



Sunday – March 24, 2024

The Lakeland Hills Leader

Lakeland Hills church of Christ

2510 Lakeland Hills Blvd
Lakeland, FL 33805
(863) 688-4336

Schedule of Services

Sunday

9:00 AM Bible Study
9:50 AM Worship
6:00 PM Worship

Wednesday

7:00 PM Bible Study

Visit our Website:

www.lakelandhillschurchofchrist.com

For Sermon & Class outlines,
Bible Study Materials and
Other Information.

Visit our Facebook Page:

www.facebook.com/LakelandHillschurchofchrist for events,
information, and links to our
YouTube Archives

Visit us on YouTube:

www.youtube.com/channel/UCu7AG_3jUtpBDlr2NPqB3iw for
Live Streams and Video
Archives.

Elders

Bob Marschall
Leon Miller
Larry Wisdom

Deacons

Bucky Day
Sherman Johnson
Michael Sadler
David Williams

Evangelist

Chuck Kozens

Chasing Happiness

Have you ever said something along the lines of, “I will be happy when I...”? Or, “I would be happier if...”? These are very typical statements; however, they are also dangerous if endeavoring for happiness takes you in the wrong direction.

Some seem to be satisfied with a life that lacks happiness and is sort of “middle-of-the-road”. However, our Father in Heaven desires for us to have a much greater life. Our Father wants us to be happy, directed, accomplished, and in all things victorious (James 1:17-25 says, *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures... then it says... he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”*). Our hope of happiness, in this life and beyond, is very real, because our Father has given us the instruction manual for life. Jesus said that by keeping God’s commandments, our happiness would be full (John 15:7-11).

Let’s consider this idea by opening the Scriptures together.

It is Not Out There: We seem to live in an environment of rebellion today. It is clear that today’s world is trying to throw off the constraints of the past; and with their supposed “freedom”, some essential elements of life are being challenged. One of the most essential things that is being thrown off is the Bible—even in “organized religion” *the Bible has been dismissed for something more fun, more interesting, or more emotionally moving.*

We must know that God wants us to be happy. But this happiness is directly tied to listening to and obeying God’s instructions. In a world where so many think they know better than God, we need to remember what is taught by the parable of the Prodigal (Lk 15:11-24). In search of happiness, this young man threw off the restraints of home and ventured out into the world. No longer having his proper foundation or family around him, he found himself in sin and happiness was not there. When he finally came to himself, he was alone and hungry enough to desire the pigs’ food. Happiness was only found when he returned to his proper place. Solomon also records a similar experience in Ecclesiastes (Eccl. 2:1-11). In search of true happiness and fulfillment in this life—Solomon searched the world. By gathering strength, power, riches, and fame, he found no satisfaction. After testing all the worldly things he said, *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all [purpose]”* (Eccl. 12:13). Knowing this, why should we waste our time by repeating this same experiment? Happiness is not out there. *True enduring happiness is with God.*

It is Not Found by Part-time Pursuit: Even after coming to God, through Christ, some still don’t get it. True happiness in Christ requires a true commitment to Christ (Rom. 12:1-2). Trying to stand with God and keep a hold on the world is a recipe for misery (Matt. 6:24). Happiness is found in embracing all of God’s direction (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Happiness is fully committing our life to godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). Happiness is trusting God’s care (Matt. 6:25-33; Rom. 8:31-39; 1 Pet. 5:7).

What is a full commitment? Paul is a good example when he depicts his commitment this way, *“No longer I who live, but Christ lives in me”* (Galatians 2:20). Our mindset

needs to be “*Christ who is our life*” (Col. 3:4). Happiness rendering commitment is putting God first (Matt. 6:33). It is doing God's will (Matt. 7:21-23). It is remaining faithful to God, all the way (Heb. 10:35-39).

Once You Find it, it will only get Better: In this life, many things diminish over time. *Our happiness in the Lord will not be one of those things.* Spiritual maturing is a lifelong endeavor; we should always increase the things that cause happiness: The study of God’s word (Jn 15:10-11; 1 Jn 1:4). Our prayers (Phil. 1:4; 1 Thess. 5:18). Our relationship with our brethren (Rom. 12:9-15; Phil. 4:1). Our eager *anticipation* (1 Tim. 4:8; 2 Pet. 3:12).

As we grow in happiness, we become more of what we should be: More excited about serving God (Heb. 11:6—*diligently seeking Him*). More caring toward our brethren (Rom. 12:9-15; Heb. 10:24-25—a *mutual source of happiness*). More concerned about our fellow man (Mk 16:15-16—*eager to offer them the gospel*).

Conclusion: The world may not understand why we seek the Lord, to serve Him. But then they also fail to understand the happiness that we gain in what we do. Your happiness is important to God; He desires rejoicing in His presence. Luke 15:10 declares that there is rejoicing in Heaven over the repentance of sinners. There is no true happiness apart from God. Let us all find the happiness God intends for his children.

By T Sean Sullivan