

God's People Are to Live Happily Ever After
(1 Thessalonians 5:16)

Introduction:

1. With all the turmoil and unhappiness in the world, we need to occasionally be reminded that the Bible teaches God's people to "rejoice" [be happy].
2. Unfortunately, many people have the idea that being happy is a "product" [something we receive].
 - a. It is true that certain things can cause us to experience joy [ex. Paul rejoiced when he learned about the spiritual growth of his friends].
 - b. However, depending upon someone or something to make us happy may lead to disappointment [ex. Solomon -- Ecclesiastes 2:1-11].
3. Rather than being a product, being happy is "a responsibility."
 - a. According to Psalm 118:24, rejoicing is to be a daily activity.
 - b. We learn from Philippians 4:4 that God's people are to rejoice "always."
4. In our lesson we are emphasizing the point made in 1 Thessalonians 5:16 that "God's people are to live happily ever after."
5. Let us begin by showing how . . .

Discussion:

- I. WE HAVE REASON TO BE HAPPY WHEN WE ARE CONVERTED
 - A. In Acts we read about many people who were filled with happiness when they were converted, including:
 1. people in Jerusalem on Pentecost (Acts 2:37-38, 41, 46-47)
 2. the eunuch of Ethiopia (Acts 8:35-39)
 3. the jailer in Philippi (Acts 16:29-34).
 - B. The Bible shows in 2 Corinthians 5:17 why happiness is associated with conversion.
- II. THE BIBLE TEACHES US TO MAINTAIN OUR HAPPINESS AFTER WE ARE CONVERTED
 - A. In addition to the verses we read earlier, this principle is taught in:
 1. Galatians 5:22-23 -- Joy is one of the nine characteristics that make up "*the fruit of the Spirit.*"
 2. Philippians 3:1 -- "*Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.*"
 - B. Not only does the Bible teach us to be filled with joy, but it also teaches when we are to be filled with joy -- "*always*" and "*evermore.*"
 1. To be more specific, the Bible teaches us to be filled with joy when we undergo trials (James 1:1-2).
 2. Thankfully, we have some positive examples in this area, including:
 - a. the apostles (Acts 5:40-41)
 - b. Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25)
 - c. Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2).
 - C. In addition to teaching us to maintain our happiness, . . .
- III. THE BIBLE TEACHES US HOW TO PREVENT LOSING OUR HAPPINESS
 - A. We must put away "*the works of the flesh*" (Galatians 5:19-21) because they will rob us of happiness (Psalm 32:1-5, 11).
 - B. We must practice the Lord's teachings (John 15:10-11).

Conclusion:

1. "Joy" [happiness] is certainly an important part of Christianity.
2. We have reason to be happy when we are converted.
3. We are to maintain our happiness after we are converted.
4. By following the guidelines that the Lord has given in His Word we will not lose our happiness.
5. "It is never too late to live happily ever after."