

# Made Happy\*

(\*God Gets to Define "Happy")

## Why God Became Man--part 4

December 21, 2014

### **DAY 1: What is "happiness?"**

1. Series review. Why God Became Man. Jesus came to earth to love and remake mankind. Week 1: Made Alive; Week 2: Made Right. Week 3: Made Honorable. Week 4: Made Happy\*. (The reason for the asterisk is, God gets to define "happy").

2. Everybody wants to be happy. Everybody believes they know what will make them happy. Everybody believes they have the wherewithal to make themselves happy. Easier said, than done!

3. This begs several questions.

a. How would you define "happiness"?

b. What is it about "happiness" that makes it so elusive? Why is it that it can *seem* so easily attainable, and yet be so fleeting?

*Hebrews 11:24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.*

<sup>25</sup> *He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time.*

<sup>26</sup> *He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.*

<sup>27</sup> *By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.*

4. Moses grew up in the palace of Pharaoh, though he was the blood son of Hebrew slaves. If you grew up in a palace, what would you believe about happiness? How would your prospects for "happiness" look to the casual observer?

5. When Moses became an adult, he left the life of the palace. Why?

6. How do you think Moses would have defined "happiness"?

## DAY 2: The world's routes to "happiness"

*Hebrews 11:24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.*

<sup>25</sup> *He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time.*

<sup>26</sup> *He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.*

<sup>27</sup> *By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.*

1. Moses grew up in the palace and saw firsthand how shallow and fleeting "happiness" was. Human beings define "happiness" along these lines:

"I want to feel good, I want pleasurable feelings, and I want to feel good about myself, all as priority number one. This kind of happiness must be available 'on demand.' And I insist on certain people treating me in such a way that validates my need for love and importance."

2. What things strike you from this definition of "happiness"?

3. Let's look at what Moses rejected as "happiness." Next to each item, jot down what Moses realized about each "route" to "happiness."

a. Fame, status (royalty; celebrity)--(v. 24)

b. "Pleasures of sin"--(v. 25):

c. Wealth; treasure--(v. 26):

d. Having important people accept me (v. 27):

4. How would you define *real* happiness?

5. How do you think Moses defined real happiness?

### DAY 3: What is *real* happiness?

*Hebrews 11:24* By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

<sup>25</sup> He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time.

<sup>26</sup> He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

<sup>27</sup> By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.

1. You may be wondering, "What in the heck does 'happiness' mean?"
2. Let's look at Moses' choices in our passage. Next to each of the following, jot down why you think Moses chose this item over the world's way to "happiness."

a. *"He chose to be mistreated with the people of God..."*

b. *"He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value..."*

c. *"...because he was looking ahead to his reward."*

d. *"...not fearing the king's anger..."*

e. *"...he persevered because he saw him who is invisible."*

3. Check the statements below that reflect Moses' beliefs about *real* happiness. Real happiness is:

More a settled satisfaction of being on the right road with God.

More a result of doing the right thing, rather than feeling a certain way.

More the anticipation of greater joy than the experience of very short "happy" feelings.

More the settled assurance that you are on God's "winning team" than feeling good now, and someday regretting that you fumbled your opportunity.

More about what God thinks of me than what anyone or "everyone" or I think of me.

More about eternal (or lasting) joy than temporal or fleeting enjoyment.

4. Which one struck you the most? Why?

#### **DAY 4: What's the difference between "the happy life" and the "abundant life?"**

*John 10:10 "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."*

1. What do you think Jesus means by "abundant life?"
  
2. Fallen human beings usually define "happiness" in these ways:
  - a. "I feel pleasant feelings right now."
  - b. "My difficult circumstances have dimmed from view. I only see positive circumstances in front of me."
  - c. "I have what I want."
  - d. "I accomplished something I dreamed I'd one day accomplish."
  - e. "Being on vacation. This place is so beautiful. I wish I could stay here longer."
  - f. "The people most important to me are treating me with love and respect."
  - g. "We finally have financial security."
  - h. "I'm my own person. I really don't *need* anyone else."
  - i. "Look what I've done. I \_\_\_\_\_." (fill in the blank).
  
3. How is what Jesus calls "life abundant" different from all of those items in question #2?

*John 17:3 "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."*

4. Here, "eternal life" means real life both quantitatively, eternally, and qualitatively, life "to the full." How does this kind of life happen? What's involved? Who's involved?

6. Does the "happiness" described in question #2 have anything to do with the "abundant life" Jesus is talking about in John 17:3? What's different?

7. We torpedo the kind of "happiness" Jesus offers when we trade any of the items in question #2 for knowing Him as first priority! We may feel temporarily pleasant feelings, but we have set aside our only hope for real joy. Have you experienced this "trade" lately? How?

## DAY 5: Rescued from our self-made trap

1. When we think of "happiness" in ways that (1) we define, (2) that bring us pleasant feelings on demand, (3) have more to do with what we do than what God does, relegating Him to butler status, we have inadvertently set up a trap of our own making. It's actually worse than a "trap." We have created Misery Castle. What strikes you about that?

2. When we depend on the items in question #1 for happiness, we find that *that kind of happiness* is fleeting, elusive and/or inadequate. The inevitable end point is, "Is that all there is?"

3. As long as the items in question #1 remain in place, we will continue to live in a quasi-world of (1) "It seems like I should be happy, (2) All I need is just a little more to be happy, and (3) How come I'm not all that happy?" Satan smiles.

4. The real challenge of "happiness" does not happen when circumstances are ideal. The challenge of "happiness" is what happens when circumstances are crummy! The prophet Habakkuk realized God was bringing judgment upon the nation through the evil Babylonians. The people were going to be defeated, taken over, taken captive, plundered, etc. When something like *that* happens, what's your route to "happiness?"

*Habakkuk 3:17 Though the fig tree do not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls,*

<sup>18</sup>*yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*

<sup>19</sup>*GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he makes me tread upon my high places.*

5. Underline everything Habakkuk believed he was likely to lose.

6. How would Habakkuk define "happiness?"

7. How does Habakkuk define "joy?"

8. How does joy happen?

9. Habakkuk 3:17 illustrates his joy. What image comes to mind? What does your imagination see? What do you think Habakkuk is trying to communicate by a deer skipping along the mountaintop?