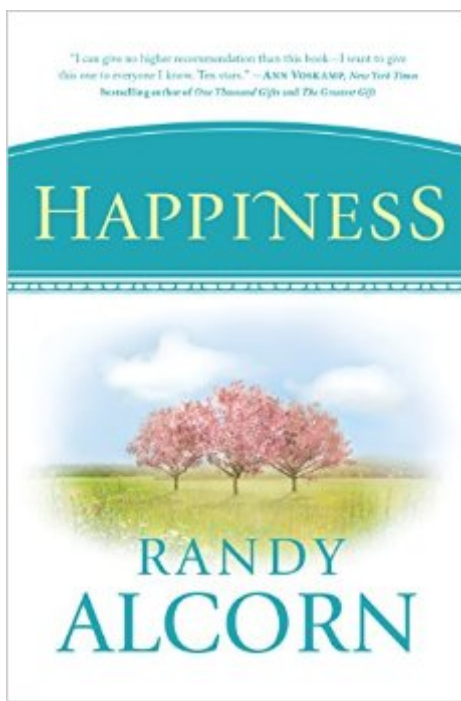


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# Happiness



## Synopsis

Christians are supposed to be happy. In fact, we are supposed to radiate joy, peace, and contentment that is so unmistakable and so attractive that others are naturally drawn to us because they want what we have. And yet, in today's culture, the vast majority of Christians are perceived as angry, judgmental people who don't seem to derive any joy from life whatsoever. So why aren't we happy? Unfortunately, many Christians are taught early on that God doesn't want us to be happy (he wants us to be holy). In fact, many Christians are laboring under the false notion that God himself is not happy. But nothing could be further from the truth! God does want us to be happy. The Bible is filled with verses that prove that ours is a happy, joy-filled God who not only loves celebrations but also desperately wants his children to be happy. Why else would He go to the lengths He did to ensure our eternal happiness in His presence? We know that we will experience unimaginable joy and happiness in Heaven, but that doesn't mean we can't also experience joy and happiness here on earth. In *Happiness*, noted theologian Randy Alcorn dispels centuries of misconceptions about happiness and provides indisputable proof that God not only wants us to be happy, He commands it. The most definitive study on the subject of happiness to date, this book is a paradigm shifting wake up call for the church and Christians everywhere.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Happiness" by Randy Alcorn is a good title for the Christian who wants to be more joyful and happy in the Lord. Throughout the book, Alcorn reminds the reader that happiness based in the Lord

(instead of circumstances, hedonistic pursuits, etc.) is not only biblical, but healthy for the committed follower of Jesus Christ. Indeed, as I grow older I realize more the necessity of being happy in the Lord and not take myself so seriously (no else does, so why should I?). Instead, take Jesus Christ and His claims seriously and then happiness will fall in place. This is not one of those touchy-feely titles with no theological meat. The book is a healthy over 400-page read and covers topics such as:

1. Uses of the word "happy" in various Bible translations.
2. As mentioned earlier, seek to be happy in the Lord instead of circumstances or hedonistic pleasures.
3. We can find pleasure in the everyday events of life (how about a solitary walk or walk with a spouse/friend, enjoying nature, a hobby, doing a chore around the house, looking at your work as serving people, etc.?).
4. Different New Testament words that translate into happiness.
5. Idols that can steal our happiness (either because they are not legitimate means to happiness or can be a good thing that can be perverted so that we seek pleasure in the idol instead of God).
6. Jesus had a sense of humor so should we (again, please don't take yourself so seriously).
7. We have the power to choose to be happy or not happy.
8. Ultimately we will have lasting, pure, and true happiness when we go home to be with Jesus.

Again, this is a lengthy read and will take several sittings to get through.

Pastor Alcorn isn't content just to tell us to be happy. He insists on searching Scripture and showing us the Gospel-centered reasons for a happy life. And if you trust him for a few hundred pages, he'll convince you that there's a lot of happiness to be found, first in God Himself, then in the gifts He gives us, and in our response to God and His world. I really enjoyed reading this book. (Frankly, if a book called "Happiness" wasn't a pleasure to read, wouldn't that be a major problem right there?) Randy clearly studied his subject, because this book was peppered with quotes from philosophers and scientists and preachers and artists and songwriters, all of them engaging with "happiness." I agree with him that for Christians, happiness has become one of those unspiritual concepts. We don't want to seem like we're obsessed with personal satisfaction or self-gratification, so we shun happiness in favor of a joyful holiness. And joyful holiness is wonderful, but Randy argues that we've devalued the concept of simple, easily recognized human happiness to our own detriment. For Randy, happiness (along with joy and gratitude and contentedness and peace, etc. etc.) rounds out the wholesome life. In this book, Randy devotes many pages to studying the most precise meanings of various words in Scripture. There's a reason for this. Often our translation of a word can give it a whole new meaning, sometimes subtle, sometimes glaring. There are a lot of really strong happy words in Scripture, and maybe you've never realized that before.

Not only is it possible for Christ followers to be happy, it is God's desire for us to experience happiness, joy, and gladness to the full. This is the conviction of author Randy Alcorn. He has written an exhaustive, and sometimes exhausting, book to proclaim that the quest for happiness comes from God himself. It is Alcorn's expressed desire that we understand why we should be happy, change our perspective, and develop habits of happiness. The book is divided into four parts. Part 1 examines our longing and search for happiness. The author explains how God has wired us to seek happiness and how sin seeks to prevent us from experiencing it. Part 2 explores the happiness of God himself. Alcorn gives considerable attention to explain that God is happy and that he wants us to be happy. Part 3 surveys the numerous biblical passages that speak of happiness, joy, and gladness. The author explores a number of Hebrew and Greek words and demonstrates how the Bible repeatedly shows that our creator wants us happy. Part 4 addresses ways to live a Christ-centered life of happiness. Alcorn details several different habits that help one pursue happiness. I found the book to be insightful and challenging. It changed my understanding of happiness and will change how I teach the topic in the future. In the past, I've taught that God wants us to be holy, not happy. In attempting to point out that the world's pursuit of happiness is incorrect, I've communicated that happiness and holiness are incompatible. I now understand that is incorrect. Happiness is a biblical concept and pursuit, provided we seek our happiness according to God's direction and provision. The downside of the book is that it feels overwhelming. Part 3 especially feels like one is drinking from a firehose.

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