

We ought to pursue the things that make for true happiness

We should be thankful that we live in a nation where the “pursuit of happiness” is considered an unalienable right. That privilege is a blessing. Not only that, but we also can be grateful that our civil government does not define happiness for us and require us to pursue it in any particular way. Each citizen is free to have his own idea of happiness and pursue it according to his own values, as long as he does not infringe on the equal rights of others.

The evidence suggests that we as Americans take the pursuit of happiness as a very serious business. We spend more time and money on “pleasure” activities than we spend on anything else in our culture. Unfortunately, however, we often do not give adequate thought to what we are trying to accomplish, and we spend great portions of our lives chasing things that, in the end, do not really make us as happy as we thought they would.

What really are the components of genuine happiness? If we’re serious about answering that question, the account in **Genesis 2** of Adam and Eve’s happiness in the Garden of Eden will be of more than passing interest to us. In that wonderful place, before sin entered the world, the first man and woman enjoyed a perfect environment, supplied with everything the Creator knew they would need to enjoy everything they were created to enjoy: (1) fellowship with God Himself, (2) fellowship with one another, (3) contact with the natural world of God’s creation, (4) productive work, and (5) the goodness of God’s law.

What do we think today about these components of true happiness? Can we deny that we need each of them? Surely not, but if we recognize their importance, why do we neglect them as we often do? Why is it that we spend 90% of our time on things that are only 10% important? How can we expect to experience fulfillment and joy if we spend our lives “majoring in minors”?

This week, let’s look at the way we spend our time. ***We ought to pursue the things that make for true happiness.*** If we are spending too much time on relatively unimportant pursuits to the neglect of the things that we really do need, let’s adjust our priorities and correct the balance.

Monday: 1 John 1:1-4

Key Idea: Fellowship with God is the most important requirement for our happiness.

Questions for Family Growth: According to this passage, on what basis may we have fellowship with God? What does the word “fellowship” mean? Why is fellowship with God necessary for us to have true joy? What point is made in **Eccl. 12:13,14**?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 17:1.**

Tuesday: Genesis 2:18

Key Idea: Fellowship with other human beings is also a part of our happiness.

Questions for Family Growth: Does the statement that it was not good for man to be “alone” apply only to the husband-wife relationship or do you think the principle can apply to other relationships also? Why do we need relationships with others?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 17:2.**

Wednesday: Psalm 111:2

Key Idea: Contact with the physical world of God’s creation contributes to our happiness.

Questions for Family Growth: What does it mean to “study” the works of God? What are the benefits to be gained from spending more time with things of God’s creation and less time with those of man’s creation? What do we learn from enjoying God’s world?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 17:3.**

Thursday: Genesis 2:15

Key Idea: Good, productive work contributes to our happiness.

Questions for Family Growth: Did work come into the world as a part of the curse for sin, or was it in the Garden of Eden before sin? What did God put Adam in the Garden to do? What makes the difference between work that gives us joy and work that does not?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 17:4.**

Friday: Psalm 19:7-11

Key Idea: Our happiness requires the commandments of God’s law.

Questions for Family Growth: What are the different things David says about God’s law and its goodness? Why are God’s commandments necessary for our happiness and joy? How can we develop a more positive attitude toward God’s law?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 17:5.**

Gary Henry — WordPoints.com