

**Urban Legends: God Wants Me To Be Happy**  
**April 22, 2018 (Transmitter)**  
**Lynn Haven UMC**

**Introduction**

Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2 NRSV)

If you are a parent, you want your kids to be happy, right? But often things that might make them happy in the moment are not the things that we know to be good for them. (Ex. A gallon of ice cream for breakfast is a bad idea!) So, as God attempts to do with us, we guide and rebuke our children with love in order to protect them from harm (or a terrible sugar rush!). Yes, God pours His blessings upon us because He loves us, but He never promised us a life filled with happiness. How is a blessed life different from a happy life? A happy life is dependent upon circumstances. If all is well, we are good. If things go awry, we forget how to find happiness. The joy that can be found in a blessed life is not tied to a circumstance, but rather depends on a relationship...with God. Because our Father indeed knows best, He wants us to lead holy lives that glorify Him and point others in His direction. This week we will discover the dangers of believing the urban legend that God wants us to be happy.

**Digging Deeper**

**THE MYTH: God wants me to be happy**

**We FAKE it.**

- Have you ever tried to “fake it till you make it”? It’s risky to let our true feelings show because if we aren’t happy then perhaps people will be able to see what we allow the enemy to plant in our heads: “Something’s wrong with me” or “I am not a good Christian”. Strangely enough, you will not find a verse in the Bible that says, “Thou shalt be happy.” However, God does tell us a little about how we can obtain true happiness through our allegiance and obedience to His Word. Have you ever faked a happy mood because it was easier than sharing how you were really feeling? Did you do so because you didn’t want to be a burden or seem like a “Debbie downer”? Consider this: sometimes when we allow ourselves to be vulnerable to others we open the door for encouragement and blessings.
- How are most people trying to find happiness? Talk about a time when you did the wrong thing because you thought it would make you happy.
- One of the most influential urban legends of today is the one that God wants us to be happy. What makes this myth dangerous? Can you see ways that it is damaging our culture at large? How might this urban legend lead to disappointment with God?

**We CHASE it.**

- Have you believed the spiritual urban legend that God wants you to be happy? Is there anything you are doing today, against God’s will, in the pursuit of happiness? If so, what attitudes or goals do you need to change in order to pursue God and experience a blessed life?
- Have you ever been faced with making a choice that you knew might cause immediate discomfort or delay gratification in some way, but sensed God was calling you to go in a certain direction? How did it grow your faith?

## **We FORCE it.**

- It is a common practice for unsatisfied people to attempt to fill a personal void with possessions or stature in the hopes of achieving happiness. While forcing happiness with these kinds of false idols may feel good for a little while, they will never yield authentic joy. As Paul expresses in Philippians 4:12, we must learn how to be content in all circumstances. Perhaps we will not always feel happy, but we can call upon the strength of the Holy Spirit, placed in all believers as a blessing from Christ, to be able to endure all things. Can you think of something that made you happy for a time but ended up making you miserable in the long run? Can you think of a difficult, hard decision that you made that resulted in happiness and peace?
- God cares about our happiness but it is not His ultimate goal. As any parent would do, He must rebuke when needed and outlines a standard of living that He knows will protect our eternal souls and lead others to Him. As Hebrews 12:11 (NIV) says, “No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.” When we walk in the way of the Lord we will have peace and righteousness. Those things are surely markers of a happy life. How have past experiences with discipline, disappointment or even denial prepared you for future challenges?

## **THE TRUTH: God wants me to be HOLY.**

What is more important than my happiness?

- Someone else’s well-being. Read Philippians 2:1-8. When we place the interests of others above our own we are placing them above us and living out the example of Christ to serve and not be served. Have you ever prayed for God to give you a selfless heart? Are you able to find joy in the joy of others?
- Sacrifices for God’s Kingdom. Kingdom growth often requires Christians to delay personal gratification in some way if we hope to lead even one person to accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. This can look like giving up free time to help someone, not purchasing something you want so you can use the money for others in need, or perhaps even dying on a cross so all of mankind might have a chance at spending eternity in heaven with God our Father. Aside from Christ, do you know of anyone who models this behavior? How have you been changed by their example?
- Trials that shape my character. Have you ever gone through a difficult time and asked God to intervene but He didn’t? Do you know why that’s usually the case? Because while we want God to change our circumstances, the Lord wants to change our character. How has your character been defined by the trials in your life? Do you view difficulties as a way to become more like Jesus?

## **Conclusion**

While God does not want us to be happy above all things, He does want us to be blessed in our lives and that comes from being in relationship, following and trusting in Him in all things, even the hard stuff. If you pursue happiness, you’ll miss God. If you pursue God, you’ll find blessings. You see, it’s an urban legend to believe that God wants us to be happy. The truth is God wants us to be holy.

“Work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14b NLT)