

Definition of Authentic Happiness: A lasting and settled well-being of the soul that is not conditioned upon the favorable happenings of people and circumstances but the favor of God that comes in multifaceted ways in the good and bad situations of life.

I. The Standard Direction Toward Authentic Happiness:

Step 1 – Delighting in the Law of the Lord (v2)

- A. You will be directed toward authentic happiness as you are bent toward and attracted to God’s Word.
- B. The more you experience the treasure of authentic happiness that is derived from learning and living out God’s Word, the more you will be bent toward and attracted to (i.e. delighting in) God’s Word.
- C. In essence, “the godly person takes his counsel from the Word of God. This Word is his delight. He finds it to be immensely interesting and relevant. It brings him joy and satisfaction.”¹

Key Point: “The word delight, used in Psalm 1, has the idea of being inclined toward something, bending toward it because of the pleasure and delight that it gives. How suggestive that word picture is: rather than finding the way of the world enticing, the Psalmist is attracted, drawn to, God’s law. Here is what interests him; not everything else that others find appealing. Are you attracted to God’s Word because of the pleasure you receive from reading and following it? If you are not drawn to God’s Word over and over again as something that you delight in studying so as to know God’s will, surely there is something wrong in your life.”²

II. The Standard Direction Toward Authentic Happiness:

Step 2 – Meditating Day and Night on the Law of the Lord (v2)

- A. You will be directed toward authentic happiness as you intently ponder the Word of God, allowing it to saturate and transform your thinking on a continuous and ongoing basis.

¹ Roger Ellsworth, *Opening up Psalms*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 30.

² Jay E. Adams, *The Road to Happiness* (Memphis, TN: Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 25, Kindle.

- B. The more you give serious thought to, accept and embrace what God’s Word says and means, and connect that truth with the various issues and aspects of your life, the more you will be directed toward authentic happiness.
- C. In essence, as you study, learn, ponder and verbally speak to yourself what God’s Word says and means on a regular basis and correlate it to your life, you will be directed toward authentic happiness as your mind is saturated and transformed with the truth.

Key Point: “What does the word ‘meditate’ mean? The Hebrew *hanah* means to ‘mutter.’ It describes someone who is talking to himself. He is discussing the truths of God’s law with himself... In effect, meditation on the Word of God means serious thought about issues that produces results that honor and please God.”³

III. Implications of Verse 2 in Relation to Delight in and Meditation on God’s Word (James 1:22-25)

- A. Genuine delight in and mediation on the Word of God leads to applying the Word of God to your life, thereby leading you into authentic happiness.
- B. There will be no authentic happiness in your life without delighting in, meditating on and applying God’s word to your life.
- C. There is only one path to authentic happiness and that is by walking in the counsel, standing in the path, and sitting at the feet of God and His Word; allowing God with His word to guide you and guard you into a life that pleases Him, resulting in authentic happiness for you.

Key Point: “To look into the mirror of the Word of God involves an obligation. One must look intently into the perfect Law that gives freedom. The intent and sustained look with a ready response is the key to spiritual strength and continued maturity. The word for ‘looks intently into’ (*parakypsas*) literally means ‘to stoop down’ in order to have a good close look. The ‘Law that gives freedom’ seems like a paradox. Law seems to imply restraint and therefore a lack of freedom. Not so with God’s Law. His perfect Law provides true freedom. ‘Hold to My teaching,’ Christ said, ‘then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free’ (John 8:31–32). One who does what God decrees will find full liberty and will be blessed in what he does.”⁴

³ Jay E. Adams, *The Road to Happiness* (Memphis, TN: Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 28-29, Kindle.

⁴ J. Ronald Blue, “James,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, Vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 823.

IV. The Designated Outcome of Authentic Happiness (vv3, 5-6)

- A. Delighting in, meditating on and applying God's Word will result in you being like a tree: having a stable heart and life firmly anchored and nourished in God's word, as a tree is firmly planted by streams of water that keep it nourished at its roots. This leads to authentic happiness.
- B. Delighting in, meditating on and applying God's Word will result in you being like a tree: being productive for God as an Ambassador and Builder of God's Kingdom in God's timing, as a tree nourished by the streams of water will bear fruit in its timing. This leads to authentic happiness.
- C. Delighting in, meditating on and applying God's Word will result in you being like a tree: not withering away, falling to the wayside or drifting into sin in times of difficulty, devastation or downfall in life because you are being nourished by God and His word, as a tree's leaves will not wither away because the tree is being nourished by the streams of water. This leads to authentic happiness.
- D. Delighting in, meditating on and applying God's Word will result in you being like a tree: making progress as God intends, advancing as God intends, being productive as God intends; bringing things to completion according to God's timing and view of progression, advancement and productivity, as a tree will produce fruit consistently because it is being nourished by the streams of water. This leads to authentic happiness.
- E. God's people have the benefit of being known and cared for by God which should lead to authentic happiness. "The force of the verb 'to know' is that of care and concern. It involves approval, care, guidance."⁵

Key Point: "So if a person meditates on God's Word, his actions will be godly, and his God-controlled activities will prosper, that is, come to their divinely directed fulfillment."⁶ "While God *regards* or concerns himself with the way of the righteous, the wicked merely drift on to ultimate destruction."⁷

⁵ Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reayburn, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 22.

⁶ Allen P. Ross, "Psalms," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, Vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 790.

⁷ Charles F. Pfeiffer, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), Ps. 1:4.



Summary: Authentic happiness, which we are defining as a lasting, settled well-being of the soul, will not be found through people and circumstances. Unfortunately, we tend to try to find it there, resulting in being tossed emotionally up and down, contingent upon people and circumstances providing that pleasure we have equated with happiness— which is really false happiness. False happiness is confusing well-being of the soul with pleasure. The problem is not the pursuit of happiness. The problem is where we are looking to find it. Authentic happiness can only be found in right standing and right relationship with God. Sin leads us to lose the happiness that can only be found in a redeemed relationship with God. The longing for happiness lost due to sin is a means to draw us back to God to gain what was lost. We tend to look to God to bring us happiness through His creation and the experiences thereof; He wants to bring us happiness through the restored relationship with Him and the purpose for which He designed us to operate for His glory and our ultimate good/happiness. Seeking to find happiness *from* the creation instead of *through* it as a means to God will lead to destruction all around you. The goal is not to ignore the pleasure one might derive from this world, but to connect it back to God, who is the source of a lasting, settled well-being of the soul. Creation enjoyed apart from God leads to a worship of and dependence on creation. Creation enjoyed through God leads to worship of and dependence on God the Creator. In order to have a lasting, settled well-being of the soul, one has to function according to the purpose for which one was intended. That means functioning according to the design of God. True unhappiness is choosing to live apart from God and outside His design.