

The Secret of Happiness

Scripture Reading — Ecclesiastes 3:1-14

I know that there is nothing better ... than to be happy and do good while [we] live. Ecclesiastes 3:12

Scientists have studied happiness. Their research has discovered that things people assume will make them happy do not make them happy. For example, they learned that getting married (or re-married), having children, moving to a nicer climate, receiving more income, or having a better body do not produce happiness.

So what recipe for happiness did the scholars find? They discovered that learning to be grateful can trigger a dramatic transformation. In fact, researchers discovered that by keeping a daily gratitude journal, a person who is down in the dumps will start feeling better in a relatively short time. Joyful people are thankful people.

A second ingredient in this recipe for happiness is to help people who are hurting. Whether it's in your daily work or through volunteering, helping others can make you a happier person. Serving in a soup kitchen, visiting someone who's homebound, discipling a prisoner--even writing a check can make a difference. The plain truth is that when we help others, it makes us feel good.

Of course, the Bible has been teaching all this for eons. The essence of the Christian life is gratitude, and Scripture's central call for Christians is to help others in need. The trouble, as the writer of Ecclesiastes learned, is that most folks are looking everywhere for happiness except where it can truly be found.

Prayer

Guide us this month, O Lord, as we meditate on what can bring us true fulfillment and abiding joy. Fill our hearts with thanks and giving, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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Printed on August 14, 2020

