

## HAPPINESS

Hello I'm Jim Fuller. I'd like to share a few thoughts and some scriptures with you about happiness.

The dictionary definition of happy is:  
delighted, pleased, or glad, over a particular thing or circumstance.

I grew up in America. Our country's constitution guarantees life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It doesn't guarantee happiness. Just the pursuit of it.

There are 328.2 million people living in the United States.  
Here are a few very disturbing statistics about our country.

The United States has the highest rate of mental illness of any country on the planet.

25 million people have been taking anti-depressant medicine for at least 2 years.

43.8 million Americans a year experience mental illness

It's estimated that 46.4% of all adults in America will experience mental illness in their lifetime.

2.3 million Americans are incarcerated in prison.

The US has 24.7% of all of the world's 9.8 million prisoners.

With 328.2 million people pursuing happiness, it doesn't seem like as a whole we are catching up with it too well.

My definition of happiness is;  
When all of your circumstances are working out the way you want, and as the saying goes,  
"you have all your ducks are in a row."

Unfortunately, just like real ducks, they don't stay in a row for very long.

1 Peter 1.24 says that,  
All flesh is like grass, and it's glory like the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off.  
But the word of the Lord endures forever.

It's amazing that our entire country is striving with their minds, their emotions, and their wills, to achieve some level of happiness that is completely temporary.

It says in 2 Corinthians 4.18  
The things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Happiness is circumstantial and completely temporary. It sometimes comes or goes based on what someone says or what someone doesn't say, on what they do or don't do.

The Apostle Paul made an interesting statement in his letter to the Philippians chapter 4.11  
I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 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.

The secret is;  
I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Joy is completely different from happiness. It's one of the fruits of the Spirit. It's a product of the presence of God in our lives.

As we abide in God, and He abides in us, His Holy Spirit produces in us the joy of the Lord.

In Psalms 16.11 David says,  
You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy;  
In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

In Malachi 3.6 God states,  
I am the Lord, I do not change...

Circumstances come and go, sometimes they are good, sometimes not so good.

But joy, because it's a product of God's presence, never changes. It's always available no matter what the circumstances are.

There is an amazing phrase used only one time that I know of in the scriptures.

It's in Peter's first epistle. He's writing to a group of people who have been scattered throughout the world because of persecution for Christ. They've been driven from their homes and lost all of their possessions.

Here's what he writes to them.

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, maybe found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ, and though you have not seen him, you love him, and though you do not see him now, but believe in him, you greatly rejoice with

(Here is the phrase)

JOY INEXPRESSIBLE AND FULL OF GLORY,

obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

It's pretty obvious from their expression, that they weren't looking at the temporary things but at the eternal things which are not seen.

Because God delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his Son, we are no longer bound by Satan, this world and any it's circumstances.

We can now live in His presence, 24/7, 365 days, of every year for the rest of our lives and experience His Inexpressible Joy regardless of any circumstance that we are passing through.

God bless you.

Jim Fuller

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