

**The Peter Principles**  
**Week 8: "The Do's and Don't's of HAPPINESS!"**  
**1 Peter 3:8-12**  
**Participant's Guide**

On Sunday we heard that God wants us to be happy. Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?

Also we were told that the bible says that our happiness is largely within your own hands and that we can control it. Again do you agree with that? Why or why not? Where does the Bible say that?

**When you think of happiness what kind of things do you think of?**

- What really makes you feel happy inside?
  
- What takes your happiness away?
  
- *What's your overall sense of happiness right now?*

**Lets read 1 Peter 3: 8-12**

What is the first word of **3:8**? For what purpose is this kind of word usually used for?

From chapter 2 till now, Peter has been addressing, citizens, slaves, wives and husbands. Who is he addressing in verses 8 to 12?

According to Sunday message, what are the 2 biggest determining factors for Happiness in your life? They both have to do with relationships. One is vertical and the other is horizontal.

- The first and most important one is vertical: It is to be in right relationship with God.
- The second one is about horizontal relationships: It is about being right with other peoples in our lives.

Here then is the question that we need to ask ourselves: Do I really want to be happy in life and if the answer is yes then the next question should be “how”?

On Sunday we were taught that in order to take control of our happiness we need to start doing 5 things and stop doing 2 things.

Peter lists five things we need to be and do, in order to relate rightly to one another. Write each of them below, along with a brief explanation.

1. ***Be Like-Minded (Think Biblical).***

This speaks of **unity**. Does this mean unanimity (agreement on everything all the time) or uniformity (look alike, talk alike, feel alike? (Ephesians 4:3-6 and 11-13; 1 Corinthians 1:10; John 17:23; Romans 12:16a)

2. ***Be sympathetic (Feel Genuinely).*** It also points to the absence of competition, envy, jealousy and comparison.

(Romans 12:15-16; 1 Corinthians 12:26; Hebrews 13:3; 2Corinthians 11:29; Philippians 2:1-4)

You cannot be selfish and self-centered and sympathetic at the same time.

3. ***Be brotherly or loving (Love Like Siblings).***

The word is *filadelfia* in Greek from which we get Philadelphia. It is a compound word. *Phileo* which means love and *adelphos* which means brother or brotherly.

Together it means brotherly love.

Romans 12:10; 2Peter 1:7; Hebrews 13:1; 1John 4:20; John 13:35; James 2:14-17)

Have you been shown this kind of love?

Have you shown this kind of love?

4. ***Be compassionate (Stay Soft)***

It speaks of deep seated emotions and feelings.

It describes how Jesus felt in Matthew 9:36.

It was compassion that moved the Good Samaritan in Jesus parable in Luke 10:25-37 to do what he did.

Are you a compassionate person?

5. ***Be humble (Be correctable)***

It is not about putting a show. It is not looking humble but being humble.

Jesus portrayed that best in John 13 when he washed his disciples feet.

Read the account found in John 13: 1-17. Also look up Philippians 2: 5-11)

- Which of these five characterizes you? Which of these do you practice regularly in your relationships?
- Which of these does not characterize you? Which of these are hard for you to demonstrate? How can you make them a part of your character?

Speaking of character and character building, you may have heard about this quote:

“Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a **character**; sow a character and you reap a destiny.” **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

It seems from this quote, that the battle is won in our minds. Any change in our actions, habits, character and destiny starts with a thought.

On Sunday we were told that if we want to be happy we need to stop doing two things.

1. STOP repaying evil for evil. Revenge, retaliation, vendetta, retribution.

2. STOP retaliating with insults when people insult you.

Verse 9, writes: "Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult". Does this remind you of something Peter already talked about?

Can I put these two negatives in one positive word: "FORGIVE". If you have truly forgiven somebody from the heart, you will neither repay nor retaliate. You refuse to get back or get even. You don't go around bad mouthing them.

Is this how you resolve to conflicts?

As you are sitting in this life group right now are there relationships that are strained and conflicts that have not been resolved and people that you have not forgiven and you are thinking how you can repay them or retaliate?

What is that doing to your health and happiness?

Why don't you just take a moment and forgive them and then try to reconcile and resolve the differences, disagreements and maybe misunderstandings.

Why should we as Christians respond in this way?

- Because we are called to this.
- Because we will be blessed for this.

How does knowing these 2 reasons help you to make a difference in your earthly relationships?

In verse 10 to 12 Peter is quoting Psalm 34. Peter instructs to practice 2 more things: To have a controlled tongue and peaceable attitude.

On the issue of controlled tongue read James 3: 1-12.

Pray Psalm 141:3 over and over again as a reminder that we all need help in this area.

As to the instruction with regards to being peaceful, ask yourself: Are you a peaceful and peace loving person or are you always looking to start a fight?

Let me end with this. If you practice these exhortations regularly, it will bring more joy, blessings and happiness into your life. But you know what else it will show? It will show that you are maturing in your walk with the Lord. It will prove that you are following His example and becoming more like Him and that in itself should bring us great joy.

Now we want to come to a time of prayer and Peter recognizes that we all need help to be able to do these things and that is how he ends verse 12.

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer . . .”

God is willing to help us but most of the time we don't ask for His help. Why don't we just ask Him right now and right here. Read 2 Chronicles 16:9 also.

“For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him . . .”.