



Happy, Happy, Happy

## P<sub>review</sub>

This lesson looks at the concept of true happiness.

## P<sub>raise</sub>

Thank God that true happiness is found in Him!

## P<sub>arable</sub>

Think about a time when you felt happy. What person or thing or event brought it about? Do you think this happiness enriched your life, or was it merely a wisp that soon vanished? (Discuss)

Solomon was arguably one of the richest men who ever lived. He indulged every whim. If he saw something he wanted, he bought it or got it somehow. He had 40,000 stalls of Egyptian thoroughbreds and 1400 chariots. His fleets brought in gold, spices, precious stones, and fine linens from all over the world. He built elaborate homes, planted lush vineyards, and amassed expensive presents from visiting dignitaries. But at the end of his life he wasn't happy. All that stuff had gotten him nowhere. He said his whole life had been as futile as chasing the wind (**Ecclesiastes 2:1-11**).

## P<sub>resent</sub>

Happiness comes and goes. You can be the happiest person plugging along until BAM, a guy cuts you off in traffic, you read an uncomplimentary social media post, you have a fight with a friend, or lose your job. These things can blindside you and give you spiritual whiplash. All of a sudden you're *unhappy*.

Be honest. Are you happy? What percentage of people in the world do you think are happy? Have you ever walked through the mall and really looked at the expressions on people's faces? You don't often see a genuine smile.

Let's look at two ways you won't find happiness.

1. You won't find happiness in getting everything you want.



Look at Solomon. He raked in possessions from all over the world. He had the means to try everything he thought might bring pleasure. But in the end he wasn't happy.

Here's a secret the apostle Paul learned: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And being blessed makes you happy! [See Acts 20:35.]

Giving applies to more than money. Jesus said if you ...

1. feed someone who's hungry and thirsty [for instance, sharing the gospel with them or even helping out in a soup kitchen];
2. take in a stranger [like befriending a guest at church];
3. give clothes to someone who has very little or none;
4. visit someone who's sick or in prison;

... it's the same as doing it for Him. That makes you happy!

2. You won't find happiness in wishing you were like someone else.

According to Paul, comparing yourself with others is extremely unwise [**II Corinthians 10:12**]. Talking like someone else, picking up their bad habits to please them, dressing like them, going where they go, doing what they do might be exciting for a while, but it can get you into real trouble.

The truth is, you are fearfully and wonderfully made [**Psalms 139:14**]. God gave you the traits, looks, and talents He designed specifically for you. No one else has them in exactly that combination. If you capitalize on developing the character and talents he has given you, He can and will use you in a unique way in Kingdom work. And that will make you happy!

## **P**practice

**Matthew 5:3-12**, the Beatitudes chapter, contains a "happiness" list. But it can be puzzling because you'd think these things might have the opposite effect.

Here's what Jesus said "blessed" [happy, AMP] people are like:

They're poor in spirit [humble; they know they need God]

They mourn [sorry for their sin]

They're meek [patient and gentle, like Jesus]

They're hungry and thirsty for righteousness [wanting more of God]



They're merciful [they know if they're merciful to others, God will be merciful to them]

They're pure in heart [hearts have been cleansed by God]

They're peacemakers [they know how to maintain peace relationally]

They might be persecuted for righteousness' sake [because they do the right thing no matter what]

People might revile them and persecute them and say all kinds of evil things against them falsely on Jesus' account [this makes them glad and supremely joyful, for they know their reward in heaven is great!]

## P<sub>ray</sub>

Lord, I thank you for the truths we've learned today and the opportunity to gather with friends to talk about your Word. Remind us daily that we will find contentment and happiness only in You. Bless us today as we go through our classes, and help us to do our best for Your names' sake!

## P<sub>lus</sub>

Today, if you find yourself battling unhappiness and discontent, read **Matthew 5** again ... and as the days pass, as often as you need to, to remind yourself of Jesus' definition of a happy person.