

**Date: January 7, 2018**

**Title: Does God Want You to be Happy?**

**Text: Isaiah 52:7; Joel 2:21; Psalm 68:3**

INTRO:

Happy New Year everyone. I hope and pray that you enjoyed your Christmas and New Year's celebrations with friends and family. As I thought about what to share this morning, I reflected back on the truths that God had taught me over this last year. One of those truths was a rediscovery of the biblical word "Happy".

My goal this morning is to explore with you the concept of God wanting you to be "Happy." Is that even Biblical?

People have said things like:

- "All I want is to be HAPPY"
- "Where does this desire to be "Happy" come from?"
- "You need to STOP wanting to be HAPPY and instead desire to be HOLY"
- "God is not interested in your Happiness HE is interested in your Holiness"
- "Is GOD Happy?"

There are a number of words in the Bible that point to our happiness like: Gladness, Joy, Happiness, Blessedness, Pleasure, Cheerfulness, Delight, etc."

There seems to have been a shift in recent times that somehow to pursue happiness is sinful but to pursue holiness is godly.

JOY has become the "Spiritual Word" and HAPPINESS has become the "Worldly Word."

The problem with that is, that GOD gave us the desire to be happy knowing that our only true happiness could ONLY be found in HIM. Take Adam and Eve for instance. God gave them everything for their enjoyment and happiness. God had provided all that they needed for real HAPPINESS. The lure of temptation by the enemy was that they could find even GREATER happiness by disobeying God. Satan appealed to their God-given desire to be happy and led them to seek it in disobedience.

So, the desire to be HAPPY is not the problem. Where we go to find our happiness IS the PROBLEM.

Have you ever heard someone say, "I just want to be happy?" Is this good or bad?

What if God gave us that desire knowing that He is the One and ONLY source of true happiness?

Should there be a drastic distinction between happiness and joy. I might first ask: **Have your EVER heard of a happiless joy or a joyless happiness?**

There are many words that can be used interchangeably in the scriptures. "Gladness, Joy, Happiness, Blessedness, Merriment, Cheerfulness, Delight, etc."

It could be that we have concluded in our day that Happy sounds UN- Spiritual. Look what we have done with splitting happiness away from JOY

Some say:

- JOY is of God and solid and Happiness is of the world and is shallow
- JOY is GREATER than Happiness
- JOY is Spiritual and Happiness is Fleshly
- JOY and Happiness can overlap but they are DIFFERENT
- BIBLE: Joy and Happiness and Gladness and Cheerfulness are synonymous.

Why is it critical that we RECLAIM this word Happiness?

*For the GOSPEL to have it's full meaning and purpose. What do I mean by that? This idea that I know I want to be happy, but God is calling me to be HOLY, I guess I will pursue holiness even if I'm NOT HAPPY. This is not a bridge that anyone in the world wants to cross.*

*The GOSPEL flows best when we understand that true happiness can ONLY be found in CHRIST Jesus. And, we actually live in that happiness and peace that ONLY God can give so that when someone says, "I just want to be HAPPY" we have a clear answer for them as to where that "HAPPINESS" can be found. ---(Randy Alcorn)*

I would like to ask you to contemplate a simple question. Is GOD Happy? We know He is good but is HE good natured? If He is the source of all true happiness and none can be found apart from HIM wouldn't it be logical that HE must in fact be HAPPY Himself. That's not all that He is, HOLY, JUST, LOVE, and might we dare say HAPPY.

He takes pleasure in us when we obey HIM. He rejoices over us with singing (Zephaniah), The Father throws a party when the prodigal comes home.

### **Let's talk about True Happiness and where it is to be found.**

Isaiah 52:7 "How beautiful upon the mountain are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness." ESV

Joel 2:21 "Be happy and full of joy, because the LORD has done a wonderful thing." KJV

Psalm 68:3 "May the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they **be happy and joyful**" NIV

John 15:11 "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." ESV

**God is clear that seeking happiness—or joy, gladness, delight, or pleasure—through sin is wrong and fruitless. But seeking happiness in Him is good and right.**

### **Chasing Happiness**

**Romans 1:21-22,25** “For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ... 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

**Genesis 3:1-8** Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” 2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” 4 But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool[c] of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

**Prov. 14:12-13** There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. 13 Even in laughter the heart may ache, and the end of joy may be grief.

“the people of God ought to be the happiest people in all the wide world.” A.W. Tozer

If you are one of those people who are saying, “I just want to be happy” that is good news, God is ready to give you His happiness through His Son Jesus Christ.

Randy Alcorn has put it this way for those who have placed their complete faith and hope in Jesus Christ:

The price for your happiness has been paid.

The basis for your happiness is secure.

The resources for your happiness are provided daily.

The assurance of your eternal happiness is absolute,  
which provides an objective reason for your happiness today.

---Randy Alcorn “Happiness” pg. 49

If you are a believer here this morning and you are experiencing unhappiness, sadness, or sorrows let me first encourage you to acknowledge your feelings as real. Pour out your heart to the God who cares for you in your sufferings. And then, remind yourself of who you are and who He is and claim the promises of His Word that we are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus.

John 13:17 "If you know these things, happy are you if you do them" KJV

"The greatest joy is joy in God. This is plain from Psalm 16:11: "You [God] will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever." Fullness of joy and eternal joy cannot be improved. Nothing is fuller than full, and nothing is longer than eternal. And this joy is owing to the presence of God, not the accomplishments of man. Therefore, if God wants to love us infinitely and delight us fully and eternally, he must preserve for us the one thing that will satisfy us totally and eternally; namely, the presence and worth of his own glory. He alone is the source of full and lasting pleasure."

— John Piper, The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God's Delight in Being God