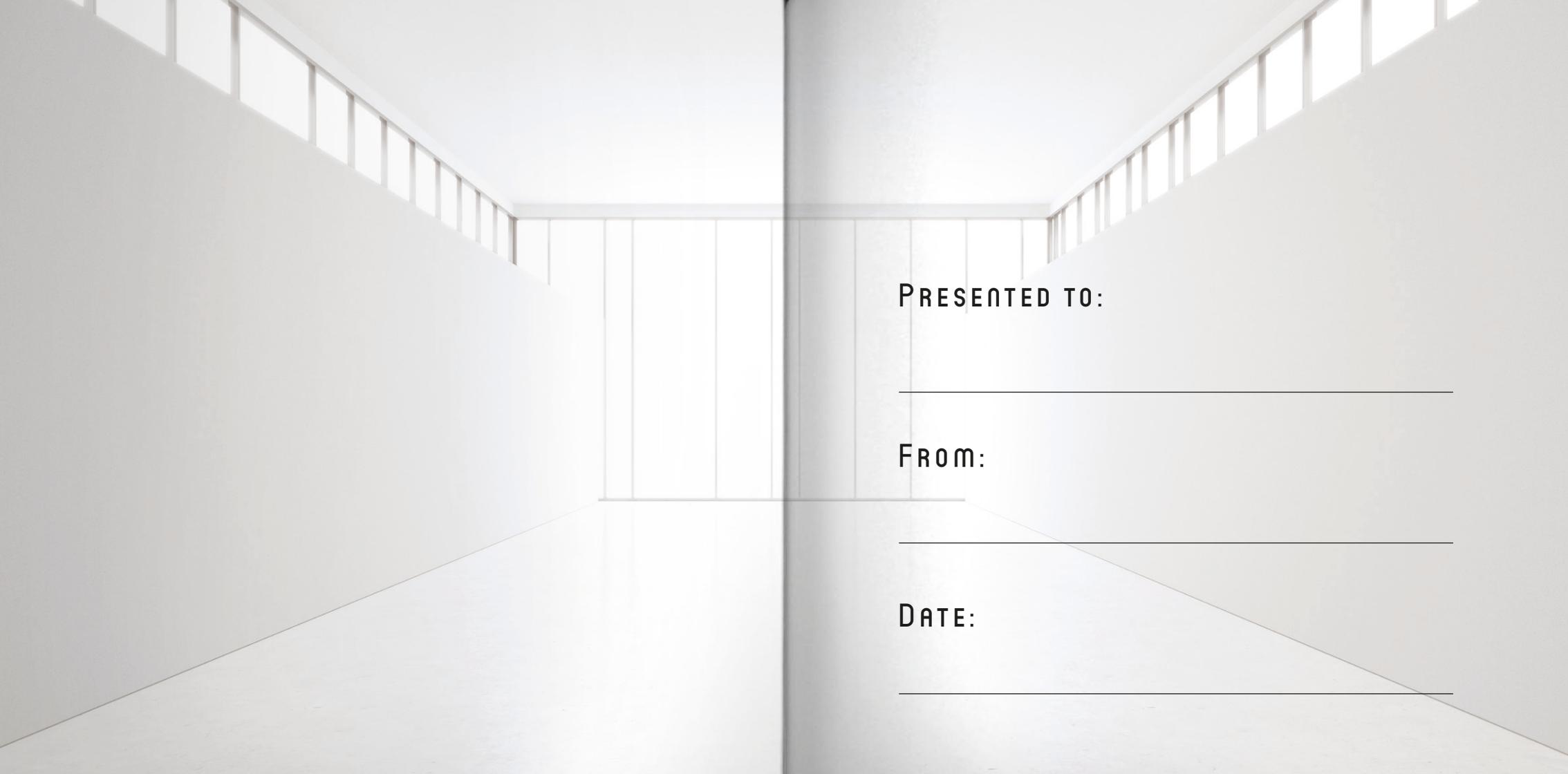




THE TREASURE OF
JOY



PRESENTED TO:

FROM:

DATE:

THE TREASURE OF

JOY

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CONTENTS

Foreword	4
The Treasure of Joy	7
Lighten Up	17
Optimism and Gratitude	23
In Spite of it All	33
The Simple Joys.....	47
The Joy of Giving.....	55
A Joyful Spirit	59
Afterword	65

FOREWORD

It has often been said that the gift of happiness is one of God's greatest gifts to humanity. And that certainly rings true when we are going through spells of gloominess, anxiety, or bitterness. To lose the joy of living is to lose one of the most precious gifts of life. It is a gift to cherish, nurture, guard, and at the same time, share with others.

In sports, it's clear that teams or players who play joyfully have an advantage over those who play solely by routine or for a paycheck. Success seems to come more easily to those who combine talent, practice, and tactics with joy and love of the game.

The same holds true in other walks of life. From the loftiest position to the lowliest rote work, joy is an indispensable ingredient in the formula for success. Without happiness, our work—and even life itself—loses its zest.

Twenty-five hundred years ago, Nehemiah exhorted his people to work with joy while building the outside protective wall of Jerusalem. Recorded in the Bible, his counsel still rings true today: “The joy of the Lord is your strength.”¹

Happiness is also found in the simple pleasures of life, in being thankful for what we have rather than looking over the fence to see if the “grass is greener on the other side.” We also find joy in giving to others—sometimes material things, but also our time, our listening ears, our hearts, or a bit of our lives. And last but not least, we find lasting joy in aspiring to the spiritual things of life that deepen our very existence and lift us above the mundane and superficial.

We hope that within these writings you will find inspirations that will lead you down the path of happiness, so you can enjoy the great pleasures and satisfactions of life. Just bear in mind that happiness is a journey, not a destination.

1. Nehemiah 8:10





THE TREASURE OF JOY

YOU HAVE PUT GLADNESS IN MY HEART.

PSALM 4:7 NKJV

DO not let problems consume your life. Be consumed by happiness.

Author unknown

YOUR success and happiness lie in you. Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties.

Helen Keller

JOY is the eternal youth of the spirit.

Ippolito Nievo

NO medicine cures what happiness cannot.

Gabriel García Marquez

HAPPINESS does not depend on outward things, but on the way we see them.

Leo Tolstoy

A HAPPY heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit.

Proverbs 15:13 NIV

HAPPINESS is not in our circumstance but in ourselves. It is not something we see, like a rainbow, or feel, like the heat of a fire. Happiness is something we are.

John Sheerin

HAPPINESS is a great remedy but cannot be found in the pharmacy.

Spanish saying

IT is true also that joy is in its nature more divine than sorrow; for, although man must sorrow, and God share in his sorrow, yet in himself God is not sorrowful, and the "Glad Creator" never made man for sorrow: it is but a stormy strait through which he must pass to his ocean of peace.

George MacDonald



I'VE lost the road to happiness,
Does anyone know it, pray?
I was dwelling there
When the morn was fair,
But somehow I wandered away.
I saw rare treasure
And scenes of pleasure
And ran to pursue them when, lo,
I had lost the road to happiness
And knew not whither to go.

"I have lost the way to happiness
Oh, who will lead me back?"
Torn off from the highway of selfishness
To the right-up duty's track!
Keep straight along and you can't go wrong
For as sure as you live, I say.
The fair, lost field of happiness
Can only be found that way.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Recipe for happiness:

Before you begin, put on a strong stain-proof apron to protect against the drips of bitterness and the sourness of life. In a bowl of resilient material, able to withstand blows, falls, and chippings, mix the following ingredients:

- ✓ 2 heaping spoons of gratitude
- ✓ 1 ½ spoons of satisfaction
- ✓ A dollop of generosity
- ✓ 3 drops of concentrated optimism syrup
- ✓ A wedge of sunny smile
- ✓ A seed of faith
- ✓ A cup of Joy Elixir

Season with a generous dose of good humor.

Blend all the ingredients together with enthusiasm, and serve on a wide and joyous table, big enough to share with all you meet.

The Editors

HAPPINESS is pretty simple: someone to love, something to do, something to look forward to.

Rita Mae Brown

A MAN'S needs are few; the simpler the life, therefore, the better. Indeed, only three things are truly necessary in order to make life happy: the blessing of God, the benefit of books, and the benevolence of friends.

Thomas Chalmers

MAKE an effort to find joy in your work, or you may never have the time to know happiness.

Author unknown

HAPPINESS is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.

Mahatma Gandhi

MANY persons have a wrong idea of what constitutes true happiness. It is not attained through self-gratification but through fidelity to a worthy purpose.

Helen Keller

HUMAN beings are happy only when they are striving for something worthwhile.

Author unknown

FOLKS are usually about as happy as they make their minds up to be.

Abraham Lincoln

THERE'S nothing wrong with living a life of pleasure ... if we get pleasure out of the right things.

Author unknown



BASED on antiquated traditions, we may harbor subconscious ideas of a stern-faced, forbidding God who frowns upon us when we're having a good time, laughing, and having fun. Nothing could be further from the truth! To live with joy was practically a commandment in the Scriptures and in the old Hebrew culture. This concept was further sealed in the New Testament with exhortations such as, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"¹

The Psalmist, King David, gives us a glimpse of God's true character whose presence radiates joy:

You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 16:11 NKJV

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.

Psalm 19:8

You make me glad by your deeds, Lord; I sing for joy at what your hands have done.

Psalm 92:4 NIV

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.

Serve the Lord with gladness: come before His presence with singing.

Psalm 100:1-2

The Editors

1. Ephesians 4:4 NKJV



The joy of living...

to be able to count on a friend when you thought that no one cared,
to be able to smile in spite of daunting circumstances,
to lend a hand to someone intimidated by the obstacle before him,
to enjoy the silliness of a child,
to rejoice at the triumph of a friend who has finally attained his dream,
to hug someone who needs a boost ...

The joy of seeing God's wink at an unexpected moment,
to look up and see a flock of birds circling above the trees,
to shed your weights and sorrows,
to hold the hand of a loved one,
to feel content and not know why ...

This joy of knowing that you have lived, have suffered,
that you have been betrayed and hurt,
but that you still have your ability to laugh, play, make the most of life,
and be thankful that your heart has not become callused,
that it is still beating awaiting the next joy.

The Editors

It is pleasing to God
whenever you rejoice or
laugh from the bottom of
your heart.

Martin Luther



THE ability to look on the bright side is a gift. It enhances your happy times and makes the difficult times more bearable. It's the gateway to greater joy, one of the many treasures you found when you found Me. Love, faith, peace, joy—these and many more are My gifts to sustain and inspire you.

I want you to partake of My full joy, but there is something you must do before this can happen: you must accept who and what you are and believe that you were created this way for a wonderful purpose, that you were endowed with a unique set of gifts, talents, and attributes that will help you find and fill the special place in this world that only you can fill.

I give you the gift of joy to alleviate heartache; I give you happiness to dry your tears; I give love to cast out fear. The outlook brightens the moment you remind yourself that My love and care are constants and I can bring something positive from whatever problem threatens to drag you down.¹

Jesus

A KEY to living a fuller and happier life is the ability to live focused on the present without being unduly distracted with the past or the future. We have to practice concentrating our energies on the present and tuning in to the experience that we are living at the moment, without getting distracted.

Take a deep breath, take notice of your surroundings, listen to the people you are with, fully enter in. Think of the difference that this will make in your interactions with your loved ones, moments of relaxation, and even with your work.

Jesus taught us to not worry about tomorrow, but rather to live like the birds of the air that trust that their Heavenly Father knows what they need. Every day has its own worries, but also its grace.

The Editors

THIS is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalms 118:24 NKJV

1. See John 15:11; Isaiah 61:3; Psalm 30:5; 1 John 4:18; and Romans 8:28,37–39.

A RECENT study proposes that our concept of happiness is formed largely from the cultures that we have grown up in. People in the Americas and Europe put a high value on self-esteem, economic success, individuality, and standing out above the crowd. Eastern cultures usually give a higher importance to social harmony and teamwork. The emphasis on social status, material wealth, and family ties vary according to the culture.

Psychologist Solange Anuch also believes that our culture tints our perception of happiness, and that it is hard to put this influence aside. She believes that individuals capable of looking for happiness outside the parameters of their own culture tend to be highly intelligent, introspective, and have high self-esteem. They are also emotionally stable and therefore can discover a form of happiness that is not subject to the dominating culture.

In this exercise, ask yourself what your personal definitions of happiness are. Divide them into different categories that range from the sublime to the little pleasures of life. Such as:

What is happiness according to your overall fundamental beliefs? *For example, according to your religion, belief system, or the values that were instilled in you.*

How would you define happiness for yourself personally? *What do you want for your life? How do you want to live? What are your aspirations? Do you feel you are living this happiness now, or are you working on it?*

What specific things do you enjoy? *For example, participating in sports, exercise, being with friends or family, hobbies, nature, etc.? Do you make sufficient time for these things?*

Some answers will cross over from one category to another. In fact, the ideal is that our aspirations are in line with our belief systems. Keep your answers for future reference; it's always interesting to see how our ideals develop as we live and learn.

The Editors

LIGHTEN UP

A JOYFUL HEART IS GOOD MEDICINE.

PROVERBS 17:22 ESV

HUMOR and laughter have been held in high esteem since time immemorial. The historian Maximiliano Salinas Campos explains that, “Throughout the different cultures and civilizations, laughter is one of the most consistent signs of the celebration of life. [...] It is a mark of sacred strength. [...] Laughter, humor, and joy take us back to the euphoric origin of life.”

Laughter applies a balm to our sorrows. It declares war on the tyranny of the solemn and severe and helps us to not take ourselves too seriously. It is a way to celebrate all that comes from on high, and is one of the most appreciated attributes that we have received from our Creator. We have a happy God who enjoys the humorous side of His creation, and He hopes that we will enjoy it alongside Him and belt out a good laugh when the occasion warrants. “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.”¹ God created us to enjoy living and to help others do the same.

The Editors

A FEW years ago, the organization Clowns without Borders campaigned for UNESCO to consider laughter a “World Heritage” asking that it be “not only promoted and supported, but also protected.” They made an appeal for “all the countries of the world to ensure that their people live in conditions where laughter is a daily occurrence.” Carmen Castro wrote in her article, “Laughter is the guarantee that all is well, and that everyone’s basic needs have been met, and that all live in peace and fairness. Everyone has the right to laugh.”

According to Clowns without Borders, laughter is in danger of disappearing in many parts of the world. Why don’t we join this campaign to promote laughter, starting with our own homes and neighborhoods, and along our daily paths? Let’s rescue laughter from the danger of extinction!

The Editors

1. Ecclesiastes 3:1,4

LAUGHTER therapy is designed to help people be more positive, improve their state of mind, and have a more optimistic focus when confronting problems.

The main objective of laughter therapy is to restore that joyful and spontaneous laughter that we had as children. We need to connect with our “inner child” and let him surface with the laughter and smiles that symbolize the joy of living. When we belt out a hearty laugh, it cleanses our five senses.

Among other benefits, laughter is known to:

- combat anguish and stress
- alleviate certain forms of depression
- strengthen the immune system
- relax the mind and body
- improve breathing and blood circulation
- inspire creativity and the imagination
- promote communication and sociability
- relieve pains
- improve self-esteem

El club de la risa (The Laughter Association)





PEOPLE who can take a joke and laugh at themselves often have a stronger sense of self-worth and/or esteem. Being able to laugh at yourself means you don't take life too seriously, that you can stand back from the situation and see the funny side of life. Good self-esteem means you feel "okay" about who you are as a person, that you feel happy in your own skin and not that you're deluding yourself about not having any faults.

Mental Health Station

YOU have to learn not to be dismayed at making mistakes. No human being can avoid failures.

Lawrence Lovasik

DON'T take life too seriously. You'll never get out of it alive.

Elbert Hubbard

SMILE a smile!
While you smile
Another smiles,
And soon there are miles
And miles of smiles.
And life's worthwhile
If you but smile.

Author unknown

THE world is like a mirror: Frown at it, and it frowns at you; smile at it, and it smiles too.

Herbert Samuels

A SMILE is the lighting system of the face and the heating system of the heart.

Barbara Johnson

A SMILE is a light in the window of the soul indicating the heart is at home.

Author unknown

WEAR a smile and have friends; wear a scowl and have wrinkles. What do we live for if not to make the world less difficult for each other?

George Eliot

SMILE. It's free therapy.

Doug Horton

WHAT sunshine is to flowers, smiles are to humanity.

Joseph Addison

WHEN you smile at someone, nine times out of ten the other person will smile back and you'll have made two people's days brighter and better.

Author unknown

SMILES are the language of love.

David Hare

SMILE at each other, smile at your wife, smile at your husband, smile at your children, smile at each other—it doesn't matter who it is—and that will help you to grow up in greater love for each other.

Mother Teresa

THERE are hundreds of languages in the world but a smile speaks them all.

Author unknown

A WINNING smile makes winners of us all.

Author unknown

THE thing that goes the farthest Towards making life worthwhile, That costs the least, and does the most, Is just a pleasant smile.

It's full of worth and goodness too,
With manly kindness blent,
It's worth a million dollars,
And it doesn't cost a cent!

Wilbur Nesbit

WE can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses.

Author unknown

OPTIMISM AND GRATITUDE

THE LORD HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR US,
AND WE ARE GLAD.

PSALM 126:3 NKJV

WHEN we know that everything has two sides, let us look at the bright side only.

Mahatma Gandhi

THE man who deals in sunshine is the man who gets the crowds. He does a lot more business than the man who peddles clouds.

Author unknown

A CONTENTED man is one who enjoys the scenery along the detour.

Author unknown

MANY of our cares are but a pessimistic way of looking at our privileges. We let our blessings get moldy, and then call them curses.

Author unknown

THERE are always flowers for those who want to see them.

Henri Matisse

YES, it's pretty hard," the optimistic old woman admitted. "I have to get along with only two teeth—one upper, one lower—but, thank goodness, they meet!"

Author unknown

BOTH the optimists and the pessimists contribute to society. The proof? The optimist invented the airplane; and the pessimist, the parachute.

Author unknown

THE pessimist says, "The worst is just around the corner." The optimist says, "The best is yet to come."

Author unknown

AN optimist sees an opportunity in every calamity; a pessimist sees a calamity in every opportunity.

Sir Winston Churchill

OPTIMIST: Person who travels on nothing from nowhere to happiness.

Mark Twain



KEEP your thoughts positive,
because your thoughts become your words.

Keep your words positive,
because your words become your behavior.

Keep your behavior positive,
because your behavior becomes your habits.

Keep your habits positive,
because your habits become your values.

Keep your values positive,
because your values become your destiny.

Mahatma Gandhi

WHEN life gets to be too much, when everything around you seems to be falling apart, when you feel that nothing you do helps, what should you do?—Think about Me. Think about how much I love you. Think about My power. Think about all your blessings, and thank Me.

You can praise your way right out of a bad mood! If you thank Me for all the good things in your life, the negative feelings will dissipate.

You may sometimes find yourself in situations where there doesn't seem to be anything good at all to thank Me for. Well, then thank Me for the good that will eventually come out of the bad, because if you love Me, sooner or later it will. "All things work together for good to them that love God."¹

Let Me change your difficult day into a happy one. You can always find something to thank Me for. Praise Me for one thing, and you'll usually be reminded of another, and another. Happiness will find you as you focus on Me and on the positive.

Jesus

1. Romans 8:28

TALK happiness. The world is sad enough
Without your woes. No path is wholly rough;
Look for the places that are smooth and clear,
And speak of those, to rest the weary ear
Of earth, so hurt by one continuous strain
Of human discontent and grief and pain.

Talk faith. The world is better off without
Your uttered ignorance and morbid doubt.
If you have faith in God, or man, or self,
Say so. If not, push back upon the shelf
Of silence all your thoughts, till faith shall come;
No one will grieve because your lips are dumb.

Talk health. The dreary, never-changing tale
Of mortal maladies is worn and stale.
You cannot charm, or interest, or please
By harping on that minor chord, disease.
Say you are well, or all is well with you,
And God shall hear your words and make them true.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

It is not raining rain for me,
It's raining daffodils;
In every dimpled drop I see
Wild flowers on the hills.

The clouds of gray engulf the day
And overwhelm the town;
It is not raining rain to me,
It's raining roses down.

It is not raining rain to me,
But fields of clover bloom,
Where any buccaneering bee
Can find a bed and room.

A health unto the happy,
A fig for him who frets!
It is not raining rain to me,
It's raining violets.

Robert Loveman



OPTIMISM goes hand in hand with gratitude. Whenever there is a grateful attitude toward life, optimism naturally follows. It is good to express thanks to the people who care for us, or those who show kind gestures no matter how small. And it is good to thank God for all the good things in our lives *and* for all the bad that didn't happen to us!

Many, Lord my God, are the wonders you have done, the things you planned for us. None can compare with you; were I to speak and tell of your deeds, they would be too many to declare. —*Psalm 40:5 NIV*

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.
—*Psalm 103:2*

In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.
—*1 Thessalonians 5:18 NKJV*



JEALOUSY, comparisons, and rivalry all eat at the soul, yet they so easily take deep root in our consumerist societies. We are so conscious of who is driving the latest car model, upgrading their house, or wearing the newest fashion. The subtle temptation to compare ourselves unfavorably is always lurking in the back of our minds.

The best cure for negative comparisons is to practice the simple exercise of being happy for the good fortune of others. *Your friend moved to a more spacious and comfortable home?* That's great that he was able to afford such a move! *Your coworker got to vacation in an exotic tourist resort?* Fantastic! What a wonderful opportunity for her!

Rejoicing for the blessings of others is one of the keys to finding our own happiness.

The Editors



I HAD the blues
Because I had no shoes,
Until upon the street,
I met a man who had no feet.

Author unknown

A THANKFUL heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all other virtues.

Cicero

OFTEN, people search for happiness as those who look for their glasses when they are perched on their nose.

Gustavo Dorz





THANK You, Jesus, for our life and all that goes with it! When something goes askew we often say, “Well, that’s life!” But life is much more than the occurrences that often don’t go as we had hoped. It is also:

- waking each morning with the ability to see and to hear;
- talking with a child and marveling at the world seen through the prism of his innocence;
- taking a moment in the middle of a hectic day to watch a bird in flight or a butterfly among the flowers;
- chatting with an old friend as you remember how much you value his friendship;
- when someone unexpectedly sends some encouragement your way;
- taking a nature walk, enjoying the view and sounds, and breathing in the fresh air;
- retiring at night, thanking God for all the blessings He gave us that day.

The Editors

YOU’RE a great wife, and I don’t know what I would do without you.” And as he spoke, he put his arms around her and kissed her, and she forgot all her cares in that moment.

And, forgetting it all, she sang as she washed the dishes, and she sang as she made the beds.

And the song was heard by the woman next door, and she caught the refrain and sang also.

And as the neighbor sang, a delivery boy who came to her door heard it and went away whistling the tune.

And the world heard the whistle.

And it was all because he had told her he loved her.

Author unknown

IN recent years, many psychologists have studied the benefits of gratitude. They have found that there is a strong link between cultivating a grateful attitude and enjoying better health, deeper sleep, and less anxiety and depression. Grateful people enjoy long-term satisfaction and are more adapted to their surroundings. They are usually kinder and more attentive toward others, and maintain better sentimental relationships. Research is even showing that being grateful reduces aggression levels.

How can we cultivate gratitude in our lives?

If you do not consider yourself an optimistic or thankful person, many experts recommend that a good starting place is to begin a gratitude diary. Every day, jot down five things you’re grateful for. For example, the generosity of a friend, something that you learned that day, a beautiful sight, a significant experience, a simple pleasure.

It also helps to surround yourself with positive upbeat people and to read motivating texts from the Bible and inspired authors. When something negative happens, you can thank God anyway, trusting that some good will come from even this seemingly bad situation.

Thankfulness and a positive attitude are effective means to rise above most of the hard circumstances or conflicts in your life. As they say, your attitude determines your altitude. The world has enough problems of its own; so the optimist, the person who gives God thanks and makes the most of his situation, naturally attracts friends.

The Bible encourages us to give God thanks for all things.¹ But of course, that’s not so easy when everything seems to be going wrong. Nevertheless, it’s always effective. Praising God for His many blessings, and even the adversity and bad times, can keep us from falling into depression and give us the mental stability to live our lives with the proper perspectives.

The Editors

GRATITUDE makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.

Melody Beattie

1. See Ephesians 5:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

ALWAYS remember to forget
The things that made you sad,
But never forget to remember
The things that made you glad.

Author unknown

IF you want to sleep more soundly, count
blessings, not sheep.

Robert Emmons

BUT you may wonder *how* you should thank
God. You may not know how to put your
thanks into words, or maybe you feel your
words aren't eloquent enough. Take
heart! God isn't looking for carefully
crafted or perfectly articulated expressions
of gratitude. He delights in hearing heartfelt
thanks, with words that may be many or few,
lofty or simple, flowing or halting. God sees
the praise in your heart and translates it into
poetry set to beautiful melodies.

Maria Fontaine

DO not be anxious about anything, but in
every situation, by prayer and petition,
with thanksgiving, present your requests
to God. And the peace of God, which
transcends all understanding, will guard your
hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6–7 NIV

GIVING thanks always for all things unto God
and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus
Christ.

Ephesians 5:20

OFFER unto God thanksgiving.

Psalms 50:14

THANKS be to God, who gives us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:57 NKJV

A GROUP of visitors at a mountain resort
were watching the sunset from a lobby
window. A rough-looking man lingered until
the last glow faded, and seemed thrilled
through and through by the beauty of it all.

Afterwards, one of the other visitors said,
"You certainly enjoyed that sunset. Are you
an artist?"

"No, I'm a plumber," he replied with a slow
grin, "but I was blind for five years."

Author unknown

IN SPITE OF IT ALL

WEeping may endure for a night,
but joy cometh in the morning.

PSALM 30:5

IN his letter to the congregation at Philippi, the apostle Paul shares this pearl of wisdom—his formula for contentment: “I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”¹

It is interesting to note that Paul wrote this from a prison cell, most likely missing the most basic commodities. They say that there are two ways to be rich. One is to have whatever you want, and the other is to be happy with what you have. So here lies one of the secrets of happiness: learn to be content with what you have, then thank God for His wonderful gifts and delight in simplicity.

The Editors

A SMALL house will hold as much happiness as a big one.

Author unknown

MY happiness consists of appreciating what I have and not having an excessive desire for what I do not have.

Leo Tolstoy

HAPPINESS is not something you have in your hands; it is something you carry in your heart.

Author unknown

1. Philippians 4:10–13 NIV



MONEY may be the husk of many things but not the kernel. It brings you food, but not appetite; medicine, but not health; acquaintance, but not friends; servants, but not loyalty; days of joy, but not peace or happiness.

Henrik Ibsen

WATCH out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.

Jesus, Luke 12:15 NIV

Is it not true that my life, with all its limitations, touches at many points the beauty in life? Everything has its wonders, even darkness and silence, and I learn whatever state I may be in, therein to be content. Sometimes, it is true, a sense of isolation enfolds me like a cold mist as I sit alone and wait at life's shut gate. Beyond, there is light and music and sweet companionship, but I may not enter. ... Silence sits immense upon my soul. Then comes Hope with a smile and whispers, “There is joy in self-forgetfulness.” So I try to make the light in others’ eyes my sun, the music in others’ ears my symphony, the smile on others’ lips my happiness.

Helen Keller, deaf and blind since early childhood

THINK of the things that make you happy,
Not the things that make you sad;
Think of the fine and true in Mankind,
Not its sordid side and bad;
Think of the blessings that surround you,
Not the ones that are denied;
Think of the virtues of your friendships,
Not the weak and faulty side.
Think of the gains you've made in business,
Not the losses you've incurred;
Think of the good of you that's spoken,
Not some cruel, hostile word;
Think of the days of health and pleasure,
Not the days of woe and pain;
Think of the days alive with sunshine,
Not the dismal days of rain.
Think of the hopes that lie before you,
Not the waste that lies behind;
Think of the treasures you have gathered,
Not the ones you've failed to find;
Think of the service you may render,
Not of serving self alone;
Think of the happiness of others,
And in this you'll find your own.

Robert Farley

THE secret to happiness is found in counting all
your blessings though others are counting all
their woes.

Author unknown

MONEY can buy anything, except happiness,
which is much cheaper and at the same time
much more expensive.

Noel Clarasó





TRUE happiness costs little; if it is expensive, it is not good quality.

François-René de Chateaubriand

GRATITUDE is an art of painting an adversity into a lovely picture.

Kak Sri



WHEN one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.

Helen Keller



THANK God ...

For my children who are watching TV instead of helping me with the dishes,
because it means they are at home and not on the street.

For my paycheck,
because it means I have a job.

For the mess I have to clean up after a party,
because it means I was surrounded by family and good friends.

For my clothes that fit a bit tight,
because it means I have more than enough to eat.

For all the repairs and installations I have to make on my house,
because it means I do not have to live out in the cold.

For my kids' noisy racket,
because it means I can hear.

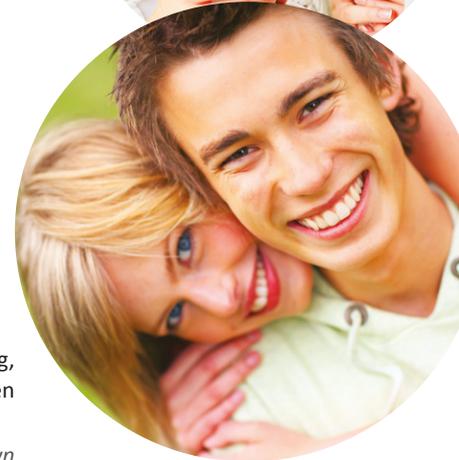
For all the washing and ironing I need to do,
because it means I have clothes to wear.

For my tiredness at the end of the day,
because it means I was strong enough to work hard.

For the alarm that wakes me up early in the morning,
because it means ... I am alive!

When you are sure that everything in your life is going wrong, stop a moment to reflect on the flip side of the situation. Then take heart and keep going!

Author unknown



A WATER bearer in India had two large pots. Each hung on one end of a pole that he carried across his shoulders. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

This went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots of water to his master's house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishment. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do. One day it spoke to the water bearer.

"I want to apologize to you."

"Why?" asked the bearer.

"I have been able to deliver only half my load because this crack causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you don't get full value from your work," the pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to see the beautiful flowers along the path."

As they went up the hill, the old cracked pot saw the beautiful wildflowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked half its load, and again it apologized to the bearer.

The bearer replied, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, not on the other pot's side? I have always known of your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. Now I can pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

Each of us has our own unique "flaws." We're all "cracked pots." But Jesus can use our flaws to grace His Father's table. Don't be afraid of your flaws. Acknowledge them and allow Him to take advantage of them, so that you too can bring beauty to His pathway.

Author unknown

YOUR present situation may not be to your liking. Perhaps you're dissatisfied and discouraged. Put the matter in God's hands. If He wants you elsewhere, He will lead you there, providing you are yielded to His Will.

But perhaps He wants you where you are. In that case, He will help you to adjust to the situation. If you yield to Him, He will make you content, even grateful for present opportunities.

Learn the great art of doing the best you can, with what you have, where you are. When you do this, you will either be content with how things are, or you will have the satisfaction of knowing you have made them better.

Reflections

THE consumerist society constantly tempts us to spend money that we do not have to buy things that we do not need for a happiness that does not last.

Jonathan Sacks



WE all have times in our past that we look upon as “dark nights”—tragedies or difficulties that were largely beyond our control and sometimes the direct result of other people’s wrong choices or unloving actions. How we react to those wrongs determines whether we become bitter or better for them.

Finding the good in a bad situation isn’t just a “glad game” exercise or a good idea; it’s vital to our spiritual health. If we can’t accept that there could be a silver lining to some of the rain clouds of our past, then we’ll probably never fully forgive and forget those things, and that can lead to bitterness, which is severely debilitating to our spirit.

God will make those situations work out for good in some way if we let Him. For this reason, it’s vital that we not allow ourselves to look back at any situation, no matter how terrible it was, remembering only the bad. It may not be our favorite memory, it may even be painful, but if we reject the negative spin and ask God specifically how He would like to use that situation for good, then He can set us free from that bitterness or other ill feelings and give us peace.

Maria Fontaine

DO not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not.

Epicurus

JUST think how happy you would be if you lost everything you have right now and then got it back again.

Author unknown

A MAN is insensible to the relish of prosperity till he has tasted adversity.

Saadi

SOME people think that they can’t be happy unless they’re free of problems. They do okay as long as everything goes their way, but the minute anything negative happens, it pokes a pin in their balloon and whatever happiness they had been feeling vanishes.

Because they let circumstances dictate their level of happiness, they are always bracing themselves for the next letdown and are never able to relax enough to have fun or feel good about life. They’ll never find lasting happiness using that approach.

The happiness I offer isn’t dependent on circumstances, which change like the weather. Rather, it’s determined by My presence and My promises, which never change. Circumstances don’t change eternal realities.

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”¹ You can’t avoid the problems of life altogether, but you can rise above them.

I can lift your spirit out of the earthly dimension, where happiness is fragile, and into the heavenly realm, where it is rock solid. The more time you spend with Me and My words, soaking up My love and getting My perspective on life, the better you will be prepared for its inevitable ups and downs, and the happier you will be.

Jesus

1. John 16:33 NKJV

It's not being hypocritical to put on a happy face even when you don't feel happy. It's a sign of inner strength and maturity. It shows you realize that whatever is dragging you down at the moment is relatively small in the grand scope of things, and that it will pass.

It's loving and considerate to be cheerful around others, smiling even when you don't really feel like it. It's considerate to try not to allow your facial expression to drag other people down with you or send a wrong signal, as though you're down because you don't like being around them.

Acting more positive than you feel also does *you* good and will often help bring you out of your funk.

Of course, the ideal would be to get over whatever is getting you down, and the best first step in that direction is to talk it over with Jesus and ask Him to help you with what is bothering you. If there is someone else who can help you sort things out, it may be good to talk with them also. In the meantime, keep smiling!

Activated

A PERSON is fully human when joy is the fundamental thing in him, and grief the superficial. Melancholy should be an innocent interlude, a tender and fugitive frame of mind; praise should be the permanent pulsation of the soul. Pessimism is at best an emotional half-holiday; joy is the uproarious labor by which all things live.

G. K. Chesterton

EVEN a happy life cannot be without a measure of darkness, and the word *happy* would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness. It is far better to take things as they come along with patience and equanimity.

Carl Jung

IN the multitude of my anxieties within me,
Your comforts delight my soul.

Psalms 94:19 NKJV

HE who has felt the deepest grief is best able to experience supreme happiness.

Alexandre Dumas

THOUGH the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior.

Habakkuk 3:17–18 NIV

THE SIMPLE JOYS

EVERY DAY THEY CONTINUED TO MEET
TOGETHER IN THE TEMPLE COURTS. THEY BROKE
BREAD IN THEIR HOMES AND ATE TOGETHER
WITH GLAD AND SINCERE HEARTS.

Acts 2:46 NIV

THE American businessman was at the pier of a small Mexican coastal village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked. In the boat were several large yellow fin tuna. He complimented the Mexican on the quality of his fish and asked how long it took to catch them.

The Mexican replied, "Only a little while."

He then asked why he didn't stay out longer and catch more fish. The fisherman said he had enough to support his family's immediate needs.

The man then asked, "But what do you do with the rest of your time?"

The fisherman said, "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, and take a siesta with my wife, Maria. Then I stroll into the village each evening, where I sip wine and play guitar with my friends. I have a full and busy life, señor."

"I have a degree in business administration," the visitor scoffed.

"I could help you. You should spend more time fishing. With the proceeds, you could buy a bigger boat. With the proceeds from the bigger boat, you could buy several boats. Eventually, you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman, you would sell directly to the processor, eventually opening your own cannery. You would control the product, processing, and distribution. You would leave this small coastal fishing village and move to Mexico City, then Los Angeles, and eventually New York City, where you would run your expanding enterprise."

"How long will this all take?" the fisherman asked.

"Fifteen or twenty years."

"But what then, señor?"

He laughed and said, "That's the best part. When the time is right you would sell your company stock to the public and become very rich. You would make millions."

"Millions, señor? Then what?"

The businessman said, "Then you would retire and move to a small coastal fishing village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your grandchildren, take siestas with your wife, Maria, and stroll to the village in the evenings, where you could sip wine and play guitar with your friends."

Author unknown

THE art of being happy lies in the power of extracting happiness from common things.

Henry Ward Beecher

MANY people lose the small joys in the hope for the big happiness.

Pearl Buck

HAPPINESS consists more in small conveniences of pleasures that occur every day than in great pieces of good fortune that happen but seldom to a man in the course of his life.

Benjamin Franklin

FOR most of life, nothing wonderful happens. If you don't enjoy getting up and working and finishing your work and sitting down to a meal with family or friends, then the chances are that you're not going to be very happy. If someone bases his happiness or unhappiness on major events like a great new job, huge amounts of money, a flawlessly happy marriage, or a trip to Paris, that person isn't going to be happy much of the time. If, on the other hand, happiness depends on a good breakfast, flowers in the yard, a drink, or a nap, then we are more likely to live with quite a bit of happiness.

Andy Rooney



At some point, most adults have looked at a child playing blissfully and wished they could turn back the clock. Children at play look happy, carefree, and thrilled about life. They laugh a lot, are easily entertained, and get excited about the simplest things. They have their problems and hurts too, of course, but they are resilient. Children live in the moment and generally spend more time being happy than adults. Here are a few ways you can recapture some of that childhood magic:

Rediscover the world around you.

Take a closer look at things that form the backdrop of your days—buds on the tree you pass on your way to the car, rays of morning sun through the kitchen window, white clouds against a cerulean sky, the spider web on the drain spout.

Savor your food.

Don't just eat and run; slow down long enough to think about and enjoy your meal.

Learn something.

Children don't have time to get into ruts, because they're too busy discovering new things. Take up a new hobby or activity. Read a new author. Study up on something that interests you.

Reward yourself.

Set a goal for the week and pick out a reward for when you reach it. Anticipation is one of the best incentives, and it works at any age.

Talk to a child.

If you want a fresh perspective, ask a child about almost anything. Wit, wisdom, imagination, hope, pathos—they've got it all. Don't be surprised if you are revisited by some of your own childhood thoughts.

Take downtime.

Your world won't come crashing down if you stop doing and accomplishing for a few minutes. Relax. Contemplate happy thoughts. Let your imagination run wild.

Be thankful for small things.

A child can be delighted by a simple trinket, a chance to go outdoors, a bit of attention, a swing at the park. Think of the little things you enjoy, and give thanks.

Activated





EDWIN Markan's epic poem, "The Shoes of Happiness" spins the tale of the infamously rich Sultan Mahoud.

*He had harvested all that pleased his eye,
All but the moon in the evening sky.
Lands and ladies and ships and herds,
He gathered them in as a flock of birds.*

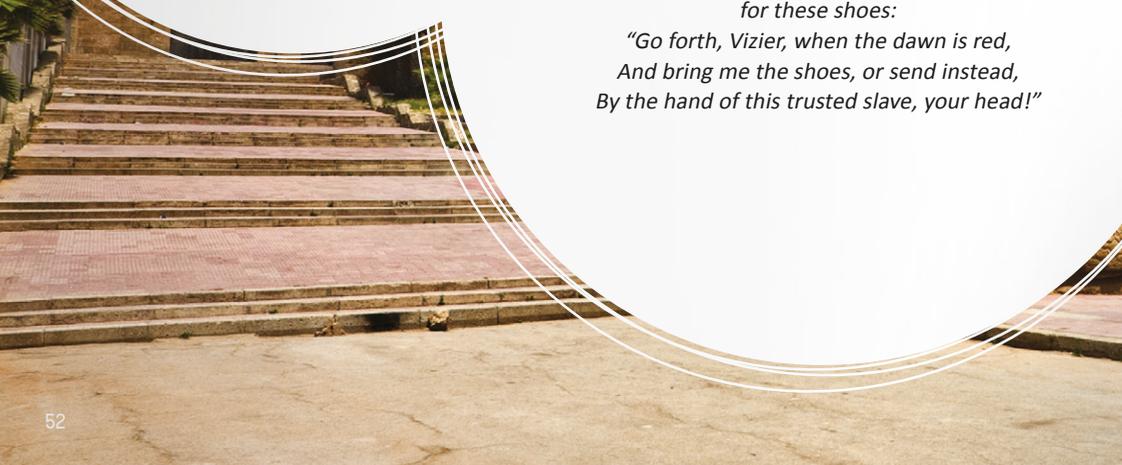
But now he is deathly ill, and a prophetic old woman declares that there is just one thing that will restore his health:

*"For only by this can you break the ban:
You must wear the shoes of a happy man."
The sultan sends his vizier, Halil, on a search
for these shoes:*

*"Go forth, Vizier, when the dawn is red,
And bring me the shoes, or send instead,
By the hand of this trusted slave, your head!"*

Halil travels throughout the kingdom, and though he finds plenty of mirth and enjoyment, he is unable to find a single home that has never known sorrow. Then he hears music coming from the field.

*Hark! suddenly over the hush of morn
Came a fluting note from a field of corn,
Where a man, stretched out with his arm for pillow,
Blew thin, sweet sounds from a pipe of willow.
The laughter-lines had scribbled his face,
And his limbs lay long with a flowing grace.*



*"Ho," cried Halil, "I am seeking one
Whose days are all in a brightness run."
"Then I am he, for I have no lands,
Nor have any gold to crook my hands.
Favor nor fortune nor fame have I,
And I only ask for a road and a sky
These, and a pipe of the willow-tree
To whisper the music out of me."
Out into the field the vizier ran.
"Allah-il-Allah! but you are the man;
Your shoes, then, quick, for the great sultan
Quick, and all fortunes are yours to choose!"
"Yes, mighty Vizier ... but I have no shoes."*

YEARS ago, I embroidered a saying that is now hanging on our wall: *The best things in life are not things*. It has the habit of coming into focus at the precise moment we need it. Right when we are considering buying a new gadget or appliance that we've seen advertised, the embroidery comes to life and makes us reevaluate whether we really need to acquire the latest in technology.

It's not easy to live a simple life in the 21st century. So many voices cry out for us to buy this product, or take advantage of that one-time offer. But to fill our lives with more things is not the key to happiness. In fact, these things often just seem to clutter more than bless.

On the other hand, a simple life, free of debts and extra expenses, will contribute to our happiness. In the long run, happiness comes from the little pleasures, those simple things that get overshadowed by excesses or run over in our rush to accumulate.

The Editors

I WAS simple, and I didn't lose My appreciation of little things. I stopped to enjoy the flowers. I cooked for My disciples.

It's when you can't find joy in the everyday things of life that you become complicated and lose the human touch.

Simplicity is a gift. Everyone starts out with it, but as some people grow up, they discount this gift because they associate it with ignorance, naiveté, immaturity, and a lack of sophistication. But did I not say that unless you have childlike simplicity you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven?

There is much to discover throughout life and even more in heaven, but you will always find that the most profound truths, the greatest beauty, and the most outstanding wisdom are expressed simply.

Jesus

THE JOY OF GIVING

**EACH OF YOU SHOULD GIVE WHAT YOU
HAVE DECIDED IN YOUR HEART TO GIVE, NOT
RELUCTANTLY OR UNDER COMPULSION, FOR
GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER.**

2 CORINTHIANS 9:7 NIV



HAPPINESS is never found in a selfish pursuit. It is not the end product of individualistic pleasures. When we make an effort to brighten the lives of those around us, happiness turns around and shines upon us when we least expect it.

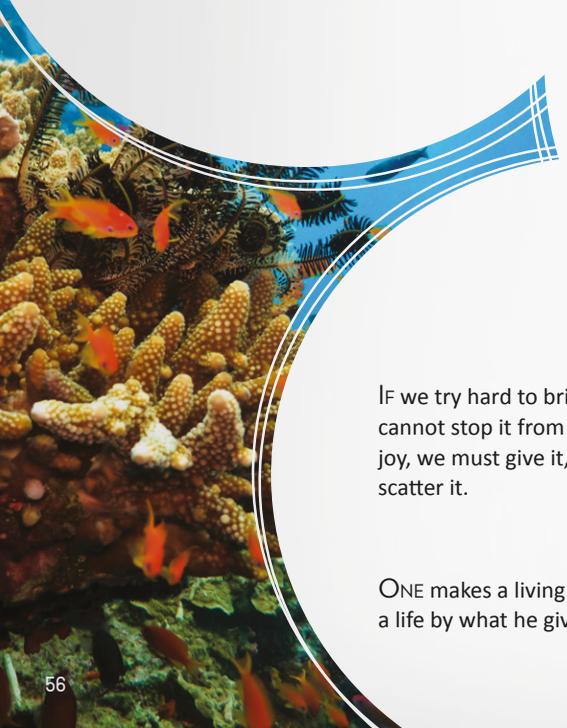
The Editors

THE happiest people are those who do the most for others. The most miserable are those who do the least.

Booker T. Washington

GENUINE happiness consists in those spiritual qualities of love, compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, and so on. For it is these which provide both for our happiness and others' happiness.

Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama



IF we try hard to bring happiness to others, we cannot stop it from coming to us also. To get joy, we must give it, and to keep joy, we must scatter it.

John Templeton

ONE makes a living by what he gets; he makes a life by what he gives.

Author unknown

BEFORE Christmas, a teacher in Africa had told his students how Christians, as an expression of their happiness and thanks for all Jesus has bestowed upon them, give one another presents on His birthday.

On Christmas morning, one of the natives brought the teacher a beautiful, lustrous seashell. When the teacher asked the boy where he had discovered such an extraordinary shell, the boy said he had walked many miles to a certain bay, the only spot where such shells could be found.

"I think it was wonderful of you to travel so far to get this lovely gift for me," the teacher said.

The boy's eyes brightened. "Long walk—part of gift."

Author unknown



WINE has a different flavor when there is no one to toast with.

Antonio Gil

HAPPINESS is the seed, shared happiness is the flower.

Author unknown



YOU can give without loving, but you can't love without giving.

Author unknown

TO get the full value of joy you must have someone to divide it with.

Mark Twain



WINE has a different flavor when there is no one to toast with.

Antonio Gil

HAPPINESS is the seed, shared happiness is the flower.

Author unknown

SAM Foss was an enthusiastic traveler as well as a writer, and on one of his trips through rustic England, weary and thirsty, he came to a small unpainted house that stood atop a fairly steep hill. Near one side of the road was a crude signpost finger pointing to a well-worn path, and a sign that read, "Come in and have a cool drink." Following the path a short distance, he found a spring of ice-cold water, above which hung an old-fashioned gourd dipper. On a bench nearby was a basket of summer apples with another sign, "Help Yourself!"

His curiosity aroused, Foss sought out the old couple who lived in the little house and questioned them about the signs and the fruit. He learned that they were childless, and that their poor farm yielded them a scant living. But because they had such an abundance of cold spring water and fruit, they felt rich and wanted to share it with anyone who might pass that way. "We're too poor to give money to charity," the old gentleman said, "but we thought maybe in this way we could add our mite and do something for folks who pass our way."

Author unknown

GIVE, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.

Luke 6:38

HAPPINESS is a perfume you cannot pour on others without getting some on yourself.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

SPREAD love everywhere you go. Let no one come to you without leaving happier.

Mother Teresa

THE JOYFUL SPIRIT

HAPPY ARE THE PEOPLE WHOSE
GOD IS THE LORD!

PSALM 144:15 NKJV



IN this book, we have often used interchangeably the word “joy” and its various synonyms. All aspects of happiness are important parts of the celebration of life, yet there is a definition of joy that deals with the sublime and transcends and encompasses all the others.

Peter Kreeft gives the following definitions: “Joy is more than happiness, just as happiness is more than pleasure. Pleasure is in the body. Happiness is in the mind and feelings. Joy is deep in the heart, the spirit, the center of the self.”

The Editors

THE best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched; they must be felt with the heart.

Helen Keller

SET your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Colossians 3:2 NKJV

MAY today there be peace within.

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be content knowing that you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise, and love.

Teresa of Ávila

DID you know that “Joy” is one of God’s names? In Psalm 43:4, the original Hebrew *El Simchah Giyl* means “God Exceeding Joy.” God created us in His own image, so it follows that He intends for us to be joyful as well.

Creation is brimming with happiness in praise to its Creator.

The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.

Psalm 65:13

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it. Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.

Psalm 96:11–12 NIV

Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains!

Isaiah 49:13 NKJV

The deepest happiness comes from being personally connected with God.

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy.

Psalm 16:11 ESV

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

Jesus, John 15:11

Faith in God’s goodness engenders happiness.

Happy is he ... whose hope is in the Lord.

Psalm 146:5

Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.

1 Peter 1:8 ESV

Even in hard times, God can give us joy.

His anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

Psalm 30:5 NIV

As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

2 Corinthians 6:10 NKJV

We can always be happy for our salvation.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation.

Isaiah 61:10 NKJV

HAPPINESS of the spirit is far above happiness of the flesh, for happiness of the spirit is something that will always be there for you, even through the loneliest nights and the darkest times.

Happiness of the flesh is fleeting; it comes and goes with your circumstances and surroundings, with the things you see and feel and experience physically. But happiness of the spirit comes from knowing that I am your Savior and that I love and watch over you; those truths never change.

The happiness that I give is as constant as the sun. When the sun disappears beneath the horizon at night, do you worry that it's gone forever? Night comes and you cannot see the sun, but you never doubt its existence or that it will rise the next morning. The happiness of the spirit is always and forever, like the sun.

When darkness settles on your spirit and you lose sight of happiness, that is the time to trust until morning, until you see and feel the sunshine of My love again. Never doubt. The dawn will come.

Jesus

PRAISE is when we tell God in thought or word or song how much we love and appreciate Him. We can also praise Him with motions, like lifting our hands heavenward.

But have you ever wondered what the purpose of praising God is? Why does the all-powerful God even want or need our praises? Does He even appreciate them? I'm convinced that He does, based on the simple truth that we are made in God's own image.¹ We love to be appreciated, and since God patterned us after Himself, certainly He must enjoy our thanks and appreciation just as much, don't you think?

The Bible has *lots to say* about praising God (222 references in the Old Testament alone), and it was nearly always a spontaneous act on someone's part, like all the times King David praised God for His power and goodness in the book of Psalms.

Praise is something we initiate because we want to, like thanking someone who gives you a present. The giver shouldn't have to say, "Thank me!" Words of thanks should come naturally.

Curtis Peter van Gorder

1. See Genesis 1:27.

PRAISE the Lord from the heavens;

Praise Him in the heights!
Praise Him, all His angels;
Praise Him, all His hosts!

Praise Him, sun and moon;
Praise Him, all you stars of light!
Praise Him, you heavens of heavens,
And you waters above the heavens!

Praise the Lord from the earth,
You great sea creatures and all the depths;
Fire and hail, snow and clouds;
Stormy wind, fulfilling His word;

Mountains and all hills;
Fruitful trees and all cedars;
Beasts and all cattle;
Creeping things and flying fowl;

Kings of the earth and all peoples;
Princes and all judges of the earth;
Both young men and maidens;
Old men and children.

Let them praise the name of the Lord,
For His name alone is exalted;
His glory is above the earth and heaven.

Psalms 148:1-4, 7-13 NKJV

PRAISE has power in our lives. It is good to hear our own selves praising God. Meditating on His goodness is an important exercise, but it is even more beneficial when we express our praises verbally. Here are three good reasons to practice praise:

The first reason is that praise helps us to see things more objectively. It reminds us of our own limitations and helps us to focus on God's power and blessings in our lives.

This brings us to the second reason: praise puts us on an optimistic path. Happiness is elusive until we understand that with Divine help any obstacle is an opportunity in disguise.

And the third reason is the most sublime: Praise puts us in loving communion with the Creator, whom to know is life eternal. This is the essence of life, the reason He made it all. When we tell God, "Thanks for everything," with sincere hearts and minds, we are making a little piece of heaven on earth!

The Editors

ENTER into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

Psalm 100:4

LORD, I lift my heart, mind, and spirit to You. You are the giver of all good things, and You are all good things to me.

You are my Creator, my Father, the source of life and strength. You cause the sun to rise, the light to shine, the night to come. You hold me in Your arms. You console me in my sadness. You warm me with Your love. You shield me and protect me and provide for me.

All peace, contentment, and blessings come from Your hand. I praise and honor and thank You.

Activated

PRAISE Him with the sound of the trumpet; praise Him with the lute and harp!
Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!
Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals!
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

Psalm 150:3–6 NKJV

PRAISE is one of the greatest powers of heaven. When we praise God, we open ourselves to the healing balm of heaven and it clears our mind, relieves stress, and refreshes our spirit. Strength and power lie in praise—not only power that lifts our spirit, but power to draw more power from the heavenly realm. Praise opens the channel that allows the blessings to pour forth. We don't just praise our way through difficulties, we also praise down the blessings of God.

Praise is a form of love. We are telling God how much we love Him and how thankful we are for all He does for us. As we praise and love Him, He loves us in return and pours His blessings upon us. So sing those praises, pray those praises, and pour forth those praises to God. And the blessings will come down as the praises go up!

Activated

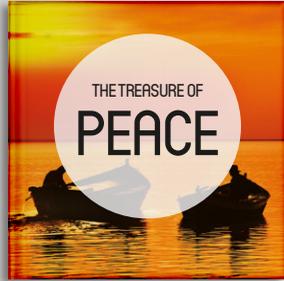
AFTERWORD

Joy is the oil that lubricates all the mechanisms. Without it, life is horrible drudgery; with it, life is worth living. Our loving Father delights to give us the gift of happiness; it is part of His very essence and part of His plan for all His creatures.

Jesus tells us, “Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”¹ If you would like to fill the emptiness in your life with the joy that He promises, open your heart to Him. He will fill you with abiding joy and restore your strength to face the struggles of life. You can ask Him now with this simple prayer, or another like it:

Jesus, I open my heart to You and ask that You fill me with Your love, light, wisdom, strength, and joy. Thank You for forgiving my sins and shortcomings and for the gift of eternal life. Amen.

1. John 16:24



CHECK OUT THE OTHER BOOKS
IN THE *TREASURES* SERIES!

Happiness is one of life's essentials. It turns our journey through this world, with all of its obligations and cares, into a colorful adventure. Joy is key to healthy living, peace of heart and mind, successful relationships, and even good business. There is evidence that people who radiate happiness multiply their possibilities of success.

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