psa 89:16 They rejoice in your name all day long; they exult in your righteousness.

Psa 89:17 For you are their glory and strength, and by your favor prosper economically.

8. The psalmist writes that the Persians will find happiness by repaying Babylon for abusing Israel.

Psa 137:8 O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is he who repays you for what you have done to us--

Psa 137:9 he who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.

9. There is a special happiness after discipline and testing provided we faint not at the reproach of God.

Psa 30:5 For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

Psa 30:11 You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,

10. There is a special rejoicing for the mature believer even though they suffer as part of their special proof testing.

1Pe 1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

1Pe 1:7 These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--maybe proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

1Pe 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

11. Happy is the man who finds wisdom.

Pro 3:13 Happy is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding,
Pro 3:14 for wisdom is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold.
Pro 3:15 Wisdom is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her.
Pro 3:16 Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor.
Pro 3:17 Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace.
Pro 3:18 Wisdom is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be happy.

12. John says "I wrote the book of First John in order that you might be happy."

1Jo 1:4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

13. Happy and blessed are those who show kindness to those in need.

Pro 14:21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.

14. God promises special blessing and happiness to the person who is positive to the Word; it would seem even greater blessing flows to those who follow His instructions with reference to being slow to anger, calm and without destructive reaction.

KJV

Pro 16:20 He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he.

Pro 16:21 The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.

Pro 16:22 Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly.

Pro 16:23 The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.

Pro 16:24 Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

15. There is a special happiness to those who fear and respect the Lord.

Psa 128:1 Happy are all who fear the LORD, who walk in his ways.

Psa 128:2 You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours.

Psa 128:3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table.

Psa 128:4 Thus is the man blessed who fears the LORD.

15.1 Sharing God's happiness is a potential given at moment of regeneration but it only comes to those who obey God's protocol and move toward spiritual maturity.

NIV

Pro 16:20 whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.

Pro 16:21 the wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant words promote instruction.

Pro 16:22 Understanding is a fountain of life to those who have it, but folly brings punishment to fools.

Pro 16:23 a wise man's heart guides his mouth and his lips promote instruction.

Pro 16:24 Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

15.2 There is a special happiness given to those who suffer for righteousness sake.

1Pe 3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

1Pe 4:14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

16. Now let's see how happiness relates to the essence of God:

16.1 God is perfect and His character is perfect.

16.2 Perfect character must possess perfect happiness.

16.3 God is eternal and His happiness is eternal.

16.4 God is immutable so His happiness never changes.

16.5 God is omniscient so His genius devises perfect happiness.

16.6 God found a way from His omniscience and His sovereignty to share with mankind His happiness.

16.7 It is therefore impossible for God not to be unhappy.

17. God Himself is said to rejoice in the salvation of His people.

Psa 9:14 That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.

18. We are commanded to rejoice in the Lord.

Psa 97:12 Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

19. The principles of happiness in summary:

19.1 You cannot build your happiness on someone else's unhappiness.

19.2 You cannot build your happiness on the details of life; things or success will only provide short term episodic happiness at best.

19.3 You cannot build your happiness on perfect environment.

19.4 You cannot build your happiness on people.

19.5 You cannot build your happiness on revolution or anti-establishment thinking.

19.6 You cannot build your happiness on carnality or evil.

19.7 Lasting happiness can only be built on the plan of God for your very own life.

19.8 True happiness can only be built on redemption and spiritual growth. Redemption is only found in faith alone in Christ alone and spiritual growth can only come from a mind transformed by metabolized doctrine in your soul.