

## The World's Answer to Happiness

The world has its own prescription for happiness; it is a life of selfishness, luxury, and indulgence. Continuously we are told that we must look out for "number one" and run over anyone who gets in our way! We are encouraged to loose all restraints and go for what we want, even if it is someone else's property or even if it is someone else's spouse. Daily the media serves up the deception that happiness consists of attaining and using things--that it is more blessed to receive than to give! And so we are treated to commercial after commercial each evening that shows ordinary people with extraordinary smiles because they just bought the right car, or just drank the right "adult beverage".

And yet, the facts do not seem to support the lies we are being told. Self-indulgent fornicators go unhappily from "affair to affair". Those who have plenty never seem to have enough. And the kids of the rich guys are killing themselves by the scores. Counseling offices are filled with unhappy people, not so much because of an unconscious physiological problem, but rather because of a conscious spiritual problem, the neglect to conform to sensible conduct and deal properly with life's challenges. Clearly the world's prescription isn't working. But, is there an answer?

## God's Prescription for Happiness

If there was ever a book in the Bible that focuses on joy it is Paul's epistle to the Philippians. This wonderful letter may be Paul's most personal work. There are over a hundred personal references in this book. This is not because Paul was so ego-centric he could not think in other terms; but rather because he writes this epistle out of his own personal experience. Repeatedly Paul speaks of a special joy he possesses. And that is even more fascinating when we realize that this joy existed in one of the darkest hours of his life. Paul does not write from the ivory tower! He writes this letter from imprisonment! And yet, remarkably, he keeps speaking of the joy that he has and offers us some valuable observations and exhortations that will lead us to that joy also.

### The Message of Philippians

As you read Philippians you will discover that God's prescription for joy centers in Jesus Christ. The repeated exhortation is "Rejoice in the Lord!" (Phil. 3:1; 4:4). We find in Jesus the ability to live joyously. We find in His coming the patience to be moderating in trouble. We find in His nearness the peace to overcome anxiety. We find in His sacrifice the power to forgive and in His example the strength to serve. We find in His promises the insight to correct our lost perspective and to see the good in what is otherwise bad. We find in His exaltation the courage to fight

for what is right. We find in His people the support we need while in conflict with the world. We find in His truth the positive thoughts we need to overcome a world full of bad things.

Philippians contains many practical principles for everyday living! Applying each of these rules enables us to experience a new dimension of joy.

### Principles For Joyous Living

*(The References are in the book of Philippians)*

1. Discover the joy of knowing and loving God's people (1:1-11).
2. Make it your purpose to glorify God and learn to see how you can do that even in the worst of life's circumstances (1:12-26).
3. Know the satisfaction of standing up for what is right! (1:27-30).
4. Give yourself to the unselfish service of other people (2:1-18).
5. Treasure and hold to the spiritual wealth you have in Christ (3:1-11).
6. Focus on the joy of knowing that your goal is heaven (3:12-21).
7. Learn to get along with others and roll with the punches (4:1-5).
8. Put your anxieties in the hand of God and let His peace fill your heart (4:6-7).
9. Let your mind dwell on good thoughts while you strive to live right each day (4:8-9).
10. Find in Christ the power to be content (4:10-20).

## Surprised by Joy!

When we live by these rules what we discover is that we arrive by submission to God to that which we could never have in our own way. We find that our faith in Christ gives us the knowledge and the strength to cope with life's trials. As Christians we learn to treasure the blessings we have in Christ rather than live in an unending quest for earthly luxury. We find the security and peace of being under God's control rather than the turmoil and insecurity of self-indulgence.

Maybe you already know the spiritual emptiness of a life without Christ. Maybe you have been searching for the answer to joyous living. Being a Christian holds to all of us the only real answer to our longings for happiness. If you would like to know more about how to become a Christian and live the Christian life, your friends at Perry Heights are eager to study the Bible with you. Join us in the quest for real joy!

--Johnny Felker

If you enjoyed reading this article, let us know. Other short tracts on various subjects are available. Let us know how we may help you.

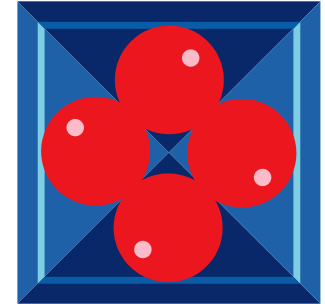


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## In Pursuit of Joy



## ...God's Way

Are you unhappy?  
Discontent? Frustrated?  
Anxious about life? Does  
your life lack meaning and  
purpose? Read inside for  
God's answer to these  
problems. The quest for  
joyous living begins with  
Christ. Let me show you  
how.