

Mailing Address:
PO Box 797
Molalla, OR 97038

Pastor Dale Satrum



Phone: 503-829-5101
Fax: 503-829-9502

Truth Vs Lies: Which Do You Follow?

(Part 4)

Intro: We all want to be happy. Everyone wants to experience joy in this life, to feel good about themselves; experience some fulfillment; have some satisfaction. I don't believe wanting to be happy is a shallow desire. I believe it is a very normal human desire. The problem comes when we buy into the lie that God's ultimate goal for us is happiness.

Lie #4: God wants me happy. Why is this a lie?

- If we believe this lie, we end up pursuing things that were never designed to bring any type of fulfillment whatsoever. This lie leads to bondage. We use this lie to justify all sorts of behaviors (Divorce / excessive debt / ignoring responsibilities / avoiding anything difficult or painful / something that requires sacrifice...
- Believing this lie, justifies our endless pursuit of happiness. We are a culture addicted to our pursuit of happiness. Happiness is my right as an American! It's not working out so well. **Share Statistics** –
- We believe the lie that if I can change my circumstances, I will be happy. **Share Research** -
- It's not that God doesn't care about our feelings. Of course He does. As a parent, I want my kids happy. I don't wish unhappiness upon them. God doesn't wish us to be miserable either. But like a good parent, He knows that most of the things we think will result in happiness will never produce it.
- If we believe this lie, we take matters into our own hands and think we have the right to explore what we assume brings happiness.
- God in His wisdom gave us an example in His word of someone who already explored all the options of happiness for us. Explain – King Solomon

I. Solomon's Pursuit Of Happiness

A. Productivity will make me happy

Ecc. 2:4-6 "I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and planting vineyards. I made gardens and parks, filling them with all kinds of fruit trees. I built reservoirs to collect the water to irrigate..." (NLT)

1. If I can just accomplish enough, I will be happy. If I can produce enough. If I can look over my many achievements it will bring satisfaction and happiness to my life.

2. The problem with this thinking is that it's only partly true. There is some sense of satisfaction we get from productivity / achievement / from our accomplishments.
3. I am a very goal oriented person. I like to get things done. I like to aim at something and achieve it. Accomplishing things does bring a level of satisfaction to my life. BUT...it doesn't last.
 - Examples: I remember graduating from college with my Bachelors degree from Multnomah – youth group there – banner - President Does that accomplishment still make me happy today? NO!
 - Past accomplishments do not produce current happiness.
4. The problem with this pursuit is that as soon as you accomplish whatever you set out to do, you start getting dissatisfied. How many of you are knocking yourselves out for some type of accomplishment that will be empty once you get there? Sure it will feel good to achieve it, but then what?
5. Could it be possible you are chasing after something thinking; since God wants me happy, this pursuit is acceptable. When in reality, God's not in it all?

B. Possessions will make me happy

Ecc. 2:7-8 "I bought slaves, both men and women...I also owned herds and flocks, more than any of the kings who lived before me in Jerusalem. I collected great sums of silver and gold..." (NLT)

1. Solomon was an incredibly wealthy King. Solomon had an amazing palace / his annual delivery of gold was 25 tons a year. The Bible says that he made silver as common as stones in Jerusalem. It wasn't considered valuable.
2. This doesn't include all the Kingdoms that paid him yearly tribute. Bill Gates and Donald Trump were poor compared to Solomon's wealth.
3. I don't know too many Christians who will admit to believing that wealth brings happiness, yet our actions reveal what we really embrace.
4. C'mon, you've drove by the Powerball sign and thought about what you'd do if you had \$100 million. BUT, since we haven't won...
5. Why do we buy things we can't afford? Why do we live in homes that make us slaves to a mortgage? Why do we work more hours than any nation in the world? Why are we obsessed with "getting ahead".
6. Why do we have a housing market that crashed? Greed! Greed is based upon the belief that money and possessions = happiness. Therefore, let's loan people money who can't afford it. Let's allow people to qualify for a mortgage that equals 50% of their income.
7. If we believe God wants us happy and then equate possessions with happiness, we do some very unwise things. There are preachers that propagate this lie. "God wants everyone wealthy." Not true.

C. Pleasure will make me happy

Ecc. 2:8 "I hired wonderful singers both men and women, and had many beautiful concubines. I had everything a man could desire!" (NLT)

1. Solomon had all the entertainment he wanted (singers) Plus, he had 300 wives and 700 concubines. He had 1000 women at his disposal. You want to talk about exploring pleasure, Solomon did!
2. If we start believing we deserve to be happy / God wants me to be happy / we begin to justify things that we believe will bring us pleasure. We begin to see the things in our life that don't bring pleasure as bad; to be avoided.
3. Then it becomes natural to justify the divorce / the affair / the drinking / video poker / online anonymous encounter / whatever brings us pleasure.
4. Maybe we begin to justify avoiding what is painful in our lives. The relationships that need work / we avoid working on our own issues that keep us from growth. We stop spending time with our kids.
5. Could you be pursuing some forms of pleasure that God has no intention of you experiencing...just like Solomon.

D. Position will make me happy

Ecc. 2:9 "So I became greater than any of the kings who ruled before me..." (NLT)

1. Solomon was the greatest Jewish King that has ever lived. Nobody compared to him. People would come from all over the world to witness Solomon's splendor, greatness, to hear his wisdom.
2. Sometimes we can pursue positions / titles / authority because we believe it will bring us satisfaction. Once I get the promotion / once I become the supervisor – manager / Once I become the boss / I will be happy.
3. We connect our identity to a position thinking that I will be happier with myself once I achieve it. Only to come to the same conclusion Solomon did 3000 years ago...

Ecc. 2:11 "But as I looked at everything...it was all so meaningless. It was like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere." (NLT)

- We can justify any one of these pursuits because we believe God wants me happy. Therefore, we take our happiness into our own hands. Which is always a bad idea.
- Happiness is a very elusive and impossible pursuit. It's like chasing after a rainbow...always in sight, yet never captured. WHY?
- Happiness is NOT God's ultimate goal for our lives. God's ultimate goal is transformation. His ultimate desire is conforming us into the image of His Son.

Rom. 8:29 "For those whom He foreknew, He also destined from the beginning to be molded into the image of His Son..." (Amplified) This is the goal!!!

- Happiness is a byproduct of cooperating with this process. Happiness is a gift NOT a pursuit. Happiness is a RESULT not a RIGHT!

II. God's Gift Of Happiness

- Notice the things that God says will result in happiness / joy / satisfaction / etc.. The Bible is filled with descriptions of what brings joy. God cares deeply about our happiness in this life. He alone knows what creates it. Whether or not you have a happy gene or not! Here's only 4!

A. Happiness is a byproduct of obedience to God's word

- If you read this Psalm 119, you will see the joy the writer receives from knowing and following God's word. It's what the entire psalm is about! It's a joy producer

Ps. 119:143 "As pressure bears down on me, I find joy in Your commands."

Ps. 119:92-93 "If Your law hadn't sustained me with joy, I would have died in my misery. I will never forget Your commandments, for you have used them to restore my joy and health." (NLT)

1. Knowing and following God's word will result in joy. God's word embraced has supernatural results in our lives. The Bible is "living and active". It's not a dead book, it is a life giving book.
2. Do you realize every one of us has one of the greatest joy producers on the planet right at our fingertips? It's right under our noses! The Bible!
3. How can God's word produce joy / happiness / satisfaction / fulfillment? I've read it before and I didn't get any cosmic zap of happiness. I got confused though.
4. As you begin to treat God's word as the road map for your life you will discover that God's word is true. As you experience the blessings of obedience, it results in joy.
5. The Bible repeatedly tells us that "obedience = blessing". Once this pattern begins to be normal pattern of your life, you love God's word and following it is a joyous experience.
6. It's like traveling somewhere for the first time following a map. Share about driving in Mexico going to ruins 150 miles away.

B. Happiness is a byproduct of God's presence

Ps. 16:11 "You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of Your presence and the pleasures of living with You forever." (NLT)

Ps. 43:4 "There I will go to the altar of God...the source of all my joy." (NLT)

1. God wants us to experience Him. He is an experiential God. Experiencing God is a very joyous / happy / fulfilling thing, not a chore.
2. Think about the person you love to be with the most. The mere presence of this person affects your moods / feelings / impacts your happiness. Jesus

Himself said that He doesn't call us slaves but calls us His friends.

3. This has nothing to do with circumstances. I can experience joy no matter what. Acts 16 - Paul and Silas in prison - explain
4. So many believers are unhappy because they may know Jesus, but they are not experiencing His presence in their daily lives and circumstances.
5. Jesus said if you seek Me you will find Me. Are you actively seeking the presence of God? We're too obsessed with asking God to change our circumstances instead of seeing God in our circumstances.
6. This is our desire for you at Foothills. Our purpose statement.

C. Happiness is a byproduct of God's purpose

II Tim. 4:7-8 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. And now the prize awaits me...." (NLT) There is some deep satisfaction in Paul knowing that he has fulfilled the purpose for which God saved him. Now, the reward is waiting for him.

- Like the Olympic athlete waiting to walk onto the medal platform.

Matt. 25:21 "His master said to him, 'Well done good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your Master.'" (NASB)

1. Fulfilling the purpose / responsibilities that we have been designed for by God is a joy producer. God has purposes and plans for every believer. Eph. 2:10 – When we walk in those plans, it's wonderful.
2. Fulfilling the purpose for which God created me for is one of the greatest joys of my life. Explain: I remember tasting this for the first time (share putting together my first bible study.)
3. So many people are afraid to really sell out to God and follow His plans for their lives. They're scared of what He may ask them to do. When in reality, they're cutting themselves off from great joy / satisfaction / fulfillment.
4. It's not my purposes realized that satisfy. It's God's purposes for me...

D. Happiness is a byproduct of loving relationships

Since loving each other is the second greatest command, it would stand to reason that experiencing this would produce great joy!

Phil. 4:1 "Dear brothers and sisters, I love you and I long to see you, for you are my joy and the reward for my work." (NLT) Relationships are his joy!

Phil. 2:2 "Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one heart and purpose." (NLT)

What makes him happy? Loving, unified, purposeful relationships.

1. I don't think this one surprises anyone. We are made for relationships. Life without loving relationships is a very dark, lonely and joyless place to live. The people who are the happiest, are those who are rich in relationships.

2. It's pretty tough to be consistently happy if you're lonely. It's tough to be happy if most of your relationships are negative / filled with conflict / painful.
3. I am convinced this is one of the reasons God has brought you to Foothills...to experience loving relationships. As Fall approaches, there will be many opportunities for you to move into relationships. PLEASE, do so
4. Don't stay on the fringe -TNT Night / Small Groups / Ministry opportunities.

Wanting to be happy is a good thing. We just need to stop trying to FIND happiness and start FOLLOWING Jesus. As we cooperate with Him transforming us, we will find more joy / satisfaction / more fulfillment than we ever thought possible. Which have you been doing more of...trying to find happiness OR following Him? Maybe today you can reject a lie and embrace some truth.