



**SERIES: MY LIFE WITH GOD**

## **The Secret to a Happy Life**

**Life Reference: John 15: 1-11**

**Focus Verse:**

***"That my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full"***  
**(John 15:11).**

Everyone wants to be happy. And everyone has a different idea of what makes one happy. Many rate their happiness by the things they possess. By this definition, they find happiness in a new pair of shoes, a sporty car, the winning lottery ticket, a new house, or a boat. For them, happiness equals "stuff." Others seek happiness through travel, entertainment, relationships, or accomplishments.

According to the dictionary, a happy person is one "marked by good luck; fortunate." Circumstance, rather than any inner quality, brings them happiness. But because they never have enough of anything, it becomes elusive. It is a constant pursuit to feel that euphoria of "having it all." Eric Hoffer stated that, "You can never get enough of what you don't need to make you happy."



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## Life Reflection:

Have you known people whose definition of happiness was directly related to how many material goods they owned?

Do you feel that their level of contentment rose as the number of their possessions increased? Why or why not?

How do you define happiness?

In reality, true happiness cannot be bought. Helen Keller summed it up this way: "Many persons have a wrong idea of what constitutes true happiness. It is not attained through self-gratification, but through fidelity to a worthy purpose." For the Christian, that worthy purpose is our service to God.

Rather than seeking happiness as the world defines it, we would be much wiser to discover joy as promised in the Word of God.

The joy process begins with our salvation experience (Isaiah 12:3). We become "a new creation" in Christ. (II Corinthians 5:17). Our priorities change. No longer do we ask, "What can I get out of life?" Instead, we offer, "What can I give with my life? What can I do to please God?" Joy comes through the power of the Holy Ghost working in our lives.

**"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15:13).**

Biblical joy is not dependent upon circumstances or possessions. In fact, our greatest joy may come while enduring trials and hardship. Luke 6:22-23 tells us to leap for joy because we are hated, shunned, reproached, and spoken evil of, for our "reward is great in heaven." Paul affirmed, "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation" (II Corinthians 7:4). In another place he declared, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (II Corinthians 12:10).

Was Paul viewing life with rose-tinted glasses and ignoring the reality of the situation? Not at all. He had the ability to see beyond the fleeting pleasure of



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material goods to discover an inner joy that develops as a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

### **Life Reflection:**

Can you think of a time in your life when you experienced great difficulty and yet felt joy in your heart?

How do you think it is possible for us to feel joy while going through times of trouble and distress?

After our initial salvation experience, we learn that to keep the joy vibrant we must develop a strong relationship with the Lord, or what the scriptures call *abiding*.

In John 15 Jesus refers to Himself as the True Vine. In descriptive terms that the listener could relate to his everyday life, Jesus spoke of the branch only being able to bear fruit as it was attached to the vine. The strength to be productive came from the life within the vine, not from the branch itself. If broken off, the branch soon withered and died, good only to be gathered up and burned. To keep our branch firmly attached to the vine we must obey God's Word.

**"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love" (John 15:10).**

### **Life Reflection:**

Do you feel you have an "abiding" relationship with the Lord?

What steps do you feel you can take to increase this joyful relationship with God?



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Abiding can be painful at times, for the gardener must prune back the branches to encourage new, stronger growth. As we walk with God, the pruning process rids our lives of things that would weaken us, causing us to become barren (without fruit), and perhaps to even die.

## Life Response:

Happiness and joy really are not really one and the same. Happiness is dependent upon circumstance, but joy has no such limitations. Happiness looks inward at our wishes and desires while joy looks upward to fulfillment in God. Happiness is temporary; joy is eternal.

**"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17).**

The secret to true joy comes not from what we possess but Who we know.

## My Prayer:

Lord, Your Word tells me that in Your presence is fullness of joy. Forgive me for attempting to find happiness from the things I possess. Instead let me experience the joy that comes from being with You and delighting in Your presence. No one can take the joy that You give from me. Times of trouble may come, but those things cannot destroy my joy. I find strength in Your joy. Loving You and being with You is joy unspeakable and full of glory.

(Taken from Psalm 16:11; John 16:22; Nehemiah 8:10; I Peter 1:8.)

## More Life with God References:

Isaiah 12  
Luke 6:22-23  
John 15:1-11  
II Corinthians 12:1-10  
I Thessalonians 5:16-18  
I John 2:3-6; 28-29

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