

**Read: Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:18-26**

## Happiness Is a Gift

### **Ecclesiastes 2:24-26**

A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God. For who can eat or enjoy himself apart from him? Yes, God gives wisdom, knowledge, and happiness.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Are you a happy person? What would have to happen for you to enjoy the perfect day? Maybe it would begin with no alarm waking you up—sleep in as long as you want! Then how about munching on a plateful of delicious, crisp bacon for breakfast? Then imagine everyone is super nice to you all day long. No one bugs you to do anything all day—you get to watch your favorite movies, eat your favorite foods, and play your favorite games. Would that make you happy?

But you know that not everything goes the way you want. Are you happy when you spill soda down the front of your shirt? Do you laugh with joy when someone interrupts or gets angry with you? Or when you don't get the grade you hoped for? Life isn't always fair.

There was a time when people would wake up in the morning and be happy. There was a day when people would look at each other and be filled with nothing but joy. Then there was that moment for Adam and Eve when happiness changed. They looked at fruit they weren't supposed to have and decided for themselves that eating it would bring them better happiness. That was the moment they lost it. Happiness.

Ever since, people have tried to get happiness back by what they eat, what they wear, or going to fun places. The man who wrote today's Word of God spent his life chasing happiness. He was a king of a huge kingdom! He didn't deny himself a single luxury! At the end of his life, guess what he said about all it? He said that his stuff, without God, is meaningless. We can't talk ourselves into being happy. We don't even have the ability to make ourselves truly happy. Happiness is a *gift* handed to us from God's hand. "God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness" (verse 26). Happiness is not getting what I want. Happiness is when Jesus gives me what I need: himself. I need him to make right everything I did wrong. He did it on the cross! There, Jesus didn't wish for his personal happiness. He was thinking of my happiness. He suffered so I could live happily with him in his kingdom.

Without God, everything is worth absolutely nothing. In Jesus, he's given you everything you need for a happy life that can never be taken away from you!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- Point at the happiest person in your family! Ask them to share what makes them so happy.
- How does Jesus make you happy?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Describe what would have to happen for you to have the happiest day of your life.
- What do you need to remember from today's devotion that will help you handle an unhappy day?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Looking back at the happiest moments of your life, evaluate them: Are they events? Places? People?
- How does today's devotion stretch your understanding of true happiness?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear God, whenever I'm sad or having a bad day, help me remember that happiness is not about having things go my way. Happiness is having you, Jesus, in my life. Amen.