

# “God Wants You To Be Happy, Doesn’t He?”

*“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”*

*John 15:11 (NIV)*

I recall “eavesdropping” on a presentation to a women’s meeting at a church where I ministered many years ago. The speaker was a fine Christian woman who had an energetic and highly enthusiastic manner of speaking.

I only listened in for a couple of moments but the lady posed the question, “God wants you to be happy, doesn’t He?” In the next few sentences it quickly became clear that the speaker saw God as some form of celestial Santa Claus who showered His children with everything their hearts could desire. It was a matter of just asking for what you want, health, wealth, perfect children, good in-laws, or whatever.

It all sounded too good to be true. In fact it was too good to be true. Jesus never wanted us to consider Him as a “sugar daddy” or some celestial lackey whose sole purpose in life was to give us whatever our greedy hearts desired.

Yet this teaching is close enough to the truth that we can mistakenly believe it for the truth. When you look at the verse today you see that Jesus is telling the disciples how to

have a fullness of joy in their lives.

Jesus told the disciples that the way for them (and for us) to have joy that is mature and sustained is to learn what He taught. Jesus expected the disciples to call to mind what He was saying that night and use the truths to not only strengthen them for the challenges He predicted, but so that they would overflow with joy.

The more you learn and obey the things Jesus taught the more mature and joyful you will certainly be as His followers. There is no godly joy for the person who is disobedient to the teaching of our Lord. Jesus will cause sorrow and trials to afflict the person until they release their grip on sin and turn back to the way of truth. Hebrews 12:5-8 points out that we are dealt with in love as the Father disciplines us. The idea of God disciplining us is called a “word of encouragement” Hebrews 12:5 (NIV)!

Jesus goes on in the context of John 15 to talk about the need for His people to love one another as He loved them. We are to put the needs and concerns of our fellow Christians above

our own needs and concerns. That is what love is all about.

If I truly love my fellow Christians I will pray more for their situations than for my own. Just as a loving parent prays more for their children than themselves out of love so it is the same in our relationships with other believers.

If your life seems joyless right now, go back and read John 15:7-17 and try to see all of the things that demonstrate what a real Christian’s life is all about. There is nothing selfish about their way of living. They have Christ’s teaching in their hearts v.7, they bear fruit that lasts v.8, they remain in Jesus’ love through obedience to Him v.9-10, they lay down their lives for their friends v. 13.

Does Jesus want us to be happy? Of course He does. However, Jesus taught that the only Christian way to happiness was by being holy. Examine yourself to see if you are really seeking godly joy according to Jesus or are you only seeking the joy of the world.

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