

Saturday Meeting
February 25-26
PREPARE!
FLYERS AVAILABLE!

Quotes about Joy and Happiness

“I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one’s lifetime.” Ecclesiastes 3:12

“A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones.” Proverbs 17:22

“But the righteous will be joyful; they will rejoice before God; Yes, they will rejoice with gladness.” Psalms 68:3

“Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials.” James 1:2

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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Indio Informer

Vol. 34 No. 6

February 5, 2023

What Is Happiness?

By R.J. Evans

How many times have we reasoned, “I’d be happy, if only...”? And then the dream usually continues with “if only I had more money,” or “if only I had married someone else,” or “if only I had more friends, a better education, a better job, a bigger house, better health,” etc. The breakthrough into happiness for many hinges upon those two words, “if only.”

What Is Your Concept?

Most of those of the world have little trouble coming up with their own formula for happiness. It usually consists of wealth, status and power, and freedom from frustration of any kind. If this is similar to what we have conjured up in order to be happy, then we need to consider whether this is a worthwhile goal or not. The best way to find out is to consider others who have lived in such conditions. King Solomon is a prime example of one who “had everything.” According to 2 Chronicles 6-9, Solomon had enough wealth to make some of our modern-day “tycoons” seem like paupers.

Consider Solomon’s Wealth

On a yearly basis, Solomon received six-hundred sixty-six talents of gold (2 Chronicles 9:13), “Beside that which chapmen and merchants brought. And all the kings of Arabia and governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon.” (2 Chronicles 9:14). Six-hundred sixty-six talents of gold would be about 960,000 ounces. Comparing that with today’s standards (even at \$300 per ounce, which is very low today) it would amount to something like \$288,000,000.

There was no need for Solomon to purchase certain items. He made two hundred targets of beaten gold and three hundred shields made of beaten gold (2 Chronicles 9:15-16). His throne was made

of ivory, overlaid with pure gold -- *“There was not the like made in any kingdom”* (2 Chronicles 9:17-19). All of the drinking vessels of King Solomon were made of gold, in fact, *“none were of silver; it was not anything accounted of in the days of Solomon”* (2 Chronicles 9:20).

In 2 Chronicles 9:21-22, we read of Solomon importing finery from all parts of the world. Then, those who visited him, seeking his wisdom, brought *“vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year”* (2 Chronicles 9:23-24). When the Queen of Sheba came *“to prove Solomon with hard questions,”* she brought spices, gold in abundance, and precious stones (2 Chronicles 9:1-2).

But wealth was not everything. The Bible says that Solomon *“loved many strange women”* (1 Kings 11:1). Of course, this is an understatement, for *“he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines”* (1 Kings 11:3). A total of a thousand women!

But Was Solomon Happy?

Being king, Solomon could do just about anything he desired, and that is precisely what he set out to do. He wrote about this in the book of Ecclesiastes. He experimented with almost everything under the sun, but this non-stop entertainment grew tiresome (Ecclesiastes 2:1); he mentions drinking wine (Ecclesiastes 2:3); he built elaborate houses, temples, vineyards, gardens, etc. (Ecclesiastes 2). He stated, *“So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also, my wisdom remained with me. And whatever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor: and this was my portion of all my labor”* (Ecclesiastes 2:9-10).

In consideration of the aforementioned, one would be almost certain that Solomon was a very happy man. But was Solomon genuinely happy? Unfortunately, Solomon was miserable.

“Therefore, I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit” (Ecclesiastes 2:17).

Consider Paul

At this point, another man comes to mind who, to some, would have had every right in the world to be miserable. This man is the apostle Paul. At times he had to go back to his old trade of tent making. He did much traveling under adverse conditions by foot or by ship. His life was one of constant danger. Paul catalogs many of his sufferings, perils, and anxieties in 2 Corinthians 11:24-28. Also, there was a great deal of worldly honor given up by Paul *“for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 3:4-11). Then, on top of all that, Paul had what he referred to as a *“thorn in the flesh”* (2 Corinthians 12:7).

Yet Paul Was Happy

True abiding happiness is not derived from earthly wealth, position, sexual freedom, or unlimited power. Paul was a contented man. A “contented” man is a “happy” man! *“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content”* (Philippians 4:11). *“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again, I say, rejoice”* (Philippians 4:4).

Did Paul know something about happiness that Solomon didn't? No, Solomon knew the basic formula for happy living, but he ignored it and it literally ruined his life. As an old man, reflecting over the wasted years, he gave wise advice to the young: *“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them”* (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Then his closing words, *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man”* (Ecclesiastes 12:13). And these same principles, if we obey them, can make us happy, no matter what our situation in life may be. If we choose to ignore these principles, then the results will be otherwise.

Conclusion

Christians can be happy! Christians should always be happy! What an occasion for rejoicing a Christian has with all the joys and blessings that are ours as children of God. We enjoy all the spiritual blessings which are in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3). We enjoy the peace of God, which passes all understanding (Philippians 4:4-7). Happiness is obeying and faithfully serving God. (Via *Guardian of Truth* XXXII: 20, October 20, 1988)