

How To Find True Happiness and Joy

Introduction:

- 1. It has been the longest running, most extensive study in U.S. History**
 - An 80 yr study that researched it's participants for the rest of their lives, now their children
 - From Harvard graduates that became lawyers, doctors, senators and even one U.S. President—to working class families from Low Income areas of Boston.
- 2. All to find the answer one question: What makes a Happy Life?**
 - The Harvard Grant Study found it was not Money, not fame, not material success, not education, or Status or power or popularity or possessions or prominence.
 - Happiness Wasn't Based on Any of the Metrics We Consider Success
- 3. The Study Found Happiness is Found in Close Loving Relationships...**
 - It seems surprising at first—until you realize God created us for loving relationships...
 - Do You Remember the Two greatest Commandments? **To Love God** with all your heart, soul and mind, and **to love others** as you would want to be loved yourself.
- 4. True Happiness is Found in the Greatest Relationship of All!**
 - With God (**Psalm 16:11 ESV; Psalm 36:8–9 ESV**)
 - We Find Joy and Peace by Trusting God (**Proverbs 16:20; Isa. 26:3**)

To Find True Happiness and Joy...

I. REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR (v.1-8)

A. BEFORE THE DIFFICULT DAYS (v.1-5)

The baseball legend Micky Mantle said: “If I knew I was going to live this long, I would’ve taken better care of myself!”

- 1. This is a Poetic Metaphor of the aging process...**
 - Someone said that his eyesight is failing, his Dr. says he has macular degeneration... But he read Ecclesiastes 12 and said he's right on track
- 2. Life has different season... Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter**
 - Each has it's own beauty and challenges... we enjoy or endure them
 - But the sands of the Hourglass keep falling... Time waits for no-one
- 3. Remember your creator while you are young because**

if you neglect God now, old age will only perpetuate your neglect.

 - Don't Wait until your thirsty to start digging your well...
 - Don't wait for a storm to hit before you build your house on the rock...
 - Don't put off Knowing God just because your young, it won't last long
- 4. Remembering God does not mean just thinking about him once in awhile.**
 - Walk with Him, discover Him, learn to know God while you are young.
 - To Remember means—**DO NOT FORGET**—Live Daily in the Light of Eternity!

B. BEFORE EVERYTHING OF VALUE NO LONGER HAS VALUE (v.6)

1. There's things in life, that if we didn't have them, we would pay a Million \$ for—But since we have them, we take them for granted

- a) The Time Will Come When There Will Be More More Time...
- b) When everything of value on this side of eternity—Will no longer have value...
- c) Winning Your Little Arguments, Having the Last Say, Always having to be right...
None of it will matter anymore

2. Winston Churchill is considered one of the greatest minds of 20th century

- a) As a Historian: he wrote a massive history of Britain...
- b) As a World Leader: He stood up to Hitler and helped save Britain...
- c) But at the end of his life—With his whole life in perspective... on his death bed...

He said... “What a fool I've been”.

C. BEFORE YOU SEE HIM FACE TO FACE (v.7-8)

- 1. The Body Returns to the Dust—and the Spirit returns to God who gave it**
- 2. Man goes to his eternal home, and the mourner go about the streets**
- 3. Now Solomon sees the End of Life is Connected to Eternity—Not Vanity**

To Find True Happiness and Joy...

II. REMEMBER THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE (v.9–12)

A. GOD INSPIRED DIFFERENT MEN FROM DIFFERENT WALKS OF LIFE (v.9-10)

- 1. Prophets, Priests, Kings, Fishermen, Tax Collectors, Physicians, Scribes, Shepherds and Sheep Herders, and Even Former Pharisees...**
- 2. to Write the Inspired word of God... God's Word, Word for Word...**
- 3. But They Are All Words From One Shepherd—the Lord! (1 Peter 5:4)**

B. WISE WORDS HURT BUT HELP—THEY CAN STING, BUT BLESS (v.11)

1. They are sharp and prod Like a Goad... a cattle prod

- a) They Stick Like Nails, driven with precision by a master craftsman
- b) They Even Cut Like a Sword—or a Surgeon's Scalpel (**Hebrews 4:12**)

2. But like goads they prod us away from danger and to the way fo Truth

“Some people will not let themselves feel the sting of serious introspection. They do not want to threaten their sense of well-being. To escape they may bury themselves in work, or become busy with a thousand special interests. They may lose themselves in the madness of the pleasure-seeking crowd, or relentlessly drive toward the attainment of wealth or fame. Or, they may dodge the goads [prodding, arousal] of reflective thinking by taking drugs, participating in occult practices, or devoting themselves to a manmade religion.... All of these are ways contemporary people sidestep the painful confrontations with the unpleasant realities of human existence. Though they may escape the prod of the goads, they will never find peace with God ... The goads are the concerns, the serious thoughts, and the guilt feelings which arise in the consciousness of one who is willing to face things as they are. Their stings are painful, and do not in themselves provide the answer to man's need. But they bring to light a person's sinfulness and helplessness, and thereby may get him started in the right direction. When he is finally driven to faith in Christ, they have served their purpose. —Richard DeHaan

3. At one point Jesus had a large crowd following Him...

But Jesus Spoke Some Words that Were Hard to Take...

- a) but after a particularly challenging sermon the crowds stopped following Him
- b) Jesus turned to the Disciples and asked: Will you also leave?

*But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life. (Jn 6:68)*

C. A WARNING FOR ENDLESS SEARCHING (v.12)

1. The Writings of people who are wise in their own eyes is just endless...

- a) Whether its all the Virtue Signaling on Social Media
- b) Or the so-called "Experts" who claim to be the Fact-Checkers of Life
(even though their life is a wreck...)
- c) Or the Endless Books on How to Live Your Best Life Now

2. We Will Burn Ourselves Out Researching the endless Opinions of men... —and Completely Ignore the Infallible Word of God!

3. Don't Judge The Word of God by the words of men— —Judge the words of Men by the word of God!

To Find True Happiness and Joy...

III. REMEMBER TO KEEP THE MAIN THING THE MAIN THING

A. THIS IS THE POINT OF ARRIVAL (v.13–14)

1. So Far All Our Own Paths Have Led to Dead Ends...

- a) The Pursuit of Pleasure, Power, Prominence, Popularity, Possessions
- b) All the things we thought would make us happy— in the end they fail us

2. But Now We Arrive at the Point of REALIZATION—and DECISION...

Nothing Can Fill the God Shaped Void in our heart except God Himself!

- a) It's is infinitely deep because it can only be filled by an infinite God!
- b) He Placed Eternity in our heart! —He Gave us a Spirit that will last forever!

*For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?
Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:26)*

B. TO FEAR THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM—AND THE END...

The Point of Arrival — and Point of Departure for Eternity!

1. It Means to HONOR the Lord With REVERENCE and AWE (Proverbs 9:10)

- a) The More You Know the Lord—the More You Will Honor Him with Reverence
- b) The Less You Know the Lord—the More You Will Honor Yourself Instead of Him

2. "The remarkable thing about fearing God, is that, when you fear God, you fear nothing else; whereas, if you do not fear God, you fear everything else." (Oswald Chambers)

C. TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS...

- 1. You Honor God By Honoring His Word and Keeping His Commandments**
- 2. If You Honor God—He Will Honor You! (Ecclesiastes 8:12–13)**
 - a) If You Honor God — He Will Honor You!
 - b) If You Keep His Commandments—He Will Keep You from the Day of Wrath
- 3. Jesus said, If You Love Me You will Keep My Commandments**
 - a) They are not burdensome—but for our own good! (1 John 5:3)
 - b) Its Men who Create Heavy Burdens—Like the Pharisees did (Mt 23:4; Lk 11:46)
 - c) But Jesus helps us with our burdens (Mt 11:28-30)

D. OUR SPIRIT WAS GIVEN BY GOD—AND WILL RETURN TO GOD...

- 1. It's been said there are Two Great Days in Every Person's Life...**

They Day you are Born and the Day you Find Out Why...
- 2. But There is a Third Great Day—The Day you are Born Again**
 - a) Born of the Water and the Spirit...
 - b) Buried with Him in Baptism—and Raised to a New Life!
- 3. You Are Not an Accident—You Were Created for a Reason...**

You Were Born to Be With God! (1 Cor. 5:1-2; 4b-5)

We are Not Human Beings Having a Spiritual Experience,

We Are Spiritual Beings Having a Human Experience (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin)

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Our Spirit Was Given By God—and it Will Return to God**
- 2. This was God's Eternal Plan Before Time Began!**
- 3. For You to be Forever Young (Titus 1:2)**

what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?
Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:26)

*“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” (1 Corinthians 2:9)*