

 **Managing  
GOD's Money**

**Theme for June: Walking the Walk**

*During an intensive two-year period when I set out to prove Christianity was for "weak-minded losers," faith preoccupied me. I realized subconsciously I put faith in many objects and people daily. Still I thought, "Why would anyone become a follower of Jesus, accepting 'blindly,' assumptions about Him?" I learned He died, rose, is alive today. But did I have faith enough to believe? Later, with open eyes, I found out I didn't have faith enough to disbelieve Jesus is Messiah! This month as we look at how we practice our faith, we will review these faith-related topics:*



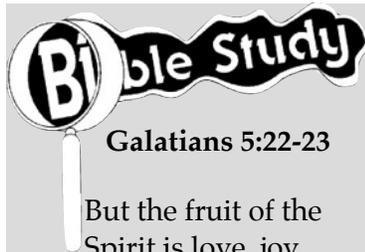
**June 1-7 - Faith and Hope**

**June 8-14 - Command and Assurances**

**June 15-21 - Forgiveness and Restoration**

**June 22-30 - Happiness is ...**

**Topic for June 22-30: Happiness is...**



**Galatians 5:22-23**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

**T**oday many believers in Jesus hunt for happiness, determined to direct their lives to find it. Some confuse happiness with joy from the *fruit of the spirit*. They forget happiness is a feeling, but the *fruit of the spirit* comes from Jesus working in us. It results from our salvation. Sadly, we

override the Spirit in our search for happiness.

We buy toys, spend extraordinary hours at work to earn more money, rush up the corporate ladder, take drugs, but somehow, we become agitated and don't find this illusive happiness. The world tells us "don't worry be happy"; but it doesn't tell us how to get it. Why? Because it hasn't defined the end-state of happiness.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary, Ninth Edition's happiness definition doesn't help either:

- A feeling or showing pleasure or contentment.
- Fortunate
- colloquially: Slightly drunk

The late American author Kin Hubbard once said, *it is hard to tell what does bring happiness; poverty and wealth have both failed.*

According to the world, happiness is a feeling, and according to the colloquial definition, some believe we need drugs to be happy.

I want to assure you, we will find lasting *happiness* in Messiah Jesus. Even when individuals who define happiness as achieving specific goals reach that goal, the happiness that follows doesn't last. They experience an anticlimax that takes them down quickly. The central issue is events that produce happiness change continually, and the happiness feeling itself is unsustainable.

In **James 5:11**, we get a glimpse of Biblical happiness as follows:

As you know, we consider blessed [happy] those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Then again, in **Matthew 5:3-12** Jesus presents a sermon on happiness called the Beatitudes, which highlights the difference between God's views of happiness and man's views:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your



## Memory Verse

Psalm 18:22

The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

The Greek word used here for blessed, *Makarios*, means happy, or fortunate. We must grasp Jesus' fundamental message throughout these Beatitudes. Believers can't get the happiness or blessedness Jesus offers on their own, from religions, denominations, or by self-righteousness. It is independent of circumstances. Here lies the crucial message to each of us: We must stop striving to get stuff or to do tasks to "make us happy." It just doesn't work.

Instead, we must start investing time at the feet of the Lord. Then we will be able to rest in Him, worship Him unreservedly, and become more productive in our jobs.

After this, we can start to apply our energies to gain His priorities. True happiness is a deep state of contentment based on a secure personal relationship with Jesus Christ; not a superficial feeling.

To experience this blessedness or happiness, first we must recognize our spiritual poverty — our need to depend on Jesus for everything. The Psalmist describes this condition aptly in **Psalm 34:18**: "The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Yes, we need to be crushed in spirit, so we may see and hear God calling.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus says mourning brings happiness; but not mourning as the world mourns. Hearts broken from sin and remorse leads to mourning that He comforts. David's life shows this picture well, especially **Psalm 51**.

It's to those mourning like David Jesus provides comfort; they are blessed or happy. They accept themselves as they are; they accept what they have; they turn to Jesus and rejoice even with "half-full cups."

Contrary to pop psychology, the Beatitudes' happiness conditions do not "look out for number one" and exalt the individual. They refer to traits

the world sees as weak and negative, such as meekness, gentleness, and mercy. Traits we need to *walk the walk* daily.

We experience Biblical happiness not by doing stuff for self-gratification, but by becoming genuinely humble, obedient, ready always to do Jesus' will. Jesus is the only source of love, joy, peace, and happiness. His followers experience Biblical happiness only through the Holy Spirit's power, no other way.

### Application



1 Peter 1 : 15-21

"... For you know that it was not with perishable things...that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your fore-fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ... Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

**A**re you searching for happiness? Where are you looking? You can find it in the one true God,

Messiah Jesus. Have you noticed that your last promotion, new toy, fancy clothes, or other major achievement, all became stale after a while? You wanted something newer, better, faster or more important — but each was transient.

Ask Jesus to remove obstacles preventing you from turning over your life to Him. Place your hopes, dreams, and search for happiness in a personal relationship with the living God, Messiah Jesus. He will give you eternal life. Through the Holy Spirit, you will be able to *walk the walk* and radiate the *fruit of the spirit*.

This week, meditate on King David's words in **2 Samuel 22:1-4**:

And David spoke the words of this song to the LORD in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said, "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; my savior, you save me from violence. "I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.

What can you take from these verses to incorporate in your life today?



**C**onsidering this month's theme, *Walking the Walk*, this period's topic, *Happiness is...* daily, reflect on the specific verses in the *Daily Reflection* section below. These questions might help:

1. Who is talking to whom, about what, and in what context?
2. How do these verses apply to me today?
3. What lessons from these verses can I start to do today?

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# Daily Reflections

**June 22:**  
Galatians 5:22-26;  
James 5:10-20

**June 23:**  
Matthew 5:3; Psalm  
34:18

**June 24:**  
Psalm 51

**June 25:**  
Matthew 5:4-6

**June 26:**  
Matthew 5:7-8

**June 27:**  
Matthew 5:9-10

**June 28:**  
Matthew 5:11-12

**June 29:**  
2 Samuel 22:1-4;  
Psalm 18:2

**June 30:**  
Psalm 18:2, 28, 46