



## I JUST WANT TO BE HAPPY!

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How many times have we heard that cry, either from those around us or even our own, frustrated hearts? Sometimes we think we will only be happy when things go the way we want them to go. When we don't have to work so hard to achieve what we desire. Or when we reach the goals we have set, whether financial or professional. Sometimes, as children of God, we believe true happiness is obtained when we see the fulfilment of our prayers.

The truth is, the list of what we think happiness is, could go on forever and constantly change, depending on where we are in our lives. Today I read a simple, yet profound statement that said, "Thankfulness is the prerequisite to happiness, because only a thankful heart can be a happy heart" (Rick Renner, Sparkling Gems from the Greek Volume 2). So, if happiness is our pursuit, and the Word tells us that a thankful heart is what is going to get us there - then let's look at what it really means to be thankful!

Being Thankful Is God's Will for Us

According to 1 Thessalonians 5:18, being thankful is God's will for us. It says, "...in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

Oh, the amount of times I have sincerely confessed, "I just want to do God's will..."! I know you have too, in fact it's perfectly appropriate for every child of God to have the desire to follow the will of our Heavenly Father. And do you know what I have found to be true? It's these small, yet extremely important instructions that produce the greatest blessing when we apply them to our lives.

Thankfulness is a Choice

Everybody wants to be happy, right? Since a thankful heart is a prerequisite to a happy heart, it would certainly be in our best interest to investigate all we can concerning being thankful. I must say the most compelling advocate for thankfulness is that it's God's will for every believer. And the benefits of walking in obedience to God's will... which brings us to the truth that thankfulness is a choice of obedience. Paul says we are to be thankful in everything. That phrase, in the Greek language, means in every detail, or even in the smallest way. Renner (ibid) refers to one Bible translation that says, "In every circumstance, be thankful..."

You may feel that the circumstances you are facing could be far more pleasant than they currently appear.

I'm convinced we all have difficulties in our lives we would rather go without having to encounter. Didn't Jesus teach us that dangerous, perilous times would become increasingly common place in the world around us too?

Frankly, being grateful in challenging circumstances, is probably the last thing on anybody's mind. That's why it's important to note, the Word doesn't say to be thankful FOR the circumstances, it says be thankful IN them. That means, don't accept any trial as being something you were meant to endure, as though it is your 'lot' in life. That kind of thinking contradicts the Word. Scripture teaches us to have faith to receive the promises of God and move the mountains in our lives. Many people misinterpret Paul's words, when he says he has learnt to be content in all circumstances. He wasn't settling for the lack or hard times, he was making a choice, that while he faced those challenges, he would keep up his faith and not complain or fear, but rather believe the promises of God until they become his reality.

Paul's advice was, that while we are experiencing unpleasant circumstances, we must choose to turn our eyes towards the good in our lives, and away from the things that try to bring discouragement. Keeping our focus on the negativity only steals our peace and quenches our joy. That doesn't

mean choosing to live in a state of denial, hoping the problems will just go away if we ignore them long enough. No, that would also contradict the Word. The Bible is full of powerful teachings on how to pray effective, faith filled prayers, with the expectation of seeing our circumstances change. Rather, choosing to be thankful, is a simple act of obedience. After we decide to lay our burdens at the feet of Jesus, and prayerfully consult His wisdom concerning them, we choose to focus on what is good in our lives, and not fret or worry.

Thankfulness is that attitude that keeps us walking in peaceful expectancy, while God's Word goes to work in our lives. When it comes to experiencing victory in this life, an attitude of gratefulness is exactly what empowers our faith to believe and receive what the Lord has promised us in His Word, concerning every circumstance.

(In the next issue, we'll share about the supernatural power that is released in our lives when we choose to be thankful!)

