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What Are You Happy About?

Matthew 5:11: (Phillips) *And what happiness will be yours when people blame you and ill-treat you and say all kinds of slanderous things against you for my sake!*

A few weeks ago we talked about worry: what it is, how it works, and most importantly, how to work through it. Well, today we thought we should look at worry's opposite - happiness! What makes us happy? Is happiness elusive? Are there different kinds of happiness? How, where, when and why do we find happiness? What about the Bible? Does it tell us to be happy and does it tell us how to be happy?

What does it mean to be happy?

Happy: (adjective)

1. Delighted, pleased, or glad, as over a particular thing: to be happy to see a person.
2. Characterized by or indicative of pleasure, contentment, or joy: a happy mood; a happy frame of mind.

Worry restricts us, but happiness frees us.



New study focus, Science of Happiness, UC Berkeley study

- For decades, psychologists tended to focus on studying our negative emotions like fear, anger and greed. But increasingly over the last decade, they've turned instead to our positive emotions, examining our capacity for compassion, gratitude and trust. They call it *The Science of Happiness*, and it's blossoming here at UC Berkeley.
- We have gotten interested in these concepts. We've gotten interested in compassion or gratitude. Only eight or nine years ago there was one study of gratitude in the scientific literature. You know, thousands of studies of anger, one of gratitude.

General Happiness Theme: Taking action based in knowledge brings happiness

John 13:12-17: But Jesus didn't say anything here about being happy. Note, however, the word *blessed* here also means "happy."

Blessed: Strongs #3107 makariov mak-ar'-ee-os; supremely blest; by extension, fortunate, well off: translated blessed, happy

There is a sense of happiness in the idea of being blessed. Many Christians use the expression, "I am truly blessed." What we want to begin to ask ourselves is, "Are we truly *happy*?" We find that the word *blessed* means to be happy in many ways. What makes real, true, long-lasting happiness?

Personal responsibility brings happiness to you and your family

Psalms 128:1-4: (NASB) ¹How **blessed <835>** is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in His ways. ²When you shall eat of the fruit of your hands, you will be happy and it will be well with you. ³Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house, your children like olive plants around your table. ⁴Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.

Blessed: Strongs #835 rva 'esh'er eh'-sher 1) happiness, blessedness, 1a) often used as interjection, 1b) blessed are



Introduction, based on Time Magazine cover story July 8, 2013, The Science of Happiness, CBS News

- "Jeffrey Kluger is Times Editor at Large, and Jeffrey, good morning. So we're a country founded on this principle. Philosophers have talked about it for centuries. How happy are we?" "Well, we are less happy than we would like to be. In 2004, seventy nine percent of us called ourselves optimists; we are now down to fifty percent. About twenty percent of us will at some point experience of mood disorder in our lives. Thirty percent of us will experience an anxiety disorder. Twenty five percent of all women are taking SSRIs, antidepressants. Five percent of all men and more than forty percent of both sexes admit that they eat just to try to make themselves happier. So, we're having some problems."





Did you know that Jesus gave a teaching specifically dedicated to happiness? Matthew 5:1-3: (NASB) ¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²He opened his mouth and began to teach them, saying, ³**Blessed** are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Same verse 3, now from the Phillips translation: Matthew 5:3: (Phillips) How **happy** are those who know their need for God, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs!

Happiness recipe - humility and mourning!

Matthew 5:3: (KJV) **Blessed** are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:3: (Phillips) How **happy** are those who know their need for God, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs!

Luke 18:9-14: Does this tax collector sound happy, even though he knew his need for God? NO! Then how is this a recipe for happiness? But he had a reverence for God shown through his humility. Humility is an accurate assessment of who you are. All in due time...happiness is a process. Proverbs 29:23

True happiness begins by acknowledging who and what we are...

Matthew 5:4: (KJV) **Blessed** are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Matthew 5:4: (Phillips) How **happy** are those who know what sorrow means, for they will be given courage and comfort!

 **MRI test, based on Time Magazine cover story July 8, 2013, The Science of Happiness, CBS News**

- *But beyond money, what else is it that makes people unhappy? Is it relationships? Is it family? Is it something else?*
- *Relationships do it. Stress does it. There are fascinating MRI brain studies that show when you are distracted by something, it's happening along four different brain regions. Your happiness reactions stop and this is the case even when researchers put people in MRIs and say, just try to remember an eight digit number while looking at happy pictures. They show that while they're distracted doing that, happiness goes down. So, if your stress is, "when is the next layoff coming, what are my deadlines," your happiness is just going to be smothered.*

When you are distracted by something, your happiness is smothered! Stress distracts! James 4:7-10: Again, does this sound like a happy text?!? It is!!! Those who sorrow will be given courage and comfort. This is when we can begin to key in on true happiness. As a true follower of Christ, we know we are promised courage and comfort. That is what brings us blessedness and happiness. Psalms 40:1-3

True happiness recognizes the real pain in life caused by loss and imperfection and knows that comfort in God will come - therefore true happiness produces peace.

Happiness recipe - meekness and hunger!

Matthew 5:5: (KJV) **Blessed** are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Matthew 5:5: (Phillips) **Happy** are those who claim nothing, for the whole earth will belong to them!

 **Synthetic just as good, The Surprising Science of Happiness, Dan Gilbert, TED Talk**

- *We smirk because we believe that synthetic happiness is not of the same quality as what we might call natural happiness. What are these terms? Natural happiness is what we get when we get what we wanted and synthetic happiness is what we make when we don't get what we wanted. And in our society, we have a strong belief that synthetic happiness is of an inferior kind. Why do we have that belief? Well, it's very simple. What kind of economic engine would keep churning if we believe that not getting what we want could make us just as happy as getting it? I want to suggest to you that synthetic happiness is every bit as real and enduring as the kind of happiness you stumble upon when you get exactly what you were aiming for.*



Of course the Apostle Paul knew this concept thousands of years prior to that TED talk: **Philippians 3:4-8**: Where is the happiness? It is in the right perspective.

True happiness is the emptying of self so that one may be filled with the treasure of Christ-likeness and thereby inherit the earth!

Matthew 5:6: (KJV) **Blessed** are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Matthew 5:6: (Phillips) **Happy** are those who are hungry and thirsty for true goodness, for they will be fully satisfied!

Don't judge your happiness based on the moment you are experiencing, judge it based on what that moment brings you to. This is how to find true happiness.

There is something special about "giving away" in order to have something come back, as in "agape" love meaning selfless love.

 Find passion, based on Time Magazine cover story July 8, 2013, *The Science of Happiness*, CBS News

- ...if you haven't found the thing that makes you happy when you go to work in the morning, find something else because you won't be good at it until you're happy with it. Don't do it in moderation. To be thrilled... I mean to be able to say, I would do this even if I wouldn't get paid for it...

2 Timothy 2:15-19

True happiness is the deep pursuit of and focus on truth - pure truth - to understand it and teach it!

 Golden rule is genetic, *Science of Happiness*, UC Berkeley study

- These new studies are discovering that the age old golden rule, "treat others as you would want to be treated," is actually part of our genetic makeup and it may be the answer to our survival as a species. Do sympathetic people do better in the game of reproduction? It turns out that they are more attractive as mates. Sympathetic parents have kids who are more resilient and who thrive more. Do sympathetic people do better in competitive situations with strangers? We're starting to amass data that shows kind people fare pretty well and invoke a lot of trust in others.

Of course the Golden Rule came from Jesus, so we already knew this. In the Beatitudes, Jesus taught us that happiness is available regardless of the stage of life we are in. We may be in a miserable state at this moment, but if we are following Jesus to worship God, we can find true happiness - even in the difficulty. The truest, deepest form of happiness is found by giving and not getting. Happiness is a state of mind that says, "God supplies my increase."

Happiness recipe - mercy and purity!

 Introduction, *Gratitude*, www.soulpancake.com

- What makes you happy? Having fun, hanging out with friends, delicious food, making money? Well consider this: Psychologists have scientifically proven that one of the greatest contributing factors to overall happiness in your life is how much gratitude you show. Yup, think about that. Go ahead and marinate on it for a second. You can thank me later if you want. It will make you feel better, according to this study. You can go ahead and click on it and read it if you want or you can keep watching, because we read it and we thought it might be fun to test out for ourselves.

Sometimes we get caught up in the wave that God wants us to have money to be happy. Jesus in the Beatitudes teaches the exact opposite. Happiness does not come from stuff, and actually is obtained when things aren't going the way we want them to go.

Matthew 5:7: (KJV) **Blessed** are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Matthew 5:7: (Phillips) **Happy** are the merciful, for they will have mercy shown to them!

James 2:12-17: Because this is so valuable, you are instructed to do something with it.



True happiness revels in the display of mercy for it knows that our need for heavenly mercy can only be met in proportion to our desire to give it freely.

Matthew 5:8: (KJV) **Blessed** are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Matthew 5:8: (Phillips) **Happy** are the utterly sincere, for they will see God!

Hebrews 10:21-25: Now, this sounds happy! Psalms 24:3-5

True happiness - true deep and abiding happiness - can only truly be cultivated in a pure heart, for there it will never fall into contradiction.

Happiness recipe - peacemaking and persecution!

Matthew 5:9: (KJV) **Blessed** are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Matthew 5:9: (Phillips) **Happy** are those who make peace, for they will be known as sons of God!

How do you become a peacemaker? Enter into the experiences of those around you! But how do we do that...? Romans 12:15-18: So, do we arbitrarily become peacemakers at all costs, no matter what the conditions? Philippians 2:1-4

True happiness deeply desires peace among all, for then happiness can reign over all - and there is no better happiness than happiness shared!

2 Corinthians 13:11



So, what observations do we have about happiness from Jesus' happiness teaching?

- Its foundation is not in "me," but its foundation is in "Thee."
- It can grow through our sorrows when we are teachable and really want to be taught that which hails from above.
- This is all expressed in merciful actions from a pure heart.

These are the happiness ingredients that are necessary for the truest, deepest and most transforming expression of happiness:

Matthew 5:10: (KJV) **Blessed** are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:10: (Phillips) **Happy** are those who have suffered persecution for the cause of goodness, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs!

Making the most of our experiences will make us the happiest.

All of the previous happiness lessons have led us to this security: Psalms 16:7-9

Happiness recipe - heavenly reward!

Godliness + contentment = a happy life

1 Timothy 6:6-10 Matthew 5:11-12 Matthew 5:11-12 How can we stay positive when everything around us is so negative? Jesus prepared us through all of the previous "ingredients" so that we could rejoice in persecution. 1 Peter 3:13-17

True happiness can actually be expressed in persecution if it is founded in the love and sacrifice of Christ, for our happiness emulates his "for the joy set before him..."

1 Peter 4:12-16: Don't be surprised...be happy! Suffer for Christ...be blessed!!

John 13:15-17: The Beatitudes were spoken very early in Jesus' ministry. These John Scriptures were said the night before he was crucified. So, we have the lessons of happiness all laid out for us, and then he gave the examples of living that happiness all throughout his ministry. The night before he was crucified, he was saying, "I showed you the way, I taught you the way; if you know these things, happy are you if you do them." That is the secret for a Christian's life of true happiness. It is not about getting what you want, but rather making happiness with whatever you are given. In Christ, all things work together for good for those that love God and are called according to His purpose.

So, what are you happy about?

For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions, Think about it...!

