

November 10, 2019

“Choices: We Are The Choices We Make”

### “Choose Happiness” –Core 9

*“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.” Psalm 1:1-3 ESV*

#### A. Happiness is a choice...

*“Take delight in the LORD, and He will give you your heart’s desires.” Psalm 37:4*

1. Happiness is not based on possessions, position, power, or prestige.

*“Those who listen to instruction will prosper; those who trust the LORD will be joyful.” Proverbs 16:20*

2. Happiness is not based on what feels right.

*“There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.” Proverbs 14:12*

3. Happiness is not based on circumstances.

*“Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18*

4. Happiness is a choice... a by-product, not a goal.

*“Yes, joyful are those who live like this! Joyful indeed are those whose God is the LORD.” Psalm 144:15*

#### B. We are designed for a DOSE of happiness...

*“I have told you these things so that you will be filled with My joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!” John 15:11*

1. **Dopamine:** *The chemical of adventure or pleasure. It is released when your mind is buzzing with activity and creative energy. It motivates you toward goals. You get a surge from encouragement, positive email, or you savor a thought. Laughter is a great chemical release for dopamine, serotonin, and endorphins. Dopamine is reduced by procrastination, feelings of self-doubt, and lack of enthusiasm. Increasing dopamine could be as easy*

*as a good night’s rest, exercise (30 minutes in 10 days), or achieving a goal.*

*“We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the One who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work.” John 9:4*

*“Sluggards do not plow in season; so at harvest time they look but find nothing.” Proverbs 20:4 NIV*

2. **Oxytocin:** *The chemical of trust, love, tenderness, a handshake or even better, a hug! It is often called the cuddle hormone. It gives a sense of comfort.*

*“Greet one another with a holy embrace.” 2 Corinthians 13:12 MSG*

*“I will comfort you there in Jerusalem as a mother comforts her child.” Isaiah 66:13*

3. **Serotonin:** *The chemical of respect, calm, content or relaxing. It is released when someone asks your opinion, treats you with respect, gives a feeling of significance, or applauds your performance. It is called that “I got it” feeling. It is suppressed by stress and can be relieved by deep breathing and a feeling of safety or “at home”. It can be increased through the practice of gratitude. When low in serotonin, one feels depressed, anxious and lonely.*

*“Let us come to Him with thanksgiving. Let us sing psalms of praise to Him.” Psalm 95:2*

4. **Endorphins:** *The chemical that masks pain and is often called the runner’s high. Endorphins are released with time spent with people, playing games with people, singing together, making music together, dancing together, exercising together and laughing together. Certain foods also release endorphins: dark chocolate, meat with tryptophan (turkey, chicken, lean meats, fish), yogurt, sauerkraut, kimchi, beans, eggs, almonds, and spicy foods. Bananas are known as the happy fruit.*

*“Those who listen to instruction will prosper; those who trust the LORD will be joyful.” Proverbs 16:20*

#### C. God’s Word on happiness...

1. Relationships account for the bulk of our happiness. Godly relationships increase our happiness. This releases endorphins.

*“Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.” Psalm 1:1*

2. Meditation is a great way to increase dopamine. Meditating on God’s Word is at the top of ways to change brain patterns. *“Because proteins hold our thoughts, our thoughts literally take up real estate in our brains. So the more we meditate on a positive thought, the larger it grows. As we meditate, we release the addictive dopamine that determines happiness.”*

*“But they delight in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night.” Psalm 1:2*

3. Serving others will bring significance releasing serotonin into our brains.

*“They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.” Psalm 1:3*

#### D. Happiness is for all who seek God...

*“Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon. Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.” Philippians 4:4-9*

1. Paul was in prison. His circumstances didn’t dictate his happiness. Don’t let your circumstances dictate your happiness!
2. Paul had two coworkers in conflict. He didn’t let his relationships destroy his happiness. Don’t let your relationships determine your happiness.
3. Paul was determined to choose happiness. Fix your thoughts on what brings positivity in your life.
4. Paul was putting into practice what God had taught him. Putting God’s Word into practice brings peace.

*“Then the God of peace will be with you.”*