

## HAPPINESS

“Pastor, how important is it for a Christian to be blessed rather than happy?” That is a good question. The truth is, we should be both blessed and happy. I don’t think true happiness can be achieved without being blessed; and being truly blessed will always produce happiness! In this regard, the translators have brought about a little confusion (especially in the New Testament), because they avoided the word “happy” by using the word “blessed.” The Greek word ‘makarios’ can also be translated happy, yet it seldom appears in the more traditional translations. My understanding of New Testament Greek is that in scripture God reveals both practical and spiritual principles so that our lives on earth can be enjoyable and balanced. We are to live with our heads in heaven and our feet on earth! Romans 14:18 says that if you “follow Christ, God will be happy with you, and men will think well of you.” This implies that God the Father expresses His pleasure by being happy. The very same way we do! Psalm 149:4 simply says, **“For the Lord is happy with His people.”** As the Father is, so are we! I love Psalm 144:15, which says, **“Happy are the people whose God is the Lord.”** If Jesus Christ is your Lord you should be full of happiness! Throughout the Bible we are told that “happy is the man who puts his trust in the Lord.” From these verses we can ascertain that happiness is as important as being blessed.

This raises the question, “Should we pursue happiness?” Ecclesiastes 3:12 says, **“I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good as long as they live.”** Therefore, the pursuit of happiness is as important as doing good. But don’t fall into the trap (as with good deeds) of working at being happy all the time. Now and then it's good to pause in the pursuit of happiness and just be happy! And to remind yourself that happiness comes from within. Many of us look outside of ourselves to define our happiness - with material things, distractions, events and personal experiences. And because of this many of us give our inner peace away by placing too much emphasis on external things. Happiness does not come from these things. Jesus said, **“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all ‘these things’ will be added to you”** (Matthew 6:33). It’s just an illusion, there is nothing intrinsic to any object that can make you feel happy. It is because of who you are inside that determines your view of life and consequently the happiness you enjoy. All “those things” which you think give you pleasure are just mirrors, reflecting back to you images of who you want to be. But this is not necessarily who you are inside - the real you! And maybe that’s where the problem lies, in your pursuit of happiness.

Only when you know who you are IN CHRIST, will you find happiness and live a blessed life.