

ENJOYING LIFE TO THE FULLEST

1 Peter 3:10-12

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. A little girl said to her grandmother, “Grandma, I just found out what happiness is. It’s that feeling you have just after you buy something.”
2. The quest for happiness is as old as mankind. Everyone is searching for happiness, even those who don’t realize it, and even those who deny it.
3. There is a new course being taught at Yale University on happiness. It is called “Psychology and the Good Life.” It is the most popular course ever taught at Yale University, which was founded in 1701.
4. Unfortunately, most people seek happiness in the wrong things. Tim Keller is a pastor who wrote a best-selling book on the Parable of the Prodigal Son, in which he discussed the two wrong ways that people seek happiness: Moral conformity and self-discovery.
 - i. Moral conformity is seeking to live such a moral life that God will be indebted to you and will have to give you what you want. It is using God for self-fulfillment. It is not love for God, but love for self, and using God for your own ends. This is illustrated by the older son in the story. When things go wrong, and they always do, this path leads to either...
 1. Self-hatred because you know you’ve failed, or
 2. God-hatred because God has not kept up His end of the bargain.
 - ii. Self-discovery is the belief that “individuals must be free to pursue their own goals and self-actualization regardless of custom and convention. In this view, the world would be a far better place if tradition, prejudice, hierarchical authority, and other barriers to personal freedom were weakened or removed.” The idea is that happiness is found in doing whatever you want to do without being under the authority of another. This is illustrated by the younger brother in the story. This leads depression when you discover that it is not the pathway to happiness, or it leads to self-destruction because you have gratified the flesh for so long.

- iii. Both of these ways to seek happiness are a rejection of God. The first is trying to control God, and the second is trying to get out from under God's control. Neither lead to happiness.
- iv. Today we're going to look at a text that teaches how to enjoy life to the fullest. The true pathway to happiness.

II. THE PASSAGE READ

1. 1 Peter 3:10-12

10 For the one who wants to love life
and to see good days,
let him keep his tongue from evil
and his lips from speaking deceit,
11 and let him turn away from evil
and do what is good.
Let him seek peace and pursue it,
12 because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous
and his ears are open to their prayer.
But the face of the Lord is against
those who do what is evil.

III. THE POINT STATED

- 1. The good life is the godly life. The pathway to happiness is holiness. Get holy, then get happy.

IV. THE PRINCIPLES OBSERVED

1. The reasonable desire.

- i. It is natural and reasonable (not wrong) to desire a good life.
- ii. **Thomas Watson** "Happiness is the mark and center which every man aims at. The next thing that is sought after being, is being happy."
- iii. I've never met someone who doesn't deeply desire to be happy and enjoy life. This is normal and natural. It is the way God created us. Otherwise this passage would tell us how, or use it as an incentive to godliness.
- iv. Research tells us that the quest for happiness is good for your health. **Nelson Search** (The Healthy Renegade Pastor) "The negative thoughts and feelings you experience create chemical reactions in your physiology that can lead to weakened immunity, chest pains, shortness of breath, fatigue, back pain, high blood pressure, digestion issues, and more."

- v. It is not unspiritual to desire and seek your own happiness.
- vi. **Psalm 112:1** “Happy is the person who fears the LORD.” Jesus began His most famous sermon of all with eight keys to happiness (the Beatitudes).
- vii. The problem with most people is not that they desire happiness, but that they seek happiness in the wrong things.

2. The key to happiness.

- i. This passage contains the key to happiness.
- ii. So many books have been written and read on the subject. So much time, money, and effort has been spent and wasted on the pursuit of happiness. So many lies have been told about the key to happiness. But this passage has the true key: “Let him keep his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit, and let him turn away from evil and do what is good. Let him seek peace and pursue it.”
- iii. If you are looking for the key to happiness, the key to a full and meaningful life, then look no further.
- iv. **Spurgeon** “You can be certain that he who prays for holiness will one day praise God for happiness.”
- v. **Psalm 119:1** “How happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk according to the LORD’S instruction!”

3. The secret to longevity.

- i. This passage also contains the secret to a long life. Godliness.
- ii. Peter is quoting from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. But the original Hebrew says differently.
- iii. **Psalm 34:12** “Who is someone who desires life, loving a long life to enjoy what is good.”
- iv. Godliness is more important to your health than diet and exercise. You should not neglect proper diet and exercise, but godliness is more beneficial to your health. Think of how many lives have been cut short and lost because of sin – an evil tongue, sinful behavior, strife with others, and rebellion against God.
- v. While this passage is not a guarantee to long life, it is the secret to longevity. Many godly people have had their lives cut short not only despite their godliness, but because of their godliness. But it is a true general principle, or proverb, that godliness contributes to longevity more than any other factor.

- vi. **Proverbs 3:7-8** “Don’t be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. This will be healing for your body and strengthening for your bones.”

4. **The evil of sin.**

- i. Consider the evil of sin. Sin steals your happiness. Sin cuts your life short. Sin keeps you from living an abundant life. It keeps you from enjoying life to the fullest. Sin keeps you from God’s blessings, and it sets God against you. Choose to sin, choose to suffer.
- ii. **Psalm 1:6** “For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.”
- iii. **Augustine** “The pleasure of sin is soon gone—but the sting remains!”

5. **The deceitfulness of sin.**

- i. Sin is so destructive, robbing a man of happiness, yet it convinces men that it is the very key to happiness.
- ii. **Thomas Watson** “Sin is first pleasant, and then tragic!”
- iii. **Thomas Watson** “Sin is the womb of sorrow and the grave of comfort! Sin turns the body into a hospital. It causes fevers, ulcers, and cancers. Sin buries the name, melts the estate, pulls away near relations like limbs from our body. Sin is the trojan horse out of which a whole troop of afflictions comes. Sin drowned the old world—and burnt Sodom. Sin made Zion sit in Babylon.”
- iv. **Hebrews 3:13** “But encourage each other daily, while it is still called today, so that none of you is hardened by sin’s deception.”

6. **The relevance of the Bible.**

- i. The Bible does not merely teach us how to live a moral life, or how to go to heaven. It teaches us how to enjoy life to the fullest. How to live the best life. Even how to live a long and healthy life.
- ii. **2 Timothy 3:16** “All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness.”
- iii. **Spurgeon** “The words of the Lord serve us for many purposes. In our sorrows, they are our delight. In our difficulties, they are our guide. We derive joy from them and discover wisdom in them.”

7. **The goodness of God.**

- i. The goodness of God is seen in this passage in that He wants us to be happy, shows us how to be happy, and provides us with the blessings to be happy.
- ii. **Nahum 1:7** “The Lord is good, a stronghold in a day of distress; he cares for those who take refuge in Him.”

8. The watchfulness of God.

- i. **1 Peter 3:12** “because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”
- ii. This passage is a reminder that God sees all. He is watching everyone. He is watching the good, and He is watching the evil.
- iii. You cannot do any good, no matter how small, but that God will see you. You cannot do any bad, no matter how small, but that God will see you.
- iv. This is both a comfort to the righteous, and a warning to the wicked.
- v. **Proverbs 5:21** “For a man’s ways are before the Lord’s eyes, and he considers all his paths.”

9. The consequences of behavior.

- i. Along with the watchfulness of God, this passage teaches that there are consequences for your behavior.
- ii. If you do what is right, you will be rewarded greatly. If you do evil, God will be against you, and nothing could be worse than that.
- iii. **Matthew 10:28** “Don’t fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

10. The necessity of faith.

- i. The Bible’s secret to a happy life is really not a secret. It is found all throughout the Scripture. All you have to do is read the Bible and it will jump out at you.
- ii. **Psalms 1:1-2** “How happy is the one who does not walk in the advice of the wicked or stand in the pathway with sinners or sit in the company of mockers! Instead, his delight is in the LORD’S instruction, and he meditates on it day and night.”
- iii. But you would think that it is a secret because it is so rarely followed. Very few people tap into this principle. Why? Because

it requires faith. To benefit from the Bible's secret to a happy life you must believe it, because it will not be easy implementing it. You will be different; alone; mocked; persecuted. You will feel foolish because you are the only one. You will be tempted with doubt a hundred times a day as the world tries to sell you other paths to happiness. Only the man of faith will prevail.

- iv. **Hebrews 11:6** "Now without faith it is impossible to please God, since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."
- v. **William Barclay** "Faith is the conviction that what Jesus Christ says is true and that we can commit ourselves to his promises and launch ourselves on his demands. It is the unquestioning certainty that the way to happiness and peace and strength on earth is to accept him at his word."

V. THE PATH EXPLAINED

1 Peter 3:10-11

10 For the one who wants to love life
and to see good days,
let him keep his tongue from evil
and his lips from speaking deceit,
11 and let him turn away from evil
and do what is good.
Let him seek peace and pursue it,

1. Keep your tongue from evil.

- i. Most of my most embarrassing moments were caused by my tongue. My family gets together every July 4th for a celebration, and we always invite my best friend's family from Baton Rouge. One year I was sitting at the table with Jonathan and his wife, Jessica, and I picked up a tortilla cheese wrap (for lack of a better name) and criticized it. I said, "I don't like food like this. Who made this? Why would you even bring something like this to a party?" Then Jonathan replied, "Jessica made that. I like it." I don't think I've ever been more embarrassed.
- ii. If you do not bring your tongue under the control of Jesus Christ, it won't just embarrass you, it will ruin your life.
- iii. **Proverbs 18:21** "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit."

- iv. Six Types of Speech Christians Must Avoid:
 - 1. Crooked words (Col 3:9). Crooked words are dishonest words, such as lying, flattery, and exaggeration.
 - 2. Curse words (Col 3:8). How do you know if a word is a curse word? Curse words are words that adults don't want their children to hear; words that parents do not want their children to say; words that would not be used in Disney or Hallmark movies; words that the preacher would never use in a sermon.
 - 3. Corrupt language (Eph 5:3). Corrupt or dirty language usually involves talking about sexual things in an inappropriate way.
 - 4. Cut downs (Mt 5:22). A cut-down or insult is a degrading comment or a hurtful name.
 - 5. Criticism (Jas 4:11). Criticism is pointing out a person's faults or flaws in an unloving way, either to their face or behind their back.
 - 6. Complaining (Phil 2:14). To complain is to express dissatisfaction about a person or a circumstance.
- v. **Ben Franklin** "Better slip with foot than tongue."

2. Turn away from evil.

- i. **Proverbs 23:31-32** "Don't gaze at wine because it is red, because it gleams in the cup and goes down smoothly. In the end it bites like a snake and stings like a viper."
- ii. What is true of alcohol is true of sin. It looks pretty, and it goes down smoothly, but in the end it bites like a snake and stings like a vapor. Sin and happiness are opposites.
- iii. Sin deceives, and then it divides, and finally it destroys. It deceives because it seems so appealing at first, or at least no big deal. But then it divides, separating us from the presence and power of God. And finally it destroys our relationships, our health, our emotions, and our potential.
- iv. **Thomas Watson** "Sin is the Trojan horse out of which comes a whole army of troubles."
- v. What is sin? Sin is any failure to obey God's commandments, either by commission or omission.

1. Sins of commission: Do what God has forbidden, such as adultery.
 2. Sins of omission: Failing to do what God has commanded, such as submitting to your husband, or loving your wife.
- vi. Do you want to enjoy life? Turn away from evil. Dishonesty, theft, murder, adultery, premarital sex, pornography, greed, drunkenness, drugs, etc.

3. Do good.

- i. "Good" in this context refers to doing God's will. Living the way that God wants you to live. Being the person God wants you to be. This includes obedience to God's commands, loving God with all your heart, loving your neighbor as yourself, and using your resources to help the needy.
- ii. It is not enough to avoid sin; we must be devoted to doing good.
- iii. **James 1:27** "Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained from the world."
- iv. Eight terms summarize the Christian's call to goodness:
 1. Amos 5:14 says to pursue good and not evil.
 2. Amos 5:15 says to love good and hate evil.
 3. 2 Cor 9:8 says to excel in every good work.
 4. 1 Tim 6:18 says to be rich in good works.
 5. Titus 2:14 says to be eager to do good works.
 6. Titus 3:1 says to be ready for every good work.
 7. Titus 3:8 says to be devoted to good works.
 8. 2 Pt 1:5-7 says to make every effort to grow in goodness.
- v. Do you seek happiness, then do good. Love God. Be kind to others. Help the needy. Build the church. Disciple your children. Take care of your parents. Be generous with your resources. Forgive those who sin against you. Devote yourself to prayer and Bible study. Put on the character of Christ.
- vi. **Spurgeon** "The surest way to abstain from evil is to be fully occupied in doing good."

4. Seek peace and pursue it.

- i. **Spurgeon** "Not merely prefer it, but with zeal and are endeavor to promote it. Peace with God, with thine own heart, with they fellow man, search after this as the merchantman after a precious

pearl. Nothing can more effectually promote our own happiness than peace; strife awakens passions which eat into the heart with corroding power. Anger is murder to one's own self, as well as to its objects."

- ii. **Augustine** said this entire passage can be summarized with two commands: "Live righteously, and live peaceably."
- iii. Three Kinds of Peace to Pursue
 1. Peace with God.
 - a. A right relationship with God.
 - b. There is no happiness without peace with God.
 - c. Naturally we are at enmity with God (Rm 8:7). This is the purpose Christ died on the cross (Is 53:5). To reconcile us to God.
 - d. How do we pursue peace with God? By turning to Jesus Christ in faith.
 - e. **Romans 5:1** "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
 2. Peace with men.
 - a. Work hard to get along with others.
 - b. **Romans 12:18** "If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."
 - c. How do we pursue peace with men? An old preacher gave this three-fold advice (Dr. Waterland, quoted in Spurgeon's Treasury of David):
 - i. Be careful not to give offense when needless, or, when it may innocently be avoided.
 - ii. Be careful not to take offense, especially in small matters.
 - iii. If any needless offense has been given or taken, we must put a stop to it right away.
 3. Peace with yourself.
 - a. Peace of mind. Inner tranquility.
 - b. Jesus promised this peace. **John 14:27** "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don't let your heart be troubled or fearful."

- c. How do we pursue peace with ourselves?
- d. We must not sin and attack our conscience; we must avoid the inner sins of worry, anger, bitterness, jealousy, covetousness, and lust.

VI. THE POWER PROMISED

1. The deepest and fullest happiness is not promised merely to those who live a moral life, but to those who have a right relationship with the one true God. Then God grants them the power for abundant life. This power for abundant life is expressed in two ways in verse 12:
 - i. "Because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous."
 1. This verse utilizes anthropomorphism, a figure of speech in which God is given human body parts to help us understand Him. God does not actually have eyes, ears, and a face.
 2. This phrase means that God promises to be near to the righteous and to take good care of them.
 3. **Barnes' Notes** "That is, he is their Protector. His eyes are indeed on all men, but the language here is that which describes continual guardianship and care."
 - ii. "and his ears are open to their prayer."
 1. God promises to hear and answer the prayers of the righteous, which ultimately leads to their happiness.
2. "But the face of the Lord is against those who do what is evil."
 - i. On the other hand, God promises to withhold blessing and deliverance from the wicked. More than that, God promises to be their enemy. This is a promise of punishment.
3. This is a sad but true illustration. I have five older brothers. As I write this sermon, one of them is living in sin. He is abusing drugs and alcohol. He is not holding down a job. He is being completely destructive and dishonorable. When my brother behaves himself and does what is right, my parents will give him the shirt off their back. They will let him live with them with free room and board. They will drive him to and from work. They will do anything for him. But when he lives dishonorably and destructively, my parents turn their faces away from him. They will not help him. They will not even answer the phone. That's the way it is with God. When we turn from evil and do what is good, God watches over us and answers our prayers. But when we run from God and rebel against God, He turns His face against us.

VII. CONCLUSION

1. **John Piper** wrote a best-selling Christian book called *Desiring God*, in which he writes the following principles about happiness:
 - i. The longing to be happy is a universal human experience, and it is good, not sinful.
 - ii. We should never try to deny or resist our longing to be happy, as though it were a bad impulse. Instead, we should seek to intensify this longing and nourish it with whatever will provide the deepest and most enduring satisfaction.
 - iii. The deepest and most enduring happiness is found only in God. Not from God, but in God.
2. It is not wrong to seek happiness. You just need to know that true happiness is found in full-devotion to Jesus Christ.
3. Pursue your own happiness by pursuing God. Not so God will give you things, but because in acquiring God Himself you will find ultimate enjoyment in life.