

The continuous pursuit of joy and happiness

Written by Timothy Houston
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Joy and happiness are two sides of the same coin.

You cannot truly have one without the other. Happiness is a temporal and conditional part of your emotional state. It is the measurement of what is going on now. For instance, if you lost your job, you would be unhappy, but if you found a better one, you would be happy again.

Joy is the permanent side of your emotional state. It is not based on what has happened, but on rather who has happened. "The joy of the Lord is our strength" – Nehemiah 8:10. Because God is eternal, He can only provide eternal joy. Your pursuit of joy and happiness is your sovereign right given to you by God. Here are a few steps to help you get there.

First, to continuously pursue joy and happiness, you must simplify your life. Clean out the clutter from your physical and emotional closets. Say goodbye to friends, clothing, collectibles, and conversations that do not add value to you. No more broken things in your life. For my physical closet, I have a personal rule that if I have not used it in a year, then I must dispose of it during my spring cleaning. This should be applied to your emotional closet as well. Get rid of old relationships and the emotional baggage that comes along with them. If you do this, your new year will be full of new possibilities.

Next, to continuously pursue joy and happiness, you must think happy thoughts. Your thoughts create your environment. They are the building blocks for your actions. Your thoughts are the greatest defense against life's adversity. They feed off of your emotional state so you must be emotionally healthy. This requires you to get rid of anger, bitterness and wrath. This will make room for joy and happiness, peace on earth, and good will towards men. The good of mankind is only made possible by the good of the individual.

Finally, to continuously pursue joy and happiness, you must make peace with God. This is a spiritual necessity. The permanency of peace is predicated on a permanent relationship with God. The peace of God will bring peace with others.

Without internal peace and joy, there can be no external contentment. Internal warfare being about external war, and war and warfare can never bring about happiness. Making peace with God makes your heart happy, and the world is better when the hearts of men and women

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become better.

You are the principle in your pursuit of joy and happiness. When negative things happen that are beyond your control, remember, you still get to choose your response. You can think the best or you can think the worst.

Always think the best.

Simplifying your life, thinking happy thoughts, and making peace with God are key ingredients in this process. Remember that happiness is temporal and joy is permanent so during the trying times, look inwardly for the joy of the Lord to carry you through. Peace with God brings about peace with all. This is the truest pursuit of joy and happiness.

Timothy Houston is an author, minister, and motivational speaker who is committed to guiding positive life changes in families and communities. For questions, comments or more information, go to www.tlhouston.com.