

Positively Speaking

By Mark Wilson

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Live Life Joyfully

Some dear friends of mine have a sign hanging over their doorway as you leave the house. It reads, "Live Life Joyfully!" I like that! It is a beautiful reminder, as they go out to face the world; that we really can choose how we are going to live.

Most folks don't think they have a choice in the matter. They believe that joy and happiness are simply the result of good fortune. When "things" are going well, we're happy.

Snoopy captures this thought when he defined happiness as "a piece of fudge caught on the first bounce." This perspective takes us on an emotional roller coaster -- up one moment and down the next. Now, I love roller coasters -- but emotional ones are not so fun.

If circumstances dictate our level of contentment we are doomed to misery. Bad things happen to everybody! We all go through struggles, hardships and pain. If a "bad day" has the authority to plunder our joy, we're all in deep weeds. Yet, there is a happiness of spirit that does not depend on the happenings of life. There is a joy that goes deeper than bouncing fudge! There is a contentment far greater than any circumstance.

Happiness is a choice. It is not what happens to you that counts, but how you respond. You will not find happiness by chasing it. It's like a lovely butterfly. The more you run after it, the more it flits away from you. However, if you are patient enough to stop and be still, it will land on your shoulder.

True happiness is the bi-product of a healthy, God centered, love filled life. You will never find it in a bottle. You won't capture it by working harder. The pathway of entertainment doesn't lead there. It begins and ends in the heart.

The right root brings the right fruit. If happiness is missing from your life, don't look around -- but look within instead.

The word "joy" appears 218 times in the Bible. That indicates that joy is the serious business of heaven. It's not just optional frosting for shallow folks -- but, rather, the very fountain of life itself. We were created for joy. "A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance. . ." Proverbs 15:13

When a person is happy, says the poet, Trapp, "the heart sits smiling in the face, and looks merrily out of the windows of the eyes."

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