

From Cope To Hope: How to Effectively Handle Life's Problems & Challenges

Part 4, "Five Secrets to Happiness"

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Phil. 4:1, **Rejoice** in the Lord always. Again I will say, **rejoice!**

Phil 4:4(NLT) 5...*Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. 7 Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.*

Happiness Definition: *is a mental or emotional state of well-being characterized by positive or pleasant emotions*

Happy definition: *Delighted, pleased, or glad, as over a particular thing:*

Dictionary definition of joy: *A feeling of great pleasure and happiness.*

Kingdom definition of joy: *Satisfaction in doing the will of God and contentment in Christ.*

"Everyone should be happy and no one should be sad." This may be a popular sentiment, but it is a shallow and simplistic statement. It's like saying, *"Everyone should be wealthy and no one should ever lack money."*

Our culture seems to be obsessed with comfort, convenience, and self-aggrandisement (defined as, "Actions undertaken to increase one's own power and influence or to draw attention to one's own importance")

Happiness is a good feeling, but it should not be a major objective or motivation for our lives. We don't want to base all life decisions on the question, "Does this make me happy?" Some of your most important work will not make you happy. Courageous and heroic actions are rarely motivated by personal happiness.

Joy gives rise to happiness like water fills ponds and lakes.

Most people confuse happiness and joy. These are viewed as the same, but believers in Christ should know there is a significant difference.

Was Jesus always happy? Isaiah 53:3 says the Jesus was a *"Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."* He did not shun hurting people to preserve His own feeling of happiness. Hebrews 12:2 says Jesus is, *"The author and finisher of our faith, who for the JOY that was set before Him endured the cross.."*

Was the Apostle Paul always happy? He wrote , Acts 20:22 *And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. 24 But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God*

People who always need to be happy may fall into a trap of superficiality and unhealthy isolation from the "real world."

HAPPINESS IS | JOY IS

Superficial		Substantive
Temporary		Enduring
Self-Focused		God-Focused
Needy		Full
Emotional		Spiritual
Shallow		Deep
Weak		Strong
Your Lemonade		Your Strength

Nehemiah 8:10 *Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."*

Five Insights from Philippians 4:1-4

1. **Rejoice! Always be full of joy in the Lord.** Have a real relationship with God. Be comfortable in and around the things of God
2. **Be considerate of others.** Walk in gentleness or moderation: suitable, equitable, fair, mild, gentle. From a Greek root, "to yield," or from a root, "it is fitting," whence "reasonableness of dealing"
3. **Don't worry or complain.** There is no "don't worry" switch or button. When Paul said "Don't worry" he was talking to people who heard him say *"Rejoice in the Lord always. Rejoice!"* Anxious defined: *experiencing worry, unease, or nervousness, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome* Anxiety is a picture, a mental image, and the feelings that follow:
4. **Pray about everything.** Cast your cares on the Lord. Free your emotions from fear and anxiety.
5. **Let peace rule and guard your heart: "Rule" defined:** 1) to guard, protect by a military guard, either to prevent hostile invasion, or to keep the inhabitants of a besieged city from flight. 2) by watching and guarding to preserve one for the attainment of something

Five Secrets to Joy & Happiness

(Items 1-4 from Rick Warren. Item #5 from Bryan Hudson)

1. I NEED A PERSPECTIVE TO LIVE FROM

Everyone of you have problems. You've brought them in here with you. Your problems are not so important as how you are looking at those problems. The way you look at that problem is much more important than the problem. Your perspective makes the difference.

Philippians 1: *"Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel."*

Romans 8:28 *"And we know that in ALL things God works for the good of those who love Him..."*

KEY: God has a purpose behind every one of my problems. *When you get this perspective you are on the way to joyful living. Paul says that God has a purpose behind all my problems therefore I have a perspective to live from.*

2. I NEED A PRIORITY TO LIVE BY

When things get tough I need to know what's really important in order to distinguish the trivial from the significant. I can be living my life either based on problems or priorities. Either you'll decide what's important in your life or you'll let other people decide what's important. If you don't choose your priorities, you'll go around putting out one fire after another, living your life simply from problem to problem to problem and not choosing what's important.

Philippians 4:15-16 Paul was saying, *"Not only am I in prison, but if you want to kick a man while he's down there are guys out there attacking my ministry. They're jealous, envious, rivaling me. Other ministers are criticizing me while I am in prison."* If you want something to steal your joy quicker than anything else, just let other people begin to criticize you.

Philippians 4:18: *"But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice."*

3. I NEED A POWER TO LIVE ON

I need strength to make it, to keep on going. Life can wear you out. Life can drain you completely. One crisis after another can drain you. You lose your energy and your power. Some of you are ready to throw in the towel.

Philippians 4:19: *"I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed."*

Paul says, I have two things that give me strength and kept me going in spite of four years of imprisonment. One, the prayers of other people. And two, the help of God's Spirit.

Circle the word "hope". You can't live without hope. You've got to have hope to cope. Cornell University did a study of 25,000 POWs from WWII. They found that man can handle tremendous stress and pressure as long as he has hope. The moment hope is gone you're doomed.

KEY: With God's power nothing can devastate me. If I am going to make it in life I need a perspective to live from -- something so I can see the way things really are not the way I feel they are, the way they appear to be. I need a priority to live by so that I do first things first and I'm not taken away by non-essentials. And I need a power to live on that gives me the strength to keep going and keep on keeping on.

4. I NEED A PURPOSE TO LIVE FOR

Philippians 4: 21 *"For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." He's not suicidal but he's anticipating death. He's not afraid of dying. Death is just on to better things, out of the prison. "But while I'm here," he says, "I have a purpose for living."*

How would you fill in the blank? For me to live is _____.

5. YOU NEED PEOPLE TO LOVE YOU Ephesians 4:16, *From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*