

# Happiness Is

## Matthew 5:6

Online Sermon:

[http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page\\_id=3567](http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567)

## Happiness Defined

Are you happy? The Britannica dictionary defines happiness as “a state of emotional well-being that a person experiences either in a narrow sense, when good things



happen in a specific moment, or more broadly, as a positive evaluation of one’s life and accomplishments overall.”<sup>1</sup>

Determining one’s level of happiness is

not easily attainable for while it is greatly influenced by the wealth, safety and freedom one has living within one’s own country,<sup>2</sup> it is also derived from a variety of other factors. Even though the rich, famous, and powerful have the most expensive items one can purchase this does not mean that

they are happy but merely partakers of expensive marketing endeavors. While having an easy, rich, or successful life certainly goes a long way towards helping one feel happy the privileged few who attain such status are still susceptible to bouts of depression and anxiety. And if worldly success was the only factor of happiness, then how does one explain that some of the poorest and oppressed of this world, despite their bleak circumstances, are able to feel joy in midst of trials, tribulations, and injustices?

Asking if you are happy is a deceptively complex question for the answer often changes moment by moment regardless of one’s circumstances.

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*If happiness were to be defined as the emotional well-being of one’s mind, then why aren’t more people using their imagination and the power of their minds to will themselves too always be happy?*

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While most people want to be happy, they are often unsure if what they are feeling day by day could be labeled as either good or happiness! For example, when I ask a colleague of mine at work if he is happy, he usually responds with “well I am not unhappy!” While most people want to feel a sense of joy, accomplishment and satisfaction with their lives is this too

<sup>1</sup> Taken from the following website: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/happiness>

<sup>2</sup> Taken from the following website: <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/mapped-global-happiness-levels-in-2021/>

lofty of a goal for something that is not only difficult to define but almost impossible to produce? The following sermon is going to review Matthew 5:6 and other Scriptures to suggest that happiness is not the product of one's circumstances or the fabrication of one's mind but a gift from God granted to those in His family who "rejoice in His works and covenantal faithfulness to their Creator!"<sup>3</sup>

## Happiness Link to One's Circumstances

There are many examples in Scripture of God's people being happy due to the wonderful things happening in their lives.



In the Old Testament happiness was often associated with "sexual love (Song of Solomon 1:4), marriage (Proverbs 5:18), the birth of children (Psalms 113:9), the gathering in of the

harvest, military victory (Isaiah 9:3) and the drinking of wine (Psalms 104:15)."<sup>4</sup> There was great happiness when Joseph was reunited with his family, and the widow Ruth married her kinsman redeemer, Boaz. It would have been easy to be a

<sup>3</sup> Martin H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: Martin Manser, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> David P. Scaer, "Joy," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed., Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 430.

happy Israelite during Solomon's reign when nothing was made of silver because it was so plentiful it had little or no value (2 Chronicles 9:20)! We are also told that the Israelites were especially joyous upon their deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 18:9-11) and their return from Babylonian captivity



(Jeremiah 31:1-19)!<sup>5</sup>

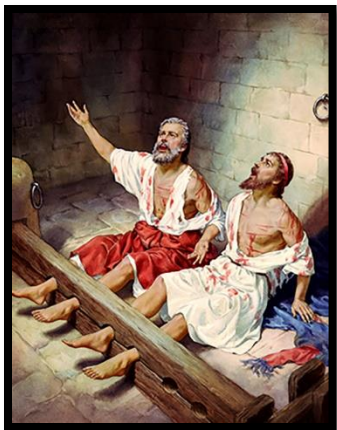
In the New Testament joy is associated with favorable circumstances as well. The Shepherd who finds His lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7), the woman who

finds the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10), the prodigal son's return (15:11-32) and the man who sold all his assets to get the treasure in the field are said to have been overwhelmed with joy!<sup>6</sup> Both the shepherds (Luke 2:10) and the Magi (Matthew 2:10) rejoiced when they met the Lord. There was also great happiness in Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (John 12:12-15), when the disciples saw the empty tomb, when Mary was held by the resurrected Christ (John 20:11-18) and even after the Lord ascended to heaven (Luke 24:52)! How easy it truly is to feel happiness when standing upon a mountain top of such blessings!

<sup>5</sup> David P. Scaer, "Joy," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed., Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 431.

<sup>6</sup> David P. Scaer, "Joy," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed., Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 431.

Happiness in Scripture does not solely depend on good circumstances for often during the most depressing and harsh events Christians were still filled with joy!<sup>7</sup> James says we are to consider it pure joy when we go through trials and tribulations for when we persevere in faith then we “become



mature and complete, not lacking anything” (1:2-4)! Other New Testament writers have said that Christian joy paradoxically is often the outcome of suffering and even sorrow for Christ’s sake (Col. 1:24; 2 Cor. 6:10; cf. 1 Pet. 4:13; Heb. 10:34, etc.)!<sup>8</sup> For example, Peter and John after having been flogged for preaching the Good News rejoiced “because they had been counted worthy of suffering

disgrace for the Name” (Acts 5:41)!<sup>9</sup> Paul spoke of his unspeakable joy in midst of afflictions (2 Corinthians 7:4-16)<sup>10</sup> which later he described as having five times received the forty lashed minus one, three times beaten with rods, once pelted with stones, and three times shipwrecked (2 Corinthians 11:20-29)! When Paul and Silas were in prison they rejoiced, prayed, and sang hymns (Acts 16:16-25).

<sup>7</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *The Sermon on the Mount: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 13–14.

<sup>8</sup> S. S. Smalley, “Joy,” ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England: Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 616.

<sup>9</sup> David P. Scaer, “Joy,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed., Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 431.

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*“If by happiness we mean serenity, confidence, contentment, peace, joy and soul-satisfaction, then Jesus is the best example of supremely happiness.”<sup>11</sup>*

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From the words of our Savior in the Sermon on the Mount we learn that happiness or being blessed is often obtained by the poor in spirit (3), those who mourn (4), the meek (5), and those who are persecuted for righteousness’s sake (10). So, if circumstances are not a good predictor of happiness, then what is and how does one feel unspeakable joy all the time?

## Happiness in the Presence of the Lord

Happiness is not due to our circumstances, nor can it be created by the power of one’s imagination but is found in having a relationship with the Lord! Believers rejoice “because God has surrounded them with His steadfast love (32:11)”<sup>12</sup> and through belief in the atoning sacrifice of His Son Jesus they have been made right in His sight (John 3:16)! Happiness is knowing that when we cry out like Apostle Paul, “O wretched man (woman) I am” (Romans 7:24-25) that forgiveness can be asked for and received (1 John 1:9). Happiness comes from having deep fellowship with God by the still waters He

<sup>10</sup> David P. Scaer, “Joy,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed., Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 431.

<sup>11</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *The Sermon on the Mount: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 15.

<sup>12</sup> David P. Scaer, “Joy,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed., Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 430–431.

graciously provides (Psalms 23:1-2). Happiness comes from hearing the testimonies of other believers that God has given His own every spiritual blessing in His Son (Ephesians 1:3) because He always does good to those, He calls His own (Romans 8:28)! It comes knowing one's very footsteps are



secured when one stands upon the rock of one's salvation (Psalms 18) or sits under the shelter of the wings of one's Creator (Psalms 91:4). Happiness is found in the

assurance that our struggles with the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms cannot destroy those who are sealed by the very Spirit of God (Ephesians 6:12)! Happiness comes from reading God's holy word (1 John 5:3) and having His Spirit commune with ours and reassured that as redeemed masterpieces of grace we can joyfully be rebuked, corrected, and trained (2 Timothy 3:16) to be right in His sight so that we might be a holy, pleasing and living sacrifice unto our Lord (Romans 12:1)! Happiness is paradoxically found in midst of the darkest of trials and tribulations for it is often in crying out to the God of all comfort one receives the strength to persevere and draw nearer to one's portion and heart's desire (2 Corinthians 1:3-5).

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*Above all happiness is knowing that not only is our work for the Lord not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58) but that He will one day return to take us home to spend an eternity with Him (John 14:3-4)!*

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Happiness is not the product of one's circumstances or the fabrication of one's mind but a gift from God granted to those in His family who "rejoice in His works and covenantal faithfulness to their Creator! Are you happy?"