

“Choose Happiness” –Core 9

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.” Psalm 1:1-3 ESV

A. Happiness is a choice...Psalm 37:4

1. Happiness is not based on possessions, position, power, or prestige. Proverbs 16:20
2. Happiness is not based on what feels right. Pro 14:12
3. Happiness is not based on circumstances. 1 Thes 5:18
4. Happiness is a choice...a by-product, not a goal.
Psalm 144:15

B. We are designed for a DOSE of happiness...

“I have told you these things so that you will be filled with My joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!” John 15:11

1. **Dopamine:** *The chemical of adventure or pleasure. It is released when your mind is buzzing with activity and creative energy. It motivates you toward goals. You get a surge from encouragement, positive email, or you savor a thought. Laughter is a great chemical release for dopamine, serotonin, and endorphins. Dopamine is reduced by procrastination, feelings of self-doubt, and lack of enthusiasm. Increasing dopamine could be as easy as a good night’s rest, exercise (30 minutes in 10 days), or achieving a goal. Proverbs 20:4 NIV*
2. **Oxytocin:** *The chemical of trust, love, tenderness, a handshake or even better, a hug! It is often called the cuddle hormone. It gives a sense of comfort. 2 Cor 13:12 & Isaiah 66:13*
3. **Serotonin:** *The chemical of respect, calm, content or relaxing. It is released when someone asks your opinion, treats you with respect, gives a feeling of significance, or applauds your performance. It is called that “I got it” feeling. It is suppressed by stress and can be relieved by deep breathing and a feeling of safety or “at home”. It can be increased through the practice of gratitude. When low in serotonin, one feels depressed, anxious and lonely. Psalm 95:2*

4. **Endorphins:** *The chemical that masks pain and is often called the runner’s high. Endorphins are released with time spent with people, playing games with people, singing together, making music together, dancing together, exercising together and laughing together. Certain foods also release endorphins: dark chocolate, meat with tryptophan (turkey, chicken, lean meats, fish), yogurt, sauerkraut, kimchi, beans, eggs, almonds, and spicy foods. Bananas are known as the happy fruit.*

Proverbs 16:20

C. God’s Word on happiness...

1. Relationships account for the bulk of our happiness. Godly relationships increase our happiness. This releases endorphins. Psalm 1:1
2. Meditation is a great way to increase dopamine. Meditating on God’s Word is at the top of ways to change brain patterns. *“Because proteins hold our thoughts, our thoughts literally take up real estate in our brains. So the more we meditate on a positive thought, the larger it grows. As we meditate, we release the addictive dopamine that determines happiness.”* Psalm 1:2
3. Serving others will bring significance releasing serotonin into our brains. *“They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.”* Psalm 1:3

D. Happiness is for all who seek God...*Philippians 4:4-9*

1. Paul was in prison. His circumstances didn’t dictate his happiness. Don’t let your circumstances dictate your happiness!
2. Paul had two coworkers in conflict. He didn’t let his relationships destroy his happiness. Don’t let your relationships determine your happiness.
3. Paul was determined to choose happiness. Fix your thoughts on what brings positivity in your life.
4. Paul was putting into practice what God had taught him. Putting God’s Word into practice brings peace.