

Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 6:25-34

What the Bible Says About Happiness

The Bible mentions the word: happiness 47 times. However, Jesus does not mention the word happiness once. The reason is that we cannot be handed happiness. We have to pursue it. To pursue anything well, we must use the right approach or strategy. Jesus gives us the right strategy in Matthew 6:25-34.

The Wrong Strategy

We try to generate our own happiness by controlling our circumstances:

Mission of Self-Preservation (Why we need the Gospel of Jesus to change us).

Apart from the God and the Gospel, sin would hold us to this Mission Statement: We preserve ourselves by seeking to insulate our lives with:

- People who look like us.
 - People who think like us.
 - People who hold to similar customs.
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The Right Strategy

Jesus does not use birds and lilies as His illustration to make light of our common plague, that being: worry. He uses this illustration to purposefully instruct us on how to be happy.

When he says: "Look at the birds of the sky: They don't sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they?"

The Point: "A bird is a hard-working creature, but it does not work hard for its feathers or to prove its worth; rather the bird simply obeys the law of its life and becomes what it is." (Chambers)

Homework Connection: "How happy is the man who does not follow the advice of the wicked or take the path of sinners or join a group of mockers! Instead, his delight is in the Lord's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night" (Psalm 1:2).

When we delight in God's design (instruction) for our lives, we become the person God intended us to be. We are then freed from striving to create personal worth and, instead, find all of our worth in knowing our Maker.

When he says: And why do you worry about clothes? Learn how the wildflowers of the field grow: they don't labor or spin thread."

The Point: "The lily obeys the law of its life where it is placed. As a disciple, Jesus says, consider your hidden life with God; pay attention to the source and God will look after the outflow. Imagine a lily hauling itself out of the ground and saying, 'I do not think I look exactly right here.' The lily's duty is to obey the law of its life where it is placed by the gardener." (Chambers)

Homework Connection: "How happy are those whose way is blameless, who live according to the Lord's instruction! Happy are those who keep His decrees and seek Him with all their heart" (Psalm 119:1-2).

When we delight in God's instruction, then we are not seeking to find delight in getting our way. We want God's way, alone. Just like the lily, wherever we are placed and in whatever we find our lives, we remain submitted to the will of the Gardener. To do so results in our greatest good because the one who cares for us desires our best, and also knows how to help us become our best.

When we worry, we are grappling for control. Instead of fighting for control, let's rest in the Lord, who is in control. Our strategy then becomes delighting in the Lord's instruction and correction, that we may become who we were created to be.

When we worry (grapple for control), we soon realize that we do not have control, so we become anxious. To be anxious is become try to fix our problems our own way in our own time. When we do this, we spoil God's designed influence in our lives. Our lives then get out of God's designed shape, taking away our happiness.

Homework Connection: "See how happy the man is God corrects; so do not reject the discipline of the Almighty" (Job 5:17).

How can we stop worrying and be happy?

1. Like the birds, know that your purpose is in God's instruction.
2. Like the lily, realize that His will revealed becomes our best life revealed.
3. When we get off track, allow the Lord to reshape us, since He knows our design.