

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

activated

Vol 12 • Issue 8

EMBRACE THE CHAOS

What to do when there's nothing you can do

The Difference-Maker

God's take on religion

Contentment

How much is enough?



PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Some say that happiness is what we make it. The more time I spend with a certain friend, the more I'm convinced that's true.

Four years ago he was a successful businessman. Then one of his employees had a breakdown and showed up with a shotgun, intent on killing as many people as he could. In an attempt to disarm the man, my friend lost a hand and an eye. When he was released from the hospital weeks later, his savings were gone. My wife and I met him when we began volunteering at the homeless shelter where he was living. By then he also had Parkinson's disease and a deadly form of skin cancer. He could barely walk or get out of a chair by himself, but he was one of the most cheerful, positive people I had ever met.

He has since moved from the shelter to an apartment, where he lives on a small pension. Two surgeries stopped the cancer before it could spread, and medication and therapy are helping him deal with Parkinson's. Still, on a bad day there are very few things that he can do for himself. Taking him to doctor appointments and shopping has been a learning experience for me. Regardless of what we're doing or how arduous it is for him, he has a secret agenda: never leave anyone without a smile. And he always succeeds. He learns everyone's name, includes it in his cheery goodbye, and remembers it next time. He finds opportunities to build people up and is generous with compliments. He tells corny jokes. He pokes fun at himself. Whatever it takes.

A lot of people, if they were in his position, would blame God or become bitter, but not my friend. "That's no way to live—and I've still got a lot of living to do," he has told me.

Happiness is what we make it.

Keith Phillips
For *Activated*

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SOMEONE BIGGER THAN ME

BY ELDORA SICHROVSKY

I CAN STILL REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I DISCOVERED WHAT A FEW MINUTES IN GOD'S CREATION CAN DO. I was in grade school and was frantically searching for a misplaced workbook that I needed for class the next day. The more I searched, the more confused and frustrated I became. I was exasperated and on the verge of tears when my mom came into the room. Seeing my dilemma, she suggested I go outside for some fresh air and sunshine. "Perhaps it will give you new energy and refresh your mind," she said.

My nine-year-old mind couldn't make sense of that, but I gave it

a try anyway. Running down the path through our yard, I breathed in the fresh spring air and basked in the warm sunlight. I stopped to smell the fragrance of newly opened flowers and sat by the lily pond, watching the goldfish dart by as the water tickled my feet. Turning back to the house, I suddenly remembered that I'd left my workbook between the cushions on our living room sofa where I'd been sitting and watching TV the night before. I felt relieved and refreshed. Mom had been right.

I have often applied that childhood lesson to my adult life. When life's challenges leave me feeling low,

God is the supreme artist. God looked at His creation as it progressed and saw it was good; when He had completed it, He saw that it was "very good." The Great Artist was evidently much pleased with His world. It was a world filled with wonderful objects, shapes, and movements, a world abundant in rich colors like those of the rainbow and the rose, rich textures like those of beaver fur and magnolia leaves, rich odors like those of the quince and the honeysuckle, rich sounds like those of thunder and running streams, and rich tastes like those of watermelons and chocolate.

—Clyde S. Kilby

when my work feels too demanding and the pressure too crushing, I love to take a few minutes with nature. Whether it's a few potted plants on a window sill or a breathtaking view from a mountaintop, there's just something about God's amazing handiwork in the diverse and colorful world around me that refreshes my mind and renews my spirit.

It's wonderfully reassuring to remember that, like His wonderful creation, my life is in the hands of someone bigger than me.

ELDORA SICHROVSKY IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN TAIWAN. ■

be happy!

BY DAVID BRANDT BERG

THERE'S SUCH A THING AS BEING TOO SOBER AND TAKING THINGS TOO SERIOUSLY, ESPECIALLY OURSELVES.

The ability to laugh at ourselves is a great asset and helps keep us humble. People who can't laugh at their own mistakes or take the mistakes of others with a sense of humor are either too proud or have too severe a sense of life.

God intended for us to enjoy living, and He has given us the ability, senses, and environment to do so. In fact, our main purpose in life is, as Martin Luther once said, "to love God and enjoy Him forever."

If there's anything we Christians are supposed to be, it's happy people.¹ We've got more to be happy about than anybody else in the world. We have the happy love of Jesus, who takes all of our burdens, carries all of our cares, and lightens all of our sorrows. Jesus says that His yoke is easy and His burden is light.²

If you're finding His yoke too heavy to bear, then maybe you're not "casting all your care upon Him."³ Maybe you're trying to carry too much and pull too hard on your own, instead of letting God do it by His power, His love, His grace, and His strength. He says, "Without Me you can do nothing."⁴ "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you."⁵

1. Psalm 146:5

2. Matthew 11:28-30

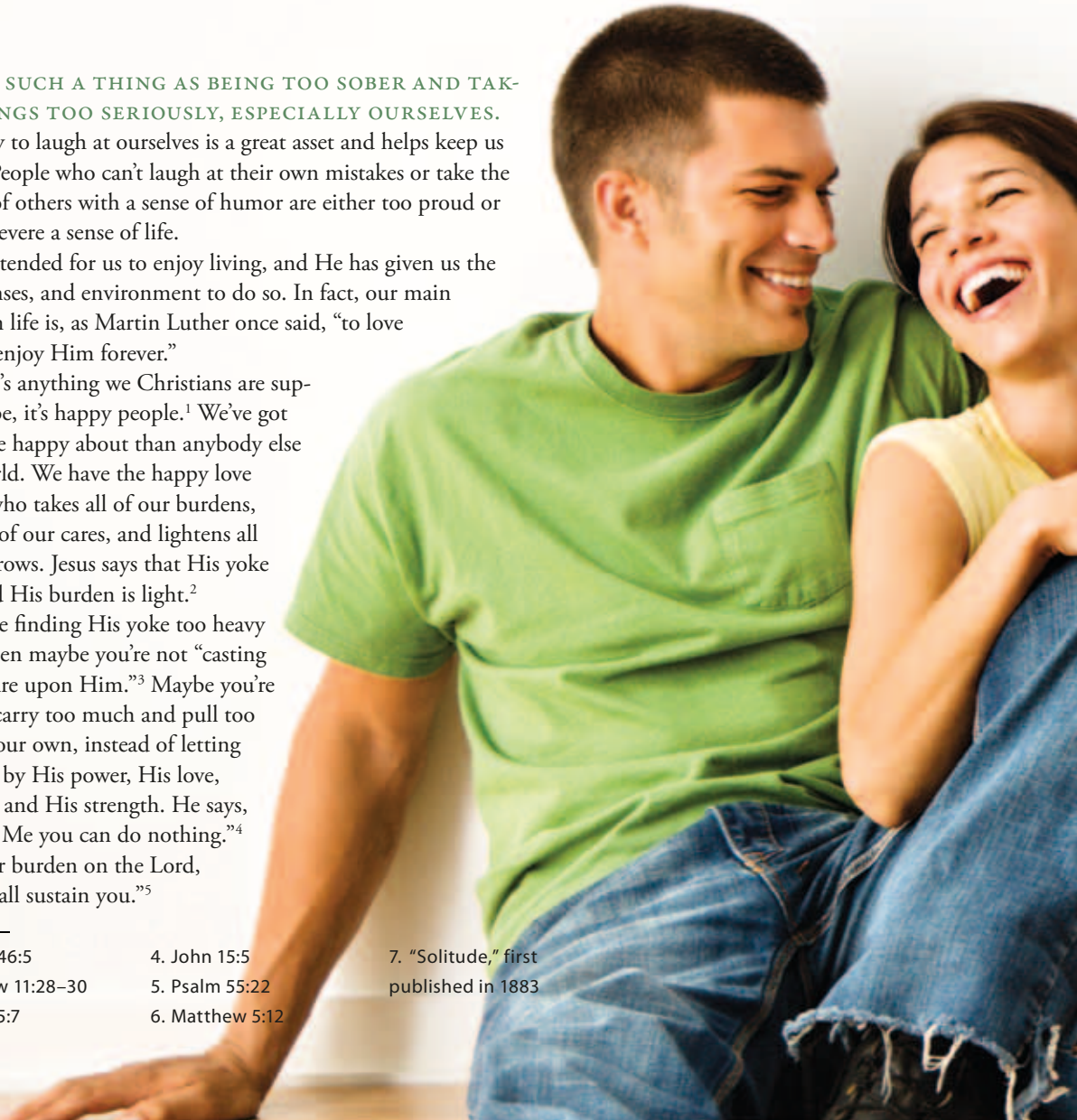
3. 1 Peter 5:7


4. John 15:5

5. Psalm 55:22

6. Matthew 5:12

7. "Solitude," first published in 1883





When I was a young man, a missionary who had evangelized a country that was closed to the Gospel stayed with my family for a while. As he helped wash the dinner dishes one evening, I marveled at his humility, grace, and happy, cheerful spirit. Here was a man who had done great things for the Lord, humbly washing dishes with me.

Since I was planning to become a missionary myself, I asked a question that I expected he, of all people, would know the answer to: What quality do you think a missionary needs the most? I expected some solemn and profound answer from his vast wealth of wisdom

and experience, so you can imagine my surprise when he paused, hands in sink, looked at me with a smile, and said, “A sense of humor—the ability to laugh when you feel like crying.”

So let’s always be able to smile through our tears. A ray of sunshine is even more beautiful in the midst of rain. Let’s have a little more sunshine and laughter, and not so much gloom and doom. The world knows enough hell; let’s show them a little more heaven. “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.”⁶ As the American poet Ella Wheeler Wilcox wrote, “Laugh, and the world laughs with you; Weep, and you weep alone. For the sad old Earth must borrow its mirth, but has troubles enough of its own.”⁷

Let’s be happy! Don’t be gloomy and sullen, lest you be like old Jenny the mule. After a Sunday of constantly hearing “no” and “don’t” at the farm of his religiously strict grandfather, poor little Johnny wandered wistfully out to the barnyard and stroked Jenny’s long nose.

“Dear Jenny, you must be *awfully* religious,” he said, “because you have such a long face—just like Grandfather’s!” That’s some people’s idea of religion. Don’t let it be yours! ■

HOLY HAPPINESS

God is not a sad God; He’s a happy God who wants us to be happy too. The Bible says, “Happy are the people whose God is the Lord.”¹ This is the whole point of salvation, to relieve us of suffering, pain, and death. God is not a monster who’s trying to deny you everything and make you miserable. He loves life and created it for your pleasure. He made this beautiful world as a home for you to live in and enjoy, and He gave you a wonderful body, mind, and heart with which to enjoy it. He even promises you the desires of your heart when you delight yourself in Him.²

—David Brandt Berg

I have a happy religion. I believe with all my heart that Jesus loves us and wants us to be happy. Not only that, but He wants us to genuinely enjoy ourselves, and He wants to enjoy our lives along with us. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”³ His liberating truth and the freedom of His Spirit allow us to enjoy many of the pleasures of life while remaining close to Him. We don’t have to choose between happiness and pleasing the Lord. We can have both!

—Maria Fontaine

1. Psalm 144:15

2. Psalm 37:4

3. 2 Corinthians 3:17

BY DAVID BRANDT BERG

the difference-maker

SOME CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS, AS WELL AS SOME OTHER RELIGIONS, TEACH THAT SUFFERING AND SADNESS ARE MEASURES OF SPIRITUALITY OR RELIGIOSITY, but it's supposed to be just the opposite. God doesn't intend for religion to be grievous, and Jesus certainly didn't make it that way.

I don't see how people can be truly happy until they have their deepest needs met. Even if they have everything they could wish for materially, they need something to satisfy their spiritual hunger. Thank God, Jesus does that!

My religion makes me happy, and even my work makes me happy because I know it does people some good. When I'm sick or suffer loss or face other serious problems, I may not feel very happy for a while, but even that doesn't destroy my overall happiness. My physical condition or present circumstance may leave a little

something to be desired, but I can still be happy in spirit.

I have very little to be unhappy about. The only thing I can think of that I want is for other people to be as happy as I am. That's the only real longing or need that I have—the desire to help others understand how much Jesus has to offer, so they can be happy too. That's why I take every opportunity to urge others to open their hearts and lives to Him, because I know they will discover the same happiness I have found. If people see that I'm happy and they're not, they wonder what makes that difference, and they want it for themselves. The difference, of course, is Jesus.

DAVID BRANDT BERG (1919–1994) FOUNDED THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL. “THE DIFFERENCE-MAKER” IS ADAPTED FROM “HALLELUJAH FOR HAPPINESS,” FIRST PUBLISHED IN MAY 1975. ■



JOY OF THE LORD

Having the joy of the Lord is part of our example as Christians, but that's not the only reason we should pursue it; we also need it ourselves. “The joy of the Lord is your strength.”¹ That joy is found in spending time with Jesus—“In Your presence is fullness of joy.”² It's found in taking in His Word—“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.”³ And it's found in putting the Word into practice—“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”⁴—*Maria Fontaine*

THE HIGH ROAD

True, lasting contentment isn't found in our possessions or circumstances, but in staying close to God and following His plan for our lives.—*Virginia Brandt Berg*

1. Nehemiah 8:10

3. John 15:11

2. Psalm 16:11

4. John 13:17 KJV

This Little Light of Mine

BY DAVID BOLICK

THE OTHER EVENING MY WIFE AND I WATCHED THE SUNSET FROM OUR TERRACE, AND WE STAYED UNTIL STARS CAME OUT. As usual, the evening star was the first to appear. An hour or so later it was still the brightest light in the sky on this moonless night, its steady gleam easily outshining the twinkling competition.

The evening star had an unfair advantage, of course, since it is actually the planet Venus, masquerading as a star. Like the Moon, it emits no light but merely reflects light from the Sun.

It struck me that if the Moon and Venus can beam that brightly, as dull-surfaced and void of light as they are in themselves, I need not worry so much about my own spiritual reflective index—my degree of goodness or godliness, as perceived by myself or others. All I really have to do is be there to reflect God's light when He shines on me. That

realization doesn't give me license to let myself go and become a spiritual slob, but it's liberating to know I don't have to try to appear to be something I'm not.

That experience put a new spin on a phrase from a familiar Bible verse—"Now we see through a glass darkly."¹ I had always applied that to my perception of God and spiritual realities, but now I see that it also applies to how others see God reflected in me. No matter how I may try, I can't change my own nature any more than a planet or moon can transform itself into a star. That transformation is something that God does as He shines on me. I may not be the most brilliant, reflective surface, but His light is sufficiently bright to make me one of His stars.

DAVID BOLICK IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN MEXICO. ■

SHINE ON

Light can only be seen as it is reflected by objects, but even a speck of dust, as small as it is, can sparkle like a diamond if it will get in the sunshine. If the dust weren't there, you couldn't see the light, and if the light weren't there, you couldn't see the dust. It takes both. The Creator is seen in the reflection of His creations.² So "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."³—*David Brandt Berg*

1. 1 Corinthians 13:12 KJV

2. Romans 1:20

3. Matthew 5:16

STRESSED?

BY MARIA FONTAINE

WHEN IT SEEMS THERE IS MORE TO BE DONE THAN THERE IS TIME FOR, IT'S EASY TO GET UNDER PRESSURE. We think we're not getting enough done or are not getting it done quickly enough, so we push ourselves harder. But the fact of the matter is that when we do that, we usually wind up being less effective and getting even less done. What began as positive, motivated action turns into stress.

Stress hinders us in a number of ways. It puts extra strain on our nervous system, which diminishes our mental sharpness. It causes us to try to go too fast, so we're not as careful and prayerful as we should be and are therefore more likely to make mistakes. It squelches inspiration. It makes us irritable and harder for others to work with. It can really take the joy out of life! Allowing ourselves to become stressed is counterproductive in every way.

STRESS?—OR PEACE?

Learning to recognize when the effects of stress begin to appear

and then taking positive steps to counter them is probably one of the most important work habits we can build—and the very best way to do that is to ask God for help.

We need to ask Him to help us see the early warning signs, and then we need to learn to give our worries and cares to Him and trust Him to do the work through us, in His way and in His time. “Don't worry about anything. Instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don't forget to thank Him for His answers. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus.”¹

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Stress is the enemy! As Christians, when we feel under pressure, the first thing to get crowded out of our schedule is often the very thing we need most—our time with God.

When you keep your spirit strong and healthy by reading and

1. Philippians 4:6–7 TLB

2. Psalm 46:10

3. NASB

4. *Jesus Calling* (Thomas Nelson, 2004), xii

5. Isaiah 26:3

meditating on God's Word and by taking time to love and be loved by Him, you gain access to one of the greatest of all stress busters, faith. Faith brings you His supernatural insight into others and situations. It brings the peace of knowing that He is in control.

When you turn to God for help, it's like opening up the pressure valve of your spirit. If you continue to try to do it all yourself, the pressure will continue to mount.

God is concerned about you and your happiness. He wants to be involved. He wants to help you with your workload, and He *will* help you as much as you let Him. He will lighten your load incredibly if you'll just ask Him. He will soothe your ruffled nerves, calm your mind, and show you what to do.

GOD HAS ALL THE ANSWERS

Of course, it's even better to eliminate whatever is about to trigger stress *before* that happens. To do that, it's important to pray for help in organizing your work. Pray before

you begin your day and again each time new factors enter in, and He will inspire you with ideas that will make your way clear and simple so you don't get under such pressure in the first place.

You'll be amazed at how specific He can be in His instructions about your schedule and how to go about your work. He'll show you your priorities. He'll give you tips on how to get them done most effectively and efficiently. He'll help you avert many of the time-wasting problems that put you under pressure by reminding you of things you have forgotten or overlooked, or by showing you things that you have no other way of knowing. He'll walk with you through the good times and the tough ones. He'll bring deeper contentment and joy in the good times and the guidance and strength to turn even the tough times into victorious ones.

MARIA FONTAINE AND HER HUSBAND, PETER AMSTERDAM, HEAD THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL, A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF FAITH. ■

"Be still, and know that I am God."² Alternative readings for "Be still" are "Relax," "Let go," and "Cease striving."³ This is an enticing invitation from God to lay down your cares and seek His Presence. I believe that God yearns for these quiet moments with us even more than we do.—*Sarah Young*⁴

Disengage from your present activity and concerns by focusing on God and His unfailing love and care. Once your spirit is centered on the Lord, the rest will follow.—*Maria Fontaine*

God can solve all your problems in one little glimpse. He can refresh your spirit with one deep breath. He can clarify your thoughts with just one sweet strain of heavenly music. He can wipe away your fears and tears with just one little restful moment in that perfect peace He gives when your mind is stayed on Him and Him alone, because you trust in Him.⁵—*David Brandt Berg*



BY DULCINEA FOX



THESE DAYS LIFE IS FULL OF UNCERTAINTY FOR LOTS OF PEOPLE, INCLUDING ME. I was lamenting this reality to a friend the other day, when she said, “Maybe you just need to embrace the chaos.”

Embrace the chaos? Easier said than done. I don’t like chaos. I don’t know many people who do. But it got me thinking.

A few days later I was about 30 minutes into my daily run when, after a few sudden claps of thunder, I found myself in pouring rain. And I mean pouring. There was no shelter in sight, so it seemed my only option was to make a dash for home. I drew a deep breath, and off I went.

About five minutes down the road I was struck by a sudden succession of thoughts. Why was I running so frantically? And what was I running from? I was already drenched. My clothes had reached the saturation point. It wasn’t like getting home more quickly

would get me home any drier. Suddenly, fussing about getting wet seemed kind of stupid. I reconsidered my options. Embrace the chaos!

I stopped sprinting and focused on enjoying the thunder and lightning, the torrential rains, the gorges, the rushing stream that was once a path—all of it. It was exhilarating!

Until that point I had been bemoaning my sorry, sopping state—my wet, clingy, uncomfortable clothes; the hair plastered annoyingly to my face and neck; the thoroughly soaked shoes that squish-squashed

with every step. But as soon as I accepted that there was no alternative, I was able to surrender to the elements, relax, and even enjoy the walk home.

There are some things that we just can’t avoid. Like a little chaos. Life has a way of backing us against a wall. But if we can stop fighting what we can’t change and accept the situation for what it is, we put ourselves in a better position to make the most of it.

DULCINEA FOX IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN MEXICO. ■

BY ANDREW MATEYAK

Contentment



“HAVING FOOD AND CLOTHING, WITH THESE WE SHALL BE CONTENT.”¹ Those words went through my mind as I washed the breakfast dishes. Was that even possible? Could I actually be satisfied having nothing but food and clothes? The apostle Paul wrote, “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.”² Not me. There have definitely been times when I wished I had some of the extras I saw others enjoying. I haven’t always been satisfied. *How could I be satisfied with only food and clothes?* I asked myself as I finished the dishes.

As if in answer to my question, my attention was drawn to my seven-month-old niece, Kylie, as she played quietly and happily gummed a slice of apple. Now *she* definitely looked content—the perfect picture of peace and tranquility. But what in the world did she have? A diaper and a slice of apple, yet she was perfectly happy.

I had my answer. Kylie wasn’t worried about whether or not she

would have food tomorrow or if she would run out of diapers. She had her food, she had her clothes, and she was perfectly content, trusting her mother to take care of her and give her exactly what she needed, when she needed it.

I should be the same way, I realized—happy and satisfied with what God gives me, and trusting God that He will take care of me and give me the things that I truly need. And now I am. I have not only food and clothing and other material comforts, but I have things that many millions of people in the world don’t have. I have Jesus and His gift of salvation. I have my family, my health, friends. I have little Kylie who loves me no matter what. I really do have all that I need. I am truly content!

ANDREW MATEYAK IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN THE PHILIPPINES. ■


HOW TO BE CONTENT

Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not.
—Epicurus (341–270 BC)

To be content, just think how happy you would be if you lost everything you have right now and then got it back again.
—Author unknown

Contentment is a pearl of great price, and whoever procures it at the expense of ten thousand desires makes a wise and a happy purchase.
—John Balguy (1686–1748)

1. 1 Timothy 6:8
2. Philippians 4:11



ANSWERS
TO YOUR
QUESTIONS

Bring back the joy

*Q: I feel less happy than I did when I was younger.
How can I regain some of the joy of life that I've lost?*

A: At some point, most adults have looked at a child playing blissfully and wished they could turn back the clock. Children at play look happy, carefree, and thrilled about life. They laugh a lot, are easily entertained, and get excited about the simplest things. They have their problems and hurts too, of course, but they are resilient. Children live in the moment and generally spend more time being happy than adults. Here are a few ways you can recapture some of that childhood magic.

REDISCOVER THE WORLD AROUND YOU. Take a closer look at things that form the backdrop of your days—buds on the tree you pass on your way to the car, rays of morning sun through the kitchen window, white clouds against a cerulean sky, the spiderweb on the drain spout.

SAVOR YOUR FOOD. Don't just eat and run; slow down long enough to think about and enjoy it. When was the first time you had that dish? What favorites do you have now that you didn't like as a child?

LEARN SOMETHING. Children don't have time to get into ruts because they're too busy discovering new things. Take up a new hobby or activity. Read a new author. Travel, if only vicariously via travelogue.

REWARD YOURSELF. Set a goal for the week and pick out a reward for when you reach it. Anticipation is one of the best incentives, and it works at any age.

TALK TO A CHILD. If you want a fresh perspective, ask a child about almost anything. Wit, wisdom, imagination,

hope, pathos—they've got it all. Don't be surprised if you are revisited by some of your own childhood thoughts.

TAKE DOWNTIME. Your world won't come crashing down if you stop doing and accomplishing for a few minutes. Relax.

Contemplate happy thoughts. Let your imagination run wild.

BE THANKFUL FOR SMALL THINGS.

A child can be delighted by a cheap gift, a chance to go outdoors, a bit of attention, a free swing at the park. Think of the little things you enjoy, and give thanks. ■

THE THINGS WHICH THE CHILD LOVES REMAIN
IN THE DOMAIN OF THE HEART UNTIL OLD AGE.
—KHALIL GIBRAN (1883–1931)

Happiness is yours for the taking

DID YOU KNOW THAT “HAPPY” IS ONE OF GOD’S NAMES? In Psalm 43:4, the original Hebrew *El Simchah Giyl* means “God Exceeding Joy.” God created us in His own image, so it follows that He intends for us to be happy too.

CREATION IS BRIMMING WITH HAPPINESS IN PRAISE TO ITS CREATOR.

The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered with grain; they shout for joy, they also sing.—*Psalm 65:13*

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and all its fullness; let the field be joyful, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the Lord.—*Psalm 96:11–12*

Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains!—*Isaiah 49:13*

THE DEEPEST HAPPINESS COMES FROM BEING PERSONALLY CONNECTED WITH GOD.

In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.—*Psalm 16:11*

Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You.—*Psalm 40:16*

Happy are the people whose God is the Lord!—*Psalm 144:15*

“These things I [Jesus] have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.”—*John 15:11*

FAITH IN GOD’S GOODNESS ENGENDERS HAPPINESS.

Happy is he ... whose hope is in the Lord his God.—*Psalm 146:5*

Whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.—*1 Peter 1:8*

EVEN IN HARD TIMES, GOD CAN GIVE US JOY.

[God’s] favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.—*Psalm 30:5*

Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls—yet I will rejoice in the Lord.—*Habakkuk 3:17–18*

WE CAN ALWAYS BE HAPPY FOR SALVATION.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation.—*Isaiah 61:10* ■

If you would like to experience the deep, abiding happiness the Bible speaks of, you can. It begins with receiving Jesus as your Savior. Simply pray:

Jesus, I believe in You and want the happiness that You and Your Father promise. Please come into my life. Amen.

POINTS TO PONDER

homegrown HAPPINESS



We either make ourselves happy or miserable. The amount of work is the same.—*Carlos Castaneda (1925–1998)*

Resolve to keep happy and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties.—*Helen Keller (1880–1968)*

Man is fond of counting his troubles, but he does not count his joys. If he counted them up as he ought to, he would see that every lot has enough happiness provided for it.—*Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–1881)*

Happiness is not in our circumstance but in ourselves. It is not something we see, like a rainbow, or feel, like the heat of a fire. Happiness is something we are.—*John B. Sheerin (1906–1992)*

I began learning long ago that those who are happiest are those who do the most for others.—*Booker T. Washington (1856–1915)*

Happiness is as a butterfly which, when pursued, is always beyond our grasp, but which if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you.—*Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864)*

Genuine happiness consists in those spiritual qualities of love, compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, and so on. For it is these which provide both for our happiness and others' happiness.—*The 14th Dalai Lama (b. 1935)*

The art of being happy lies in the power of extracting happiness from common things.—*Henry Ward Beecher (1813–1887)*

It is only possible to live happily ever after on a day to day basis.—*Margaret Bonnano (b. 1950)*

If we try hard to bring happiness to others, we cannot stop it from coming to us also. To get joy, we must give it, and to keep joy, we must scatter it.—*John Templeton (1912–2008)*

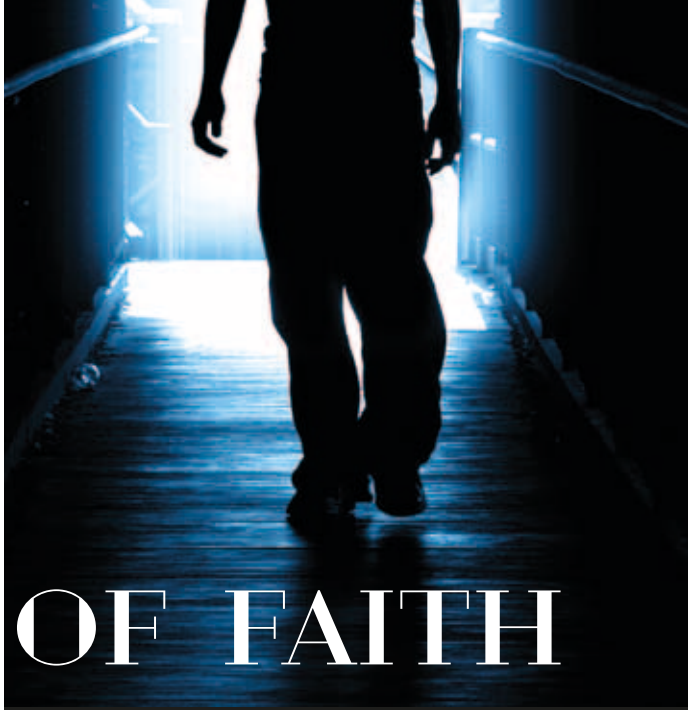
Happiness does not depend on outward things, but on the way we see them.—*Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910)*

If only we'd stop trying to be happy we could have a pretty good time.—*Edith Wharton (1862–1937)*

Seek to do good, and you will find that happiness will run after you.—*James Freeman Clarke (1810–1888)*

It is pleasing to God whenever you rejoice or laugh from the bottom of your heart.—*Martin Luther (1483–1546)*

True happiness comes not in your personal pursuit of selfish pleasure and satisfaction, but in finding God and giving His love and life to others, and bringing them happiness. Then happiness will pursue and overtake and overwhelm you, without your seeking it for yourself.—*David Brandt Berg (1919–1994)* ■



A SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

THE WALK OF FAITH

THE BIBLE HAS LOTS TO SAY ABOUT WALKING. We are advised to walk in God's ways,¹ to walk in the way of goodness,² to walk in the Spirit,³ to walk properly,⁴ to walk in love,⁵ to walk in wisdom,⁶ to walk in truth,⁷ and to walk in a way that pleases God.⁸

But what about those times when you don't know which way to walk? Darkness has fallen on your way; a thick fog obscures the path ahead. Your footing is unsure, and you just don't know which way to turn. It's time for the walk of faith.⁹ We can walk by faith, without knowing exactly where we are going or what we are in for next, because we do not walk alone. When we call on the Lord, He walks with us¹⁰ and guides our way.¹¹ Jesus promised, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."¹²

This exercise is a reminder of this important principle. Imagine you are walking through the streets of an unfamiliar city or down an unmarked country

path. Dusk is falling as you arrive at a three-way fork in the road. Should you turn left, turn right, or continue straight ahead? Now picture Jesus arriving at your side. "Show me the way I should walk,"¹³ you plead. Jesus has a flashlight in His hand. He shines it down the road you should take and then starts to walk with you. His presence causes your apprehension to vanish. You know you are on the right path.

Now think about a decision or problem you are facing but don't have the answer for. Follow the same process. Call on the Lord, asking Him to show you where to go or what to do next. Let Him shine His light on your path—perhaps through a verse of Scripture, or perhaps through words He speaks to your mind or an inner conviction He gives you. As you proceed in the direction He has shown you, trust that He has led you and is with you. There is nothing to fear. ■

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| 1. Deuteronomy 10:12 | 8. Colossians 1:10 |
| 2. Proverbs 2:20 | 9. 2 Corinthians 5:7 |
| 3. Galatians 5:16 | 10. Leviticus 26:12 |
| 4. Romans 13:13 | 11. Isaiah 30:21 |
| 5. Ephesians 5:2 | 12. John 8:12 |
| 6. Colossians 4:5 | 13. Psalm 143:8 |
| 7. 3 John 4 | |



O, come and let us walk in the light of the Lord.
—*Isaiah 2:5*

You'll never walk alone if you have Jesus in your heart and your hand in His.—*David Brandt Berg*



FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

Here's happiness

Some people think that they can't be happy unless they're free of problems. They do okay as long as everything goes their way, but the minute anything negative happens, it pokes a pin in their balloon and whatever happiness they had been feeling vanishes. Because they let circumstances dictate their level of happiness, they are always bracing themselves for the next letdown and are never able to relax enough to have fun or feel good about life. They will never find lasting happiness using that approach.

The happiness I offer isn't dependent on circumstances, which change like the weather. Rather, it's determined by My presence and My promises, which never change. Circumstances don't change eternal realities.

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."¹ You can't avoid the problems of life altogether, but you *can* rise above them. You can't have everything I have promised and planned for you just yet, but you can have a foretaste anytime, anywhere. I can lift your spirit out of the earthly dimension, where happiness is fragile, and into the heavenly realm, where it is rock solid. The more time you spend with Me and My words, soaking up My love and getting My perspective on life, the better you will be prepared for its inevitable ups and downs, and the happier you will be.

1. John 16:33