

The Bible and Happiness



SABBATH—JUNE 2

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Luke 21:36; John 8:32; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 2:3; Colossians 3:13; 1 Peter 3:15; 1 Peter 4:12-14; 1 John 1:4.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I [Jesus] have come so they can have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way’ ” (John 10:10, NlrV).

KEY THOUGHT: The Bible offers us answers for one of the hardest goals to reach in life: happiness.

EVERYBODY WANTS TO BE HAPPY. BUT FEW KNOW HOW TO FIND HAPPINESS. The world promises happiness. But these promises always prove false in the end.

Can we find happiness in this sinful world? We can, but only by going back to the Author of all happiness: God. Pain, suffering, and unhappiness are the result of our separation (being apart) from God. When we return to Him, we can find the happiness that we all desire. The world cannot offer us this happiness.

This week we will study some biblical principles¹ about happiness. We will also focus on the family unit itself. So much of our happiness or unhappiness comes from the family unit. The Bible offers us wonderful principles. If we follow them, they can protect our families from so many things that can cause unhappiness and suffering. Through His Word, God offers us promises of healing and happiness. Our sinful past or hurtful mistakes do not matter.

“Those the Lord has saved will return to their land. They will sing as they enter the city of Zion [New Jerusalem]. Joy that lasts forever will be like beautiful crowns on their heads. They will be filled with gladness and joy. Sorrow and sighing will be gone” (Isaiah 35:10, NlrV).

¹principles—basic rules of life.

SUNDAY—JUNE 3**LIFE TO THE FULLEST
(John 10:10, NIV)**

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I [Jesus] have come that they may have life and have it to the full” (John 10:10, NIV).

What is Jesus saying to us in John 10:10? How do we understand the idea of having life to the fullest? What do you think that life includes? What does that life not include?



“The thief comes to steal . . . but I [Jesus] have come that they may have life . . . to the full” (John 10:10).

All that we as Christians believe and hope for centers on the promise of eternal (without end) life (1 John 2:25).

Without that promise, anything else

Jesus does for us would be all for nothing (1 Corinthians 15:16-19).

But the promises that God has given us in the Bible are not only about heaven. They do not tell us only about life in a new heaven and a new earth without sin, suffering, and death. The Word of God also promises us many things here and now. These things help us know in this life what Jesus means when He talks about giving us life “more abundantly [plentifully].”

What promises are found in John 8:32; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 2:8; 1 Peter 3:15; and 1 John 1:4? What do they offer us in this life, here and now?

God loves us. Because He loves us, He wants us to be happy. He wants what is best for us. Through His Word, God has shown Himself to us. He has shown us what He is willing to do for us if we will just let Him. How often are we the biggest blocks to our own happiness?

What things keep us from enjoying life to the fullest through Jesus? Once you know what these things are, how can you get rid of them?

MONDAY—JUNE 4**BE JOYFUL BEFORE THE LORD
(Deuteronomy 12:12)**

“God created the earth to be the home of holy, happy people.”

—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 540. That happiness was spoiled by sin (Genesis 3:16-18). Sin must end before we can enjoy the full happiness that only sinless people in a sinless world can enjoy.

But even in this sinful world, God has given a way for us to have happiness and peace and joy in this life.

What promises did God make to Israel if they obeyed Him? Leviticus 23:40; Deuteronomy 12:7, 12, 18; Deuteronomy 16:11.



Those who have faith in God live happier lives than those who have no faith.

Study after study teaches that those who have faith in God live happier lives than those who live with no faith. After all, as Christians, think about what the Bible has taught us: We have a loving, caring God. He loved us so much that He came down to earth. He took on a human body (Romans 8:3). And in that body He died for our sins (Romans 5:8). We have the hope that life is not on this earth only. We can

²principles—basic rules of life.

³foundation—the basis on which an idea or belief rests.

look forward to having eternal life in heaven too. Because of His death we have the promise of eternal (without end) life in a world one day made new (Revelation 21:1). God gave us promises that He is with us (Hebrews 4:16). God promises never to leave or forget us (Hebrews 13:5). So we should be happier than those who know nothing about these promises.

Note the principles² found in Exodus 20:1-12; Proverbs 3:5; Luke 21:36; Philippians 2:3; Colossians 3:13; 1 Peter 4:1, 2; and 2 John 1:5. How would each principle add to our happiness here if we were to obey it? Ask yourself, too, “How well am I following the principles found in these verses?”

TUESDAY—JUNE 5

THE FAMILY FOUNDATION:³ PART 1 (Genesis 1:26, 27)



Marriage is the foundation of the family.

The Bible says the world was created by the Word of God. And God created humans⁴ in His own image (likeness) (Genesis 1:26, 27). He made man and woman. He blessed the first marriage. And He made marriage the foundation of the family. A strong family is very important in creating happy lives. The psalmist says, “If the Lord doesn’t [does not] build a house, the work of its builders is useless” (Psalm 127:1, NIV). We can learn love and happiness in the family.

The Bible clearly says, “ ‘So a man must not separate what God has joined together’ ” (Matthew 19:6, NIV). The Lord wants His children to understand what marriage means. A husband and wife have made a promise to be faithful to each other for as long as they live. The Bible also makes known how marriage can be made stronger: Marry only another believer (2 Corinthians 6:14-16). Be completely loyal (true) to each other (Hebrews 13:4). And show love and care for each other (Song of Solomon 7:1-9). The family that follows the Word of God will know and feel the joy of God’s presence as they follow His commandments.

What principles⁵ for a strong family can be found in the following verses?

Deuteronomy 6:5-7_____

⁴humans—men, women, or children.

⁵principles—basic rules of life.

⁶foundation—the basis on which an idea or belief rests.

Proverbs 31:30_____

Galatians 3:28, 29_____

Ephesians 5:25_____

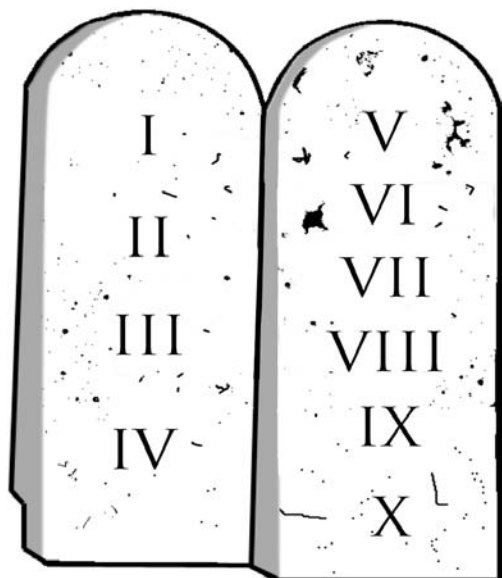
How can you use the principles shown in the above texts and make stronger your own family relationships? What can you do to heal the wounds from past family relationships?

WEDNESDAY—JUNE 6

THE FAMILY FOUNDATION:⁶ PART 2 (Genesis 18:19)

The family is the foundation of all that we do. Destroy or weaken that foundation, and everything else will fall with it. How important it is for us as Christians to protect the holy boundary of our homes. (“Home” includes everything from living by

ourselves to being part of a large family.)



Go back over the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17. How many of those commandments relate to family affairs? How are they related? Why would families be stronger and safer if family members followed all these commands?

Family life involves responsibility.⁷ The Bible says that each family member—husband, wife, or child—must accept responsibility for the choices he or she makes (2 Corinthians 5:10). Each person must know and accept his or her responsibility according to the Bible. This will make the family ties much stronger.

The Bible gives guidelines (rules) about the responsibility of each person. The Bible says that Abraham

“must direct his children. He must see that the members of his family after him live the way I [the Lord] want them to” (Genesis 18:19, NIV). To parents, the Bible says, “Train a child in the way he should go. When he is old he will not turn away from it” (Proverbs 22:6, NIV). The Bible also advises (tells) parents to avoid treating their children in a way that will cause them to become discouraged⁸ (Colossians 3:21).

To the children, the Bible says, “Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long time in the land the Lord your God is giving you” (Exodus 20:12, NIV). “Children, obey your parents as believers in the Lord. Obey them because it’s [it is] the right thing to do” (Ephesians 6:1, NIV). To the husbands, the Bible says, “Love your wives. Love them just as Christ loved the church. He gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25, NIV). To the wives the Bible says, “Follow the lead of your husbands as you follow the Lord. The husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church. The church is Christ’s body” (Ephesians 5:22, 23, NIV).

What are your own responsibilities to your family? How well are you meeting those responsibilities? Are you doing anything that can wreck the happiness and holiness of your family? Which areas in your family relationships need to be made better?

⁷responsibility—being expected to take care of something or being expected to do something; duty.

⁸discouraged—to cause someone to lose hope or belief that he or she can do something.

THURSDAY—JUNE 7**“NOT AS THE WORLD GIVES”
(John 14:27)**

God loves us and wants us to be happy. At the same time, we must remember that we are in a world of sin, death, and suffering. This is a world in the midst of a war between good and evil. And as in all wars, there are the dead and the wounded. We all have suffered in this war, one way or another. There are many promises that we have in the Bible. These promises offer us much comfort and hope. But we all still suffer in this life.

Think about the lives of Abraham, David, Jesus, and Paul. Would you judge them to be happy? Defend (give a reason for) your answer.

How do we understand happiness? Jesus points to the answer in John 14:29. “I leave my peace with you. I give my peace to you. I do not give it to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be troubled. And do not be afraid” (John 14:27, NIV). The world’s ideas of peace or happiness are not the same as the Bible’s ideas. Worldly happiness is based on things that can last only a short time. These things often can be good. But sooner or later all these things go away. To build our hope and happiness on the

things of the world is to build on sand. For the Christian, happiness has to be based on something deeper than the short-time (not lasting long) joys of this life. It is important to enjoy these things. It is important to get some pleasure and happiness from them. But we must keep our hope based where “moths and rust do not destroy them [riches]. Where thieves do not break in and steal them” (Matthew 6:20, NIV).

**What principles⁹ are found in Luke 10:20; John 14:27; Philip-
pians 3:7-11; Philippians 4:6-13;
and 1 Peter 4:12-14? How can
these principles help us better
understand what it means to be
“happy” in this life, even if we are
suffering and sad? Also, as you
read them, ask yourself, “How well
am I using these principles in my
own life?”**

FRIDAY—JUNE 8

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Ellen G. White, “Factors¹⁰ That Make for Success or Failure,” pp. 77–96; “From the Marriage Altar,”¹¹ pp. 97–128, in *The Adventist Home*.

“This guilty feeling must be put at the foot of the cross of Calvary. Feeling sinful has poisoned the springs of life and true happiness. Now Jesus says, ‘Put it all on Me. I

⁹principles—basic rules of life.

¹⁰factors—the causes that bring about a result or that make something happen.

¹¹marriage altar—a table or stand in a church. The bride and groom stand or kneel before the marriage altar during their wedding.

will take your sin. I will give you peace. Destroy no longer your self-respect, because I have bought you with the price of My own blood. You are Mine. I will make your weakened will stronger. I will remove the hatred you feel for yourself because of your sins. Then turn your thankful heart that is trembling with uncertainty.¹² Claim the hope set before you. God accepts your broken, repentant¹³ heart. He offers you free pardon.¹⁴ He offers to adopt you into His family with His grace to help your weakness. Dear Jesus will lead you on step by step if you will only put your hand in His hand and let Him guide you.” —Adapted from Ellen G. White, *This Day With God*, p. 63.

“The children of God may rejoice in all things and at all times. When troubles and difficulties [hardships] come, you may believe in God’s wise leading and rejoice. You do not need to wait for a happy feeling. By faith you may claim the promises, and lift up a hymn of thanksgiving to God. When

Satan tempts you, breathe not a word of doubt or discouragement.”¹⁵ —Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Feb. 11, 1890.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ❶ As a class, talk about the idea of happiness. What are your ideas of happiness? Should we expect to be happy all the time? Is there something wrong with our walk with the Lord if we do not feel happy? How can happiness be used as a trick by Satan to deceive (fool) us? At the same time, how can God use unhappiness as a way of reaching people?
- ❷ What do you say to a Christian who says that he or she is not happy? What advice would you give that person?
- ❸ As a class, discuss this thought: Can a person in the Lord be happy even while suffering for Christ’s sake?

¹²uncertainty—not being sure.

¹³repentant—being sorry for your sins and turning away from sin.

¹⁴pardon—to free a person from punishment.

¹⁵discouragement—a feeling of having no hope.