



Living Well

Happiness



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March 2012

Check out these websites for more information:

For more detailed information about the ministry - www.livingwelloc.org
Photos and writings about the ministry - www.livingwelloc.blogspot.com
Encouragement/culture on marriage - www.livingwellinmarriage.blogspot.com
Marriage events in the state, resources for marriage - www.marriagenetworkok.net
Making Marriage Memorable blog - www.marriagenetworkok.blogspot.com

Couldn't be happier...

We are wired to experience happiness, but we keep hitting the wrong buttons in our efforts to turn our happiness on.

Dr. Henry Cloud

Achieving happiness is not an ideal found in the Bible. Or is it?

God is not concerned with my happiness. Or is He?

Money can't buy happiness. Or can it?

Humans seek pleasure. I don't think any of us would argue with that statement. The pleasure I experience becomes my own happiness sometimes.

God designed humans to seek pleasure. However, I often sabotage my own happiness by pursuing pleasure in unsatisfying ways.

God's intention was not to deny us pleasure; in fact, He

created the world for our pleasure, "put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment." (1 Timothy 6:17b)

The problem is that I think I know how to find happiness. **Pursuing my own idea of happiness often results in pain, not pleasure.**

Jesus said He came to give us a full life, **I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.** (John 10:10b)

God wants me to find joy, peace, and contentment in my life on earth. He wants me to find them through a personal, intimate relationship with Him. **That pleasure will not go unfulfilled.**

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon talks about His search for pleasure and the meaninglessness of life. When talking about the summation of the book, Walter Kaiser explains, **"No one good part of God's good**

world will give fulfillment until a person comes to know Him."

John Piper suggests that our ultimate pleasure in life comes from finding our joy in God. *Why would we want anything less than the abundant life?*

Too often we settle for a poor resemblance of pleasure and happiness. **C.S. Lewis put it this way, "We are far too easily pleased."**

God cares about how I feel. The Psalms clearly show many expressions of despair and anxiety, alongside God's comfort. (Psalms 55-56)

As I fill my life with Him, He can overflow into other lives through me.

The avenues I pursue to allow Him to pour out onto others determines much of my happiness.

[See the other articles for details about this idea.]

Money can buy happiness

"Happy people are givers," according to Dr. Henry Cloud in the *The Law of Happiness*.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive," according to Jesus. (Acts 20:35b)

Money can buy you happiness as long as you give some of it away. Giving actually makes people happier than spending money on themselves. Some suggestions on giving:

1. Give to God first.

How? I give to those who are doing His work.

Why? I give out of my love for Him, not from duty or obligation; He gave me the ability to work and provided this world with all of it's beauty for me to enjoy. **My giving is a response of worship.**

2. Give out of empathy. Find a situation where you find compassion for those who are

suffering. Many cannot get out of their suffering on their own. Others must help.

3. Give freely. Give without expecting anything in return. Give without strings attached. Give without trying to control.

Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Cor. 9:7)

On the reverse side:

Happy Hour

Pursuit of Happiness

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

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Happy Hour

We love to go to Sonic during "happy hour." If one of us is out doing errands, we always bring a drink back for both of us. Smiles result.

What about all of the other hours during the day? What brings smiles?

"A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery while on a detour." Anonymous

Our happiness is a matter of perspective on life, but also on habits that we develop.

Dr. Cloud presents several other findings in his book about **how people influence their emotional state in a positive way**. Some of these include (some are included elsewhere):

1. Happy people have faith. [See more about this on the front of this sheet.]

2. Happy people have a calling. Having a job that you consider a calling from God, based on your talents, abilities, and passions, rather than seeing your job as a means to provide a living, or merely as a career path.

3. Happy people forgive. Unforgiveness can destroy a person's life. Unforgiveness is like swallowing poison and waiting for the other person to die. Forgiveness releases you from the person who hurt you.

4. Happy people pursue goals, God's goals. What He calls me to do, He will equip me to do and provide. *But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me*

heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:13b-14)

5. Happy people fully engage. Whatever I do, I do it wholeheartedly. *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart.* (Colossians 3:23)

6. Happy people connect. God created us for relationships. *God has not constructed us to be fueled by accomplishments. He has constructed us to be fueled by love.* (Dr. Henry Cloud)

7. Happy people don't compare themselves. If I compare myself with others who have less or who I think are less gifted, then I can become prideful. If I compare myself to those who have more, then I have self-pity. *Each one should test his*

own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load. (Gal. 6:4-5)

8. Happy people think well. I am vigilant about my thought life. Believing God's truth about who He is, who I am, and not believing the lies of the enemy. I can assume good will and ask for clarification whenever people say something to me that sounds hurtful. *We are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.* (2 Cor. 10:5) *A man's private thought can never be a lie; what he thinks, is to him the truth, always.* Mark Twain

9. Happy people are grateful. [We covered this topic in Nov '11]

The Pursuit of Happiness

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" are the inalienable rights which our founding fathers believed were granted to us by our Creator.

They never granted us the right to happiness, only the pursuit of it. Many people passively go through life expecting happiness to happen

to them. People who truly enjoy life actively **cultivate habits to partake of the pleasures that God has provided. Consider:**

1. Spending time with the Lord. Seek Him through His Word and prayer. Spend time quietly, listening for Him to speak. Believe/act on what He says.

2. Developing relationships by investing in the lives of others, listening to wise people about living a godly life.

3. Serving others. Find meaningful ways to give of your time, resources, and abilities to others.

4. Pursue activities for physical and emotional health; take care of the temple that God has given you.