

The Secret of True Happiness

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Millions of books have been written on the subject, 'How to be Happy,' but Paul shares the secret in just four verses in Philippians 4:4-7.

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (NASB). Now let us analyze the passage.

Rejoicing in the Lord is a distinguishing feature of New Testament Christians. It opens like a beautiful flower in the early life of every true child of God and blooms more and more each day as the new convert passes from a carnal mind to a spiritual mind. Yet, rejoicing in the Lord is not automatic by any means! It is a trait that must be constantly and consciously learned and developed each day as one grows in grace and knowledge. Also, the careful Bible student will note that the word, 'rejoice,' is second person plural present active imperative, which means it is a command, not a suggestion! But one might be heard to say, “But why should I rejoice?”

Well, here are some reasons one should consider in rejoicing:

- (1) We might begin (like the Ethiopian eunuch) by rejoicing that we have been baptized into Christ (Acts 8:39; Rom. 6:17-18; Gal. 3:26-27);
- (2) Rejoice that our names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20);
- (3) Rejoice that we have an imperishable, undefiled, and unfading inheritance promised and are protected by the power of God (1 Pet. 1:4-6a);
- (4) I must learn to rejoice even when persecuted (Luke 6:23; Acts 5:41); [It gets even harder!]
- (5) I must learn to rejoice when others rejoice (Rom. 12:15; 1 Cor. 12:26b); [Now it really gets harder!]
- (6) I must learn to rejoice when an erring brother returns to the fold (Luke 15:5-9, 24, 32).

The next phrase is: “Let your forbearing (rejoicing) spirit be known all around. The Lord is near.” The sense seems to be: I have so little time to show my rejoicing spirit to others because the coming of the Lord is just as near as the day of my death.

Verse 6 contains the very heart of the secret. You should notice the contrast here! “Be anxious for nothing, BUT in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made know to God.” In other words, do not worry about things, but express your thanksgiving to God and give it into His hands!

The word, “anxious,” comes from the Greek word, “merimna,” and means, “To draw in different directions, distract.” Hence, it signifies “that which causes this, a care, especially an anxious care.” In Matt. 6:25-34, the word may be translated, care, thought, anxious, worry; or concern like in 1 Cor. 7:32.

You can count on one hand the things most people in the world (and in the church) worry about: Food, clothing, shelter, tomorrow, and the cares of this world usually involving money (Mark 4:19). These all will distract us from our most important consideration – to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33).

In Luke 10:38-42, Martha was distracted and worried about many things that kept her from sitting at the feet of Jesus like her sister, Mary (vs 40-41).

We find the result of our happiness in verse 7 where we read: “And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Summary: If we can learn to rejoice in the Lord always, quit worrying about things, pray with thanksgiving, give our worries to the Lord, and seek first His kingdom and righteousness, we will be at peace and will have learned the secret of true happiness!