



## Why Can't I Just Be Happy?

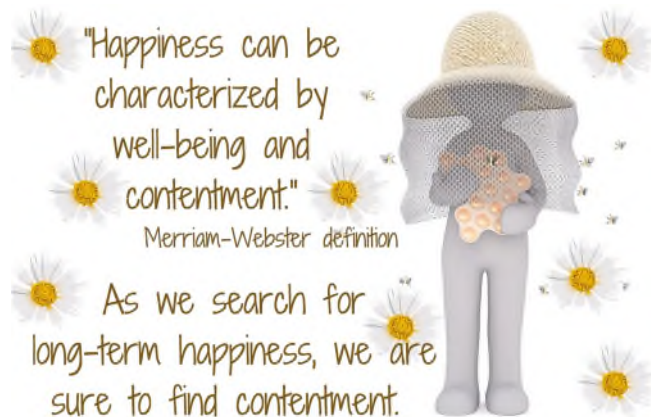
**Philippians 4:12: (NASB) *I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.***



You want to be happy. I want to be happy. Everyone wants to be happy, I mean, who would not want to be happy? The Declaration of Independence of The United States of America talks about "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" as being unalienable rights of humanity. What can we conclude from all of this? Happiness is a central objective and desire that belongs to all. Having said that, why are we not happy? Why are so many of us frustrated, disappointed and anxious about our lives? Why do we overeat, binge, eat chocolate, shop or do any number of other things to hide from our lack of happiness? Why can we not just be happy? Why can we not stop comparing, stop wishing, stop regretting, stop rationalizing and just

start living today for the glory of it being our present? There is hope, because happiness is attainable! We just need to know where and how to look for it and how to recognize it when we see it.

The whole idea of "Why can't I just be happy?" needs rebooting, because happiness is often elusive and is therefore a long-term objective for most of us. That being the case, let's reframe our approach to happiness this way: "How can I learn to continually grow into a happy, God-honoring life?"



### Defining happiness, *How to be Happy, The Science of Happiness*

- *How to be happy is a powerful question to ask, so I contacted the psychologists and experts in the science of happiness over at "Happify" to give me their best answer, and man, did they deliver! Our personal definitions of happiness might differ, but scientists view happiness as a combination of how satisfied you are with your life, and how good you feel on a daily basis. It varies from person to person, but approximately 40 percent of your happiness is controlled*



*by your thoughts, actions and behaviors, 50 percent is genetically determined and 10 percent is determined by your circumstances. Contrary to popular belief, we get used to our circumstances over time, so they don’t play as large a role in our happiness level as we might think.*



Interestingly, we try to change our circumstances when we are not happy, but that only accounts for 10 percent of the equation.

Starting our day with prayer addresses the 40 percent - it helps direct and control our thoughts for the day resulting in greater happiness.

For our conversation, let’s label “happy” as a state of mind and “content” as a state of being.

### **Our theme text tells us that there is something hidden:**

**Philippians 4:12:** (NASB) *I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned **the secret** of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.*

What secret?

**Secret:** Greek English Lexicon - “initiate into the mysteries”

According to the Apostle Paul, there is something to the idea of coping when we have a lot or have almost nothing. There is a secret, an understanding, for the life we want.



### **Happiness Observation:**

Managing physical or emotional changes in life is a learned behavior.

### **This reminds us of:**

**Hebrews 4:11:** (KJV) *Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest...*

You have to work at resting - it does not come naturally, just like happiness.

Some background on happiness in the Scriptures:

**Happiness:** Strongs #835 how happy  
happiness, blessedness

“Blessedness” helps us to reframe happiness. We can be happy from a human perspective or blessed from a godly perspective. The godly perspective is the scriptural definition of being happy.

**Happiness:** Strongs #833 to be straight (used in the widest sense, especially to be level, right, happy); figuratively, to go forward, be honest, prosper

So, the primary Old Testament word for *happy* <Strongs #835> comes from a word <Strongs #833> that has to do with being level, moving forward and progressing. This being the case, we could say that from an Old Testament



perspective, to be truly "happy" and "blessed" is to be in a position where progress is attainable. Being level means you are on ground that allows you to move forward.



Being appreciative of the little things in life helps with our attitude. How about running water, warm showers and indoor toilets!

**First reason - adaptation, Three Science-Backed Reasons You Should Quit Complaining, TheMeetologyLab**

- I shared some great science this week on our social media channels about why it's bad to moan. It's actually bad for you. The first reason I am going to give to you, I'm going to give you three, but the first reason is based in neuroscience. When we moan, the synapses between our neurons fire between the gap of the two neurons - has a connectivity, and when we do that those become stronger and stronger. So, when we're moaning our brain is becoming more used to it, it's becoming better at it, it's becoming more familiar with it. Essentially what we do more of, we get better at and that's the amazing plasticity of the brain. So, if I am going to keep complaining, I'll get better at it. I'll get more used to it, and that's not a good thing.*



**Happiness Text: Trusting in the Lord brings happiness - and happiness is a pathway to progress:**

Proverbs 16:18-20: (NASB) <sup>18</sup>Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling. <sup>19</sup>It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud. <sup>20</sup>He who gives attention to the word will find good, and **blessed** <835> (happy) is he who trusts in the LORD.

Trusting in the Lord brings happiness, not having lots of "stuff."

Philippians 2:14: (KJV) *Do all things without murmurings or disputings.*

Acknowledge the beginning of the process - prayer and appreciating the little things of life. This is a basis for us to find happiness, what it is and how it works.

**If happiness is an objective, what do we do to obtain it?**



**Happiness Observation:**

Heartfelt personal anxiety must be countered by contentment for happiness to be given a place to live in our hearts.

We are connecting heartfelt personal anxiety with our ability to be happy. We acknowledge we all have anxiety. Somehow to be happy, it must be countered with contentment.



**))) The declaration, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, Movie Quote (2006)**

- *It was right then that I started thinking about Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence, and the part about our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And I remember thinking, "How did he know to put the pursuit part in there?" That maybe happiness is something that we can only pursue. Maybe we can actually never have it, no matter what. How did he know that?*



**True happiness is...to enjoy the present, without anxious dependence upon the future. — Lucius Annaeus Seneca**

**Therefore, true happiness NEEDS contentment to flourish! Jesus knew this and showed us what the road to contentment and happiness looks like:**

**Luke 12:22-32:** (NASB) <sup>22</sup>And he said to his disciples, for this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. <sup>23</sup>For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.



**Our human life and body must be seen in light of the kingdom. If we are followers of Jesus, then our life and body are bent towards his footsteps.**

**))) Increasing happiness, *How to be Happy*, *The Science of Happiness***

- *You can increase your happiness in the long term by nurturing relationships, having new experiences, helping others or just by being grateful for what you have. You can get even more happiness out of a good experience by savoring it, use all your senses, pay attention to sights, sounds, smells and feelings. Pay attention to the little details of a great experience. Share it with someone else, and linger and dwell on the moment, too. Savoring experiences makes us happier, more grateful and more hopeful while reducing levels of stress, guilt and depression. Good experiences strengthen the parts of the brain connected with happiness.*



**It is so nice to pick up meat at a store. It is clean, cut up and packaged. You do not have to kill and slaughter an animal.**



<sup>24</sup>Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds!

The birds and the animals go about their instinctive business and are provided for as a result! Our contentment will instinctively flourish when we are about our business of following Jesus.

<sup>25</sup>And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life's span? <sup>26</sup>If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters?

We are small in the big picture of God's plan. Our contentment comes in acknowledging that God does watch over and care for our lives.

<sup>27</sup>Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. <sup>28</sup>But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith!



God's creation of the flowers that simply grow because they are planted are stunning evidences of God's care for His creation.



A caller from Connecticut suggests: One of my favorite Scriptures is [Psalms 16:11](#): *In Thy presence is fullness of joy.* There is no real happiness apart from our Creator.

<sup>29</sup>And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. <sup>30</sup>For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things.

We, as the called ones of Jesus, are different and our contentment depends upon our being reminded of this important, basic and life-changing fact. Our Father knows we need certain things, and He also knows there are a lot of things we want. He also knows there are a lot of things we might want but should not have.



**Second reason - emotions spread, [Three Science-Backed Reasons You Should Quit Complaining](#), [TheMeetologyLab](#)**

- *The second reason is actually to do with the fact that emotions spread. So, my friends are going to feel my negativity, those around me are going to feel my negativity, I'm spreading the virus of negative energy - negativity. That can't be a good thing, can it? Imagine there's a friend of yours that you always feel negative around. You're eventually going to stop returning their phone calls and seeing them.*

<sup>31</sup>But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. <sup>32</sup>Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.

Our contentment is a result of our focus and our application of that focus. Once we set our lives in order, we can begin to truly develop deep and abiding happiness. This does not come just because you say, "I want to be happy."



## Contentment seems more important than happiness. How do we master it?



### Happiness Observation:

Contentment is the DRIVING FORCE that gives happiness deep roots.

*Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.*  
— Mahatma Gandhi



### *Killing happiness and adversity, How to be Happy, The Science of Happiness*

- *Three things that will kill your happiness over time are comparing yourself to others, a lack of close friendships or holding onto resentment. People who’ve experienced some adversity in life are actually happier than those who’ve never experienced any. After adversity, once we’ve got some distance and perspective, making sense of our life’s challenges helps us to shape our identities, increase our resilience, cope better with current stressors and become more optimistic about the future. Feeling connected to a deeper purpose, mission or direction in life is key for our well-being.*

Grow into continuous happiness by learning the art of contentment.

### Here is the scriptural combination that builds contentment:

1 Timothy 6:6-9: (NASB) *“But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by **contentment** <841>.”*

**Contentment:** Strongs #841 self-satisfaction, i.e. (abstractly) contentedness, or (concretely) a competence

*Great gain* - means “splendid acquisition.” Godliness can bring us splendid acquisition when it is accompanied by spiritual competence. This would imply some level of maturity.

### The following Scriptures dictate a way to measure that maturity:

*<sup>7</sup>For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. <sup>8</sup>If we have food and covering, with these we shall be **content** <714>. <sup>9</sup>But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.*

*Those who want to get rich* - This grand comparison flushes out our truest desires and shows us our level of spiritual maturity. This is completely opposite of the “Prosperity Gospel.”

**Content:** Strongs #714 properly, to ward off, i.e. (by implication) to avail (figuratively, be satisfactory)

So, contentment in these verses is a (spiritual) competence that “wards off” fleshly desire. Contentment therefore is not just sitting back and absorbing the trials of life; rather, it is the strength of spiritual choice and action to choose to accept our circumstances for the sake of Christ.




**A listener asks:** How does contentment work when you have inherited anxiety?

Some people are just wired anxiously. How can you be content if you are naturally on edge? Looking at the Luke 12 verses and 1 Timothy 6 verses we have looked at so far - contentment is “spiritual competence.” To be



competent at your job, you have to practice and train. This applies to our spiritual work as well. We have to be able to do what we need to do - through fellowship, study, prayer and standing up for what we believe in. These things all create spiritual competence. Godliness with spiritual competence is great gain.

 **Third reason - illness comes, Three Science-Backed Reasons You Should Quit Complaining, TheMeetologyLab**

- *And the third thing is the stress hormone cortisol that gets released when we're moaning, when we're stressed. It can worsen blood pressure, it can lead to long-term diabetes. It's got so many negative connotations in the long term. So, if we're actually moaning all the time and complaining all the time, it can't be good for us. So, my tip this week, my insight based on neuroscience, mainly, is watch how much you're negatively complaining and moaning. It can become something you just do more and more and more into a cycle.*

You can create illness in your life by constant complaining.



Another little thing to be happy for is a change of clothes every day - and clean socks!

**Regarding the Apostle Paul's "thorn in the flesh" he wanted removed:**

2 Corinthians 12:9-10: (NASB) <sup>9</sup>And he has said to me, my grace is **sufficient <714>** for you, for power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. <sup>10</sup>Therefore **I am well content <2106>** with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

We believe this deficiency was his eyesight. We can parallel this with inherited anxiety. Jesus said, *my grace is sufficient for you*. The word for *sufficient* here is the same word for *content* in 1 Timothy 6:8. His grace can ward off any lack in your life. That is one of the ways we take our inherited anxiety and put it in the hands of God.

**I am well content:** Strongs #2106 to think well of, i.e. approve (an act); specially, to approbate (a person or thing)

Paul could “think well of” his weaknesses, because when he was weak in the flesh, he could still be content. This was spiritual maturity and spiritual competence in action.

Again, contentment is a spiritual competence that wards off fleshly desire, and now we see it brings us a powerful acceptance of higher standards to deal with our many issues in life.



### Where else can we find examples of this “well content” powerful acceptance?

Matthew 3:16-17: (NASB) *16After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on him, 17and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased <2106>.*

We have the same word used again - God showed us how well pleased He was in His son. And the Apostle Paul used the same word to describe how well content he was with weaknesses, insults and distresses. These examples both show spiritual confidence.

### This gives us insight into what it means to be godly, but God is pleased with more than just Jesus:

Luke 12:32: (NASB) *Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly <2106> to give you the kingdom.*

God looks at our attempts to follow Jesus and says, “Yes, I am happy to give you the kingdom.” The same happiness God has in His son is the same acceptance and approving He has in giving us the kingdom. We need to allow the grace of Jesus to ward off those things in our lives that prevent us from being spiritually content.

### What about when we want more from life? Are we not allowed to have it?



**Happiness Observation:** Wanting and comparing seriously challenge spiritual contentment and must therefore be understood and dealt with appropriately. Only then can happiness grow.

Comparing our lives to others seriously challenges our contentment! “I wish my child was more like yours.” “I wish my wife did that for me like yours does.” All this brings is more anxiety and a reason to challenge the good things in our lives.

*A smile is happiness you'll find right under your nose. — Tom Wilson*

Sometimes we have to look right in front of us to find the things that can change our lives.



The five points in this segment are from the sermon “Learning Contentment,” by Pastor Rick Warren (YouTube).

What are the results of always wanting more?



“Satisfaction,” (Verse one) Rolling Stones

I can't get no satisfaction, I can't get no satisfaction  
'Cause I try and I try and I try and I try  
I can't get no, I can't get no  
When I'm drivin' in my car, and the man comes on the radio  
He's tellin' me more and more about some useless information  
Supposed to fire my imagination  
I can't get no, oh, no, no, no





**Contentment is being satisfied with what the Lord gives you and where He directs you:**

Proverbs 3:5,6: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. <sup>6</sup>In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

Be satisfied with His leadings. If we are not, then we are looking for the wrong things in the wrong places.

### 1. More fatigue



The race to get more makes us work too hard.

Do we not get tired in the effort to always try to get more?

Proverbs 23:4-5: (NASB) <sup>4</sup>*Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, cease from your consideration of it. <sup>5</sup>When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings like an eagle that flies toward the heavens.*

*When you set your eyes on it, it is gone* - Wealth teases you. You set your sights on it and it seems to fly away. Does that mean you should not work hard? What if you are blessed with talent and opportunity? That is not what we are saying. Do not make those things the reason for your life. If you are going to pursue things, you will get tired.

When we pray for more, we somehow expect God to just give it to us and exactly as we requested. Since when does He simply give us the things that we can earn? God is NOT our magic genie! *Contentment means knowing God knows!* Happiness can follow as a result of this knowledge. *Contentment is the foundation for life-changing happiness.* If we are getting fatigued because we are trying to get MORE, is it worth the effort? Are we trying to *fulfill* our lives and not just *fill* our lives?



### 2. More expenses



"If the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, so is the water bill. Somebody had to pay for that green."

It costs more to have more! When having more becomes your life's obsession, are you content?

Ecclesiastes 5:10-11: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>*He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity. <sup>11</sup>When good things increase, those who consume them increase. So, what is the advantage to their owners except to look on?*

*He who loves money will not be satisfied with money* - Because it is never enough. There is always more to accumulate.



*When good things increase, those who consume them increase - If you become successful and everyone sees your new lifestyle, you now attract lots and lots of newfound friends!*

Contentment requires asking who we serve. Happiness can follow, depending upon the answer.

### 3. More Anxiety



The more you have,  
the more you have to worry about.  
"I never ever worry about my yacht  
getting barnacles. Why?  
Because I don't own a yacht!"

Ecclesiastes 5:12: (NASB) *The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or much; but the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep.*



THE MORE "STUFF" YOU HAVE, THE MORE YOU HAVE TO STORE, DUST, PROTECT, INSURE, FIX, MAINTAIN, PAY TAXES ON...THE LIST GOES ON!

This is profound! If you are working hard, making ends meet and contributing, you sleep well at night. If you have a lot of stuff to keep track of, maybe you do not sleep as well.

Anxiety can literally kill you over time. Contentment flourishes when we do what is before us with energy and commitment. Happiness lives in *contented* accomplishment!

No matter what we accomplish, there is always someone who has done better, who has more or who got that break we did not get. We can so easily look at this, not knowing the backstory, and be discontent. Happiness can grow if we are content in our accomplishments.

Even more difficult, we should feel happy for others who have abilities and talents we do not. We want to look at it as a positive, rather than, "I want that. I wish it was me." To be able to celebrate the accomplishment of someone else is a powerful way to find contentment in your life.



#### 4. More conflict



### Fatigue + expenses + anxiety = conflict

1 Timothy 6:9: (NASB) *But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.*

Life's experiences create momentum. It is our choice as to whether that momentum is a positive, spiritual, contented momentum or a negative, sensual, restless momentum. Happiness is only at the back end of one of those things - the first one!

 **Gratitude and happiness, *How to be Happy, The Science of Happiness***

- *Being intentionally grateful is very powerful, too. Well-known researcher Brené Brown said, "In 12 years of research, I have never interviewed a single person with the capacity to really experience joy who does not also actively practice gratitude." In one study, people who wrote down things they were grateful for once a week for six weeks felt happier and less depressed for up to six months. They reported better sleep quality, and they were more likely to engage in healthy behaviors, like exercise.*

Being intentionally grateful can combat inherited anxiety.

#### 5. More dissatisfaction



I think having more will make me  
more happy, more secure, more  
important, more loved.  
None of that is true.

1 Timothy 6:10: (NASB) *For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*

Money is a great tool. If you are blessed with that tool, you should use it wisely and in a way that will create a momentum that is spiritually contented and positive. This can bring contentment and happiness to not only your life but to others.

Life's experiences bring us to conclusions. People - especially in cultures of plenty - continually wrestle with life. Godly contentment *accepts* life and *invites* happiness.

**What do we do when we don't feel  
like being happy or contented? Is all lost?**



**Happiness Observation:** The happiness we strive for is a profound and deep state of mind.



**Act your way into feeling rather than feel your way into acting. — John Maxwell**

**🔊) The wisdom of Dory, *Just Keep Swimming, Finding Nemo, Movie (2003)***

- (Explosion then coughing)
- (Dory) *Wow! Dusty!*
- (Nemo's Dad, Marlin) *The mask? Where's the mask? No! No, no get the mask, get the mask! Get it!*
- (Dory) *Doo-do-dee, La-la-la, it just keeps going on, doesn't it? Echo! Hey, whatcha doing?*
- (Nemo's Dad) *It's gone! I've lost the mask.*
- (Dory) *What, did you drop it?*
- (Nemo's Dad) *You dropped it! That was my only chance of finding my son. Now it's gone!*
- (Dory) *Hey, Mr. Grumpy Gills. When life gets you down, you know what you've got to do?*
- (Nemo's Dad) *I don't want to know what you've got to do.*
- (Dory) (Singing) *Just keep swimming, just keep swimming, swimming, swimming. What do we do? We swim, swim, swim.*
- (Nemo's Dad) *Dory, no singing.*
- (Dory) *I love to, swimming. When you want to swim you want to be...*
- (Nemo's Dad) *Now I'm going to get stuck with that song! Now it's in my head.*
- (Dory) *Sorry.*



When life has you down, keep moving forward! If you stay still, anxiety grows. If we continue to move, contentment can begin to find us.



Another thing to be happy about - thermostat climate control! This little dial can change the environment in your house. You do not have to chop down a tree and stoke a fire all night.

Managing the inconsistencies of our *interpretation* of life IS tricky. Again, focusing on and attaining contentment will by default bring us happiness - not the fleeting happiness of something new or the temporary lift of a single experience. True spiritual contentment brings a happiness that is abiding, powerful and life-changing. This can happen in the midst of the most difficult parts of our lives if we are seeking spiritual competence and the spiritual ability to ward things off AND (like the Apostle Paul) we have happy acceptance of what comes our way through the filter of God's will for us.

**🔊) Boosting happiness, *How to be Happy, The Science of Happiness***

- *Here are five ways to instantly boost your happiness: Spend five minutes doing something to brighten the day of someone you love. Email someone and thank them for something they did for you. Have a meaningful conversation with a good friend. Take 30 seconds to help someone who needs it. Or just*



*savor a memory - close your eyes and relive the happiest moment of your life. People who regularly practice mindfulness meditation have increased activity in the left prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain responsible for calm and happiness. And it helps to practice empathy. Take someone else's point of view. When others feel understood, you have a chance to build intimacy and well-being.*

A lot of what can boost our happiness involves other people. That is significant - get outside of yourself!

### **Contentment brings us strength:**

**Philippians 4:10-13:** (NASB) <sup>10</sup>*But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. <sup>11</sup>Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be **content <842>** in whatever circumstances I am.*

**Content:** Strongs #842 self-complacent, i.e. contented

"I have learned to be okay in whatever circumstances I am" is a deliberate, intentional interpretation of the inconsistencies of your life. "Whatever position I am in, I can learn from it, (even if I do not feel like it yet, do not know quite how yet and do not even WANT to yet) because God has granted me this very important experience."

We must be faithful stewards with the gifts given to us. If we look at our responsibilities - family, job, church - we should have the strength to move forward. Being a good steward of what we have is a godly perspective. Our lives are not our own - we have given our lives to God through Christ. God through Christ gives those lives back to us to take care of, nurture and guide to bring honor to His name. That is what being a steward is. Contentment comes from being a steward in God's name.

### **To be content is to be competent in God's strength:**

<sup>12</sup>*I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. <sup>13</sup>I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

*I can do all things through him who strengthens me* - This verse is often misrepresented. When read out of context, it sounds like you can do ANYTHING - you can make a lot of money, close that sale, get that new car, etc. because Christ strengthens you. But that is not what it is saying. *I know how to get along with humble means* - it was not that the Apostle could do anything he wanted; he learned the secret of spiritual competence through Christ who strengthened him.

This strength is the soil in which happiness can grow, be tended and flourish. Happiness is there if you want it. Just seek godly contentment first.

### **Strength brings happiness: Did you know that Jesus gave a teaching specifically dedicated to happiness?**

**Matthew 5:1-3:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>*When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup>He opened his mouth and began to teach them, saying, <sup>3</sup>**Blessed <3107>** are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*



**Matthew 5:3:** (Phillips) How **happy <3107>** are those who know their need for God, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs!

**Blessed:** Strongs #3107, supremely blest; by extension, fortunate, well off, blessed, happy

When you go through the Beatitudes in Matthew 5, substitute *blessed* with the word *happy*, because happy is easier for us to identify with than blessed. Happy comes from within the human frame and we think in those terms.

**Jesus, even the night before he was crucified, taught us how to be happy:**

**John 13:12-17:** (NASB) <sup>12</sup>So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments and reclined at the table again, he said to them, Do you know what I have done to you? <sup>13</sup>You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. <sup>14</sup>If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup>For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. <sup>16</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. <sup>17</sup>If you know these things, you are **blessed <3107>** if you do them.

This happiness lesson started with Jesus humbling himself, taking the lowest position of everyone in the room and serving. He wanted them to do this for each other - but what did this have to do with happiness? The bottom line lesson was: "Do what I did. You are not greater than me. If you do this and understand its value, you are blessed (happy)." He is literally walking into his crucifixion within hours. At that very tenuous, stressful, disheartening moment for him, he teaches this lesson. "I want you to be happy in your Christian life." He was happy in his sacrifice and to go through the pain, because it meant glory to God. That is spiritual competence! That is contentment!

To be happy means to be spiritually content and competent, to put things in order and understand the purpose of all of our trials and difficulties. This is all so we can do the things which honor God. Seek God first and happiness will follow

*So, why can't I just be happy?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...  
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*Happiness is a butterfly, which when pursued, is always just beyond your grasp, but which, if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you. — Nathaniel Hawthorne*

### Several Scriptures that encourage contentment and happiness:

Psalm 40:1-3: (NRSV) <sup>1</sup>I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry. <sup>2</sup>He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. <sup>3</sup>He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD.

Has this ever been your experience? If so, what a cause for happiness!

Psalms 16:7-9: (NASB) <sup>7</sup>I will bless the LORD who has counseled me; Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night. (Have you ever had this happen?) <sup>8</sup>I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. <sup>9</sup>Therefore my heart is glad and my flesh rejoices; my flesh also will dwell securely.

When your heart is glad - truly glad, you are content.

1 Peter 4:12-16: (NASB) <sup>12</sup>Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; <sup>13</sup>but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of his glory you may rejoice with exultation. <sup>14</sup>If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. <sup>15</sup>Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; <sup>16</sup>but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

Don't be surprised - be happy! Suffer for Christ - be blessed.

Proverbs 3:13: (KJV) Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

Happiness Theme: Finding wisdom and holding wisdom brings happiness.

Proverbs 3:13-18: (NASB) <sup>13</sup>How **blessed <835>** (happy) is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding. <sup>14</sup>For her profit is better than the profit of silver and her gain better than fine gold. <sup>15</sup>She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her. <sup>16</sup>Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor. <sup>17</sup>Her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace. <sup>18</sup>She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy (833) are all who hold her fast.

### The "payback" of wisdom:

Proverbs 4:5-9: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth. <sup>6</sup>Do not forsake her, and she will guard you; Love her, and she will watch over you. <sup>7</sup>The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; And with all your acquiring, get understanding. <sup>8</sup>Prize her, and she will exalt you; She will honor you if you embrace her. <sup>9</sup>She will place on your head a garland of grace; She will present you with a crown of beauty.

Proverbs 14:21: (KJV) He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, **happy <835>** is he.

Happiness Theme: Being merciful brings you happiness

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

1 Peter 4:14: (KJV) 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.



Happiness Theme: Godly suffering and reproach (rebuke or disapproval) brings happiness.

**1 Peter 3:13-17:** (NASB) <sup>13</sup>Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? <sup>14</sup>But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, <sup>15</sup>but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; <sup>16</sup>and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. <sup>17</sup>For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.