

HAPPINESS – A Choice You Can Make!

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Instructions: The format of these mini-studies is similar to that of the Bible On-Line Study Course. Look up and read in your Bible the scripture references given in answer to the questions. Comments following the questions further explain the scriptures just read. That's all there is to it! (These studies are based on the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.)

Do you have control over whether you are happy? You can!

Your teen years are a time to enjoy yourself, and to begin to plant the seeds of happiness. These are the years when choices can be especially critical to future success or failure.

How can you avoid making decisions that lead to unhappiness, frustration and disappointment? What can you be doing today to prepare for a happy and productive life both now and in the future?

Before reading further, be sure to get your Bible, some paper and a pen or pencil. Look up and read each scripture reference given in answer to the questions. And why not write out each scripture as the kings of ancient Israel were instructed to do (Deuteronomy 17:18-20)? This will help you remember what you'll be learning.

1. How did the apostle Paul describe the time in which we are now living? 2 Timothy 3:1-4.

The conditions in today's dangerous, lawless and pleasure-seeking society were predicted more than 1,900 years ago. We are constantly reminded of the slums, decay, disease, sorrow, anguish and crime in the world today.

People of all ages, especially in the Western world, seek temporary, fleeting thrills that do not result in lasting happiness. Millions end up suffering from the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol and drugs.

2. Why do some people live happy and productive lives while others suffer frustration and sorrow? Galatians 6:7-8.

There is a cause for every effect! Decisions you make today can lead to success and happiness, or to frustration and heartache in the years to come.

3. We all want to enjoy life. But is God concerned about how we do it? Ecclesiastes 11:9-10. What should a person begin doing early in life? Ecclesiastes 12:1.

Besides acknowledging that God exists, remembering Him also means being thankful to Him for your existence, for your parents and for the material things you enjoy.

4. What does God promise those who do remember Him and strive to please Him? Proverbs 3:1-6. Does God promise to bless those who desire to obey His law? Psalms 119:2; 34:7-10; 112:1-3; 1 John 3:22. Will He even grant the desires of our hearts if they are good for us? Psalm 37:3-4.

God wants us to live successful, happy lives – to enjoy good health, a challenging career, a beautiful marriage and happy children. He promises blessings and special protection to those who seek to do His will and keep His commandments!

5. Are various Bible examples preserved for us so that we can see the end results of both obedience and disobedience to God? 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11. How can we learn from these scriptures? Same verses and 2 Timothy 3:16.
6. What did God offer the people of ancient Israel if they would obey His commandments? Read and summarize Leviticus 26:3-13. And what would they bring on themselves for disobedience? Summarize verses 14-20. (Read verses 21-39 for additional details.)

Did God leave it to the people to choose the way of life they would pursue? Deuteronomy 11:26-28; 30:19-20.

God commanded the people of ancient Israel to choose the blessings that would come from obedience to Him. But Israel chose to disobey God.

Because of their disobedience, they suffered from terrible troubles including wars, famine and diseases. They were eventually taken captive just as God warned them. Their suffering came because they chose to follow their own ways, rather than obey God.

7. What did God warn Adam and Eve? Genesis 2:16-17. What choice did they make? Genesis 3:6. What was the result of their disobedience? Verse 16-19, 23-24.

Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden because they chose not to obey God! They came under a curse for their disobedience to God and their lives became difficult and unhappy.

8. Why was Abraham blessed greatly by God? Genesis 22:15-18; 26:3-5.

Abraham believed and obeyed God's laws and taught his son Isaac to obey them too (Genesis 18:19). God, therefore, prospered him and made promises of national greatness to him and his descendants.

9. Were Daniel and his three friends given positions of great responsibility because of their obedience and trust in God? Read Daniel 1, especially verses 19-20. Also notice chapter 2:48-49. Did God protect them from harm? Read and summarize Daniel 3:14-28; 6:16-23.

Sometimes it is not easy to obey God, as these four men discovered. But they chose to obey God regardless of the consequences. They knew that obeying God was the most important thing in life!

10. Why did God select David to replace Saul as king of Israel? Acts 13:22. What did David do every day? Psalm 119:97. Why? Verses 98-100. Did David learn about God and begin to obey Him as a youth? Psalm 71:17.

David often thought about God's commandments and how to apply them in his daily life. His basic motivation and intent in life was to serve and obey God.

11. How did David respond to and view God's law when he was older? Psalm 119:60, 101-105. Will David be king over Israel in the world tomorrow? Ezekiel 37:24-25.

12. Did King David tell his son Solomon to keep God's commandments? 1 Kings 2:1-3. Why? Last part of verse 3.

13. Did King Josiah – a descendant of David – and the people of Judah make a covenant to keep the commandments of God? 2 Kings 23:3. What reforms did his zeal for God's way lead him to accomplish when he was just 20 years of age? Read and summarize 2 Chronicles 34:1-7.

Josiah became king when he was only 8 years old. At age 16 he began to develop a burning desire to follow the example set by his ancestor David. He began to seek and obey God with all his might!

14. Is it God's will for us to keep His commandments today? 1 John 5:3. How are they described? Romans 7:12.

15. Did Jesus Christ set an example of keeping God's commandments? John 15:10. Did He clearly show that we are to keep the Ten Commandments? Matthew 19:16-19. What kind of life does Christ want us to experience? John 10:10 (second part of the verse); 3 John 2.

Jesus Christ came to earth about 2,000 years ago to show mankind how to live life to the full. He wants everyone to follow the way that leads to happiness, abundance and eternal life!

If people everywhere obeyed God's laws, there would be no war, no unhappy families, no divorce, crime, violence or stealing. People would be honest and concerned for one another's welfare and property.

16. What did Solomon conclude is the whole duty of man, whether young or old? Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

We have seen that it is extremely important to remember God while we are young – to begin learning and following the ways that lead to an abundant, happy life both now and in the future.

Why not take the first step? Choose to obey God now – no matter what obstacles are in your way. It will take effort on your part, but keep trying, and God will back you all the way.

God wants you to have all the benefits that come from following His wonderful way of life. And you will have a head start over those today who don't know or don't care about God's way. You will be recapturing true values and building lasting character by living the way that will soon be the standard of society in the world tomorrow.