

"SIMPLY HAPPY"

Week 1

KEY PASSAGES:

Zephaniah 3:17 The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing."

Nehemiah 8:10 The joy of the Lord is your strength.

John 17:13 "...that they may have the full measure of my joy within them"

Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Philippians 1:3-6 I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.

Philippians 1:18-19, Because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

Philippians 1:20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Philippians 1:27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

QUESTIONS:

1. Fun confessions: what experience/thing is your 'go-to' for momentary happiness?
2. By contrast, what are some things / experiences that you've found tend to leave you with a deeper or more lasting happiness?
3. Share a time where something relatively small got you WAY more excited than it should, or WAY more depressed than it should.
4. Think of your associations of God in your younger years. Now read the verses in blue above. How do those verses compare with your understanding of God in the past?
5. Read Philippians 1:3-6 above. This is how Paul opens his letter, written from prison while on trial for his life. What stands out to you about his words here?
6. Experts say that joy and gratitude very often go hand in hand--and Paul's opening words are an example of that. Can you think of an example in your own life where joy and gratitude went together?
7. Generations of psychological studies have helped us learn that the state of our circumstances only affect about 10% of our lasting happiness, while voluntary choices (actions, responses, habits & disciplines, etc) account for about 40%. Why do you think we always act and feel as though our circumstances are what is going to make the biggest difference?
8. Read Philippians 1:27. In light of everything else Paul writes in this chapter, what does this verse say to you?