

THE BIBLE DOESN'T SAY THAT

WEEK 5

“ These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family, and/or with a group or Bible class. ”

We believe it is our inalienable right to pursue happiness, and we want our stories to end up “happily ever after.” So it is no surprise that our worship of happiness gets mixed with our worship of God and comes out as “God wants you to be happy.” That sounds true, but does the Bible say that?

1 Often “God wants me to be happy” says more about what I want than what God wants. Our culture believes in pursuit of happiness as an entitlement for all. Does the Bible affirm this? Why or why not?

2 THE BIBLE DOES NOT SAY... that happiness is a problem. We are created in the image of God, which means we are designed with a capacity to be delighted. Every good parent delights in their children’s happiness, and God is a good Father. But a good parent does not give a child everything they want to keep them happy. Why, and how does this relate to our relationship with God?

3 THE BIBLE DOES NOT SAY... that happiness is a promise. The reality is that a lot of misery results from a mindset that I am entitled to happiness. What are some of the wrong conclusions we reach when we think “God wants me to be happy”?

4 Most of our journeys into disobedience are motivated by the belief that happiness is found somewhere else. How can the pursuit of happiness take us away from God (a subtle form of idolatry), and why is it ultimately an unfulfilling quest?

5 THE BIBLE SAYS... that the kingdom is a better pursuit. Read [Matthew 6:33](#) and [13:44](#). Happiness is the by-product of a better pursuit. Why is seeking the kingdom of God a better quest?

6 THE BIBLE SAYS... that joy is a better gift. When our lives are focused on the reign of Christ the Holy Spirit is released to fill us with something better than happiness. Read [Romans 14:7](#). What is the difference, if any, between joy and happiness?

ACTION STEP *The Bible does not say that God wants you to be happy. The Bible says God wants you to have something better. The Bible says we should pursue God instead of happiness. Dallas Willard once shared these words of wisdom with John Ortberg during a difficult season in Ortberg’s life, “You must arrange your days so that you are experiencing total contentment, joy, and confidence in your everyday life with God—that and that alone is what makes a soul healthy.” We all arrange our days around something important to us (things that make us “happy”)—our families, jobs, and personal interests. What kinds of things might have to change if you were to rearrange your days around experiencing total contentment, joy, and confidence in your everyday life with God? Begin to implement some of these changes each day this week and share your experience with a close friend.*