

How To Be Happy - Part 4

Sermon Title: **How To Be Happy – Part 4**

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Welcome to Brothers Of The Word, because brother you need the word!

Today, we are continuing on with a series called How To Be Happy. This is part four of that series. Anyone who is having a difficulty with joy and happiness in their life, I recommend that you go to brothersoftheword.com and you can listen to the entire series of How To Be Happy absolutely free of charge.

We are dealing now with just the letters of the word happy. Two messages ago, we dealt with the letter H, which stands for: Hang around happy people. In the last message, we dealt with the letter A, which means: Appreciate. Today, I want to use for the P, I want to use something that Paul wrote in the book of Philippians 1:15. When Paul says: It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely; supposing they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet, what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through that my being with you again, your joy in Christ will overflow on account of me.

Today's P stands for: Perspective. Perspective simply means: the manner, or the way, or the mentality in which you view a particular situation. As Paul wrote this, Paul was in chains. What we commonly know as: Paul was locked up...Paul was in jail. Yet, even though Paul was in jail, Paul had a perspective that he was rejoicing even in jail. Paul said: even if the worst by man's definition happens to me, which is I lose the life of my body; he said that's better because I am going on to Christ. So it wasn't a matter that Paul looked upon death as being so horrible, it was his perspective. He said that's better because if they kill me while I am in jail, I am going on to be with Christ.

But because y'all need me, because y'all are cutting up. Y'all are going through all of this because y'all need me, I am going to choose just to stay here, but it is better if I can go on just to be with Christ. It was not circumstance that he rejoiced in...it was perspective. If I can get you to understand that it is the perspective of your situation

that makes the difference, not particularly the situation. It is the perspective of the situation that makes the difference. With right perspective, you can just about be happy in any situation. In wrong perspective, you are going to be sad and complaining in any situation.

I told you the story before of how I used to work as a teenager in my father's warehouse. Back in the makeup room today, we were discussing physical fitness. We talked with the barber because he is in just real good shape, and James is in real good shape, C. Elijah is in real good shape. I am in decent shape myself. We were talking about just working out. I remember when I used to work in the warehouse, there would be these big trucks that would come in, and we had to unload all of the boxes. We didn't have a forklift in that day, so everyone used hand trucks. I never used a hand truck. I would take all of the boxes and put them in my arms, and walk them down the ramp, and take them over and put them on the shelf.

They would always ask me: Why don't you use a hand truck? They would just be complaining pushing the hand truck. I never will forget, one time the boxes were 25 pounds each. I had eight of those boxes, and I would carry 200 pounds of boxes down the ramp. And they would say: Why don't you use a hand truck?! I said: Because this gets my body in shape. Instead of me going to the gym, to pay the gym, the job pays me! It was the same boxes...matter of fact, I was doing more work because I didn't use a hand truck, so I had to sweat more. I had to use more muscle, more energy, more effort than everybody else, but I was happier. I saw the boxes in a different perspective than everyone else. They would just be grumbling pushing the boxes, "I will be glad when I get my lunch break. I am tired." They would just be grumbling, so it was not the situation that made the difference. It was the perspective.

Once there was a pastor, there was a pro athlete, and a cowboy. They were all standing over the rail looking out over the Grand Canyon. It was a beautiful day and the pastor said: Oh my goodness, look at all of this beauty. Look at all of this awesomeness! Look at all of this glory of the handiwork of what God has made. Look at all of these beautiful colors and there is like almost a rainbow. All of the hues of brown and gold that exist. Look at the beautiful river flowing. That is so beautiful that God has made! Can't you see the handiwork and the majesty of God?!

The pro athlete looked out over the Grand Canyon, and he said: I see those trails running up and down the mountain side. He said: I can run up and down those trails, and that would get me in better and better shape just running up and down the trails. The cowboy looked out over the Grand Canyon. He looked out and he put a scowl on his face, and he said: Dang nabbit, it would sure be a mess to lose a cow in that!

They all saw the same thing! But they all had vastly different perspectives on what they saw. One saw just the majesty and the glory of God. He saw ultimate beauty just looking out over the same thing that everyone else saw. Another saw a practical use of what he saw. The third saw a problem. He didn't have any cows there! He was on vacation. Have you ever been in a situation and people will actually manufacture problems? I remember when I went to Panama City once. I was there and I walked out on the beach, and the beach was just empty. It was like two or three folk on the whole beach. I said to myself: It is hot out here. Why is there no one on the beach, and there is no one in the water?

I said well maybe the water is just freezing. I went and touched my toe to the water. I was expecting the water to be ice cold. The water was just as warm as it could be. I said why is there is no one in the water?; why is there no one on the beach? I was out there in the water swimming. An old couple came up, and the man was walking out in the water, and I heard his wife say: I'll keep an eye out for the sharks! Then I understood why there was no one on the beach. There had been a shark attack on the other side of Florida. The thing had scared folks so bad, because there was a shark attack on the other side of Florida that it kept folk out of the water on the other side. That wasn't the deep part. It didn't just keep people out of the water; it kept folk off the beach! It kept people off the beach where sharks can't even go.

When I talked to the hotel clerk he said people don't understand there has not been a shark attack on this side of the Atlantic in 50 years. The thing scared folks to death because of perspective. I went out and swam every single day, and it didn't bother me one bit for a lot of reasons. I have a habit of seeing in every situation what I call the higher level perspective. I have this book, what does this book say? The Bible Coloring Book. I just want to show you something, just from the Bible Coloring Book, of the difference perspectives can make in life. There are some who have that cowboy's perspective and every situation and everything that they see, they don't just see the negative, they see what could happen negative.

When you see life like that, it leaves an emptiness in life, because everything you look at, all of your future becomes bleak and it becomes bland. It becomes void because you have all of this fear and all of this negativity about what could happen. All of the stats have shown that 99% of the stuff that folk worry that could happen never even happen, but we worry about it so much. It takes our joy away from us; it takes our happiness away because we are looking at the bleakness of life. We take the bible, which is a book that has all extremes in it. Depending upon your perspective, you can look at this book and if you have a negative perspective, all that you will see are blank pages. That is all that you will see are blank pages; but if you change your perspective, and if you move up a notch higher. If you can at least move from the cowboy's perspective to the athlete's perspective, to at least see the practical parts of things, it will change it from being blank to where you can at least see stuff in black and white.

Where you can at least see what's there just in the practical. If just change your perspective, just try to put some faith into something that you've got. Just change it just a little bit. Then when you open up the book of life, instead of it being just blank pages, then at least you will have some black and white. Instead of it being just all empty, at least you will have something that is black and white. Don't stop there! You still need to go higher in life, and it depends upon your perspective. So many of us, we focus...and I'm not saying that you shouldn't change your situation or try to change your situation, but I've just seen it happen over and over and over again. People think that because they have changed their situation, they are going to become happy. They say: Oh, if I can just make some more money. Oh, if I can just get married. Oh, if I can just lose some weight. Oh, if I can just...I'm going to be happy.

They get there, and because their perspective has not changed, it is going to be something that you can find critical at any area and level of life. If you can really infuse some God view into some things, and see what God sees in some things. See just what God has made, and if you can see these things then life will change. It will change from emptiness; it will change from black and white. All of sudden, you open up the book of life and you have full color! So it makes a difference just in how...same book. Same book, but it could be empty, black and white, or full color, depending upon your perspective of life. As we study happiness, and as we began to try to understand some things about perspective.

When Goliath came against the Israelites, the soldiers all thought: He is so big! We can never kill him. David looked at the same giant, and said: He is so big, how can I miss? It depends on how you look at things, and sometimes it even depends on how you explain some stuff. There was once a young man and he was going off to school, and he was a freshman, but his daddy has just been a track superstar. He just didn't have much athletic ability at all, but his daddy was just pushing him to run track. He said I was a star; you need to be a star. You need to get into that suit and you need to run track.

The son went out one day to run track, and there at the school he got into a race with the fastest miler at the school. This fella ran the fastest one mile of anybody in the school. They got in the race and the fella just destroyed him, he ran so fast he almost just lapped the fella. When he got back he called up his daddy, and he said: Daddy! I ran today against the fastest runner in the whole school. The daddy said: What happened?! He said: I'm happy to tell you daddy, that even though I ran against the fastest man in the school...he came in next to last and I came in second.

People, it depends sometimes even on...it will take some of you a minute to get that. It just depends upon your perspective of some things. You can sit and fuss that the fastest man in the school beat you, or you can praise that you had the ability to run

around and make it. It depends upon how you view some things and your perspective will change whether you have joy or sadness. Sometimes in life, people we have defeats, no two ways about it. Sometimes we are just defeated. Coach John McKay, who was a coach at USC, said to his team after they had been beaten by Notre Dame 51 to 0, that's a pretty bad football score. 51 to 0. The football team was just devastated. They had just been embarrassed and almost slaughtered out there on the field. Coach McKay came in to the team and said: Look, we have to keep this thing in perspective. He said: Do you know there are 800 million Chinese who have never even heard of this game?

Sometimes you have to keep some stuff in perspective. You have to learn to laugh about some of your defeats. Learn to be joyous that no matter what happens, you are going to find something good in it, because there is something good in everything if you can find the right perspective. I have seen too much, I have been too many places. People, this stuff is all about what is in here, it is not about what is out there. If you get what is in here right, what is out there will change; and all of a sudden that which was empty will turn into color and your world will change. It just makes a difference if we can have the right perspective about stuff.

Even when we look at Olympic medalists, they found that people who won a bronze were happier than people who won a silver. Bronze is third place, silver is second place, gold is first place. You may say why would the bronze people be happier than the silver people. This is what they discovered, they found it is universal. The people who won the bronze were happier than the people who won the silver. What they found was this: they found that the bronze winners were just glad to place. They were just glad they made it, and they were glad they came in place somewhere. They found that the silver winners were upset because they didn't win first. Here you have two groups of people: one with actually the greater prize, but the lesser joy. All because of perspective.

A farmer was approached by a stranger one day. The stranger asked the farmer how much did he think his prized cow was worth. The farmer looked at the stranger for a minute, and said: Let me ask you a question first, are you the tax assessor or have you killed my cow with your car? What he had to do was: my answer to how much my cow was worth depends upon whether you are the tax assessor, or whether you have run over my cow. The tax assessor was coming to get something; but if the stranger had killed his cow, he was coming to give something. You value things in life from a different perspective depending upon whether you are a giver or a getter. It changes your perspective on how you view things.

If you go into a situation saying: what can I get out of this? You start finding all kinds of flaws and issues. If you walk into a situation saying: what can I give? It changes things, even if you walk into a church. If you walk into a church with the attitude: what can this church do for me? Sooner or later you are going to get

disappointed. Because sooner or later I am not going to act right. I'll just be honest about that right now; I am not going to act right. Somebody will be sick and I won't show up. It is going to be some stuff you are going to want to talk to me about, and I am going to be too busy. It is just going to be some stuff that sooner or later, I am not going to act right.

If you walk into a church asking only: what can I get? Sooner or later, you are going to end up upset and mad and disappointed, and you are going to leave and go to another church. It will not be long, because you are going to walk into that same church with that same attitude: what can I get? It will not be long before that preacher won't show up either. It is a difference if you walk into a church and you say: what can I do to help the people here? That's a whole different attitude. It's an entirely different perspective, and there is a difference in the joy level between the getters and the givers. There is an entirely different level of joy and happiness. This is a Brother Point: It is what it is because you are who you are.

It is what it is...the normal phrase stops right there. It is what it is. No, it is not it is what it is. It is what it is because you are who you are. Because there are a lot of times when the 'is' is totally different depending on who is looking at that 'is'. So it is not 'it is what it is'. It is what it is because you are who you are, and the 'you are who you are' affects your perspective in life, and it changes how you view it. There was once a cat and this cat was a pampered cat. He lived in a rich mansion. The cat didn't eat cat food, the cat ate chicken, and salmon, and tuna fish. The cat didn't eat regular cat food; the cat just had special food brought in. The cat had the best groomer in the city. The cat was brushed three times a day. The cat had its own bed.

The cat really had it made, but one day the cat said I can't take this anymore. The cat hopped out of the window and ran away. The cat ran to the city, and after awhile the cat became hungry. The cat went to the alley trying to find something to eat and ran across an alley cat. The alley cat was dirty, the alley cat was skinny, the alley cat had fleas. So the fine pampered cat went up to the alley cat, and the alley cat said: I know you; don't you live in the mansion up the hill? Yes, I live up there! The alley cat said: What happened? Did they throw you out? The pampered cat said: No, I left! I couldn't take it anymore. The alley cat said: You couldn't take it anymore?! Did they stop feeding you?

No, I had three meals a day. My food bowl was kept full of chicken and salmon, and all kinds of fancy fish. They even gave me caviar every now and then. The alley cat said: What?! What happened, did they get a big dog that was about to eat you up? No, I am the only cat in the house. I received all of the attention. So the alley cat said: Man, what in the world happened? The fine cat said: I just couldn't take it anymore, I just couldn't take it. The alley cat said: What happened man?! The fine cat said: Well, every day my owner would stroke me, but he stroked me the wrong

way. Every day, my owner would be stroking me the wrong way, and I just couldn't take it anymore. The alley cat looked at the fine cat and said: You fool! All you had to do was turn around!

People, with our situations in life, sometimes we have so much, and we are complaining about some stroke, and all we have to do is turn around. Because you cannot change the stroker, all we have to do is turn around. If we can turn our mentality, if we can change our perspective; then we will change ourselves from these states of depression and complaining and negativity. We will move into the joy of the Lord. People, remember they had to cast a third of the people out of heaven itself. Because heaven was just like that mansion, but it was 'as it is in heaven, so it is on earth'. There was some stuff in heaven, and they had to cast one out of three of the angels out of heaven; because even they found stuff they did not like and wanted to change. Something was stroking them the wrong way, even in heaven. So if you are depressed, and if you are frowning, turn your viewpoint around and move from the empty blank through the black and white to the full color of life that God has granted us.