

Truth in Advertising

Scripture Reading — Psalm 42

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

—Psalm 42:5 —

I have to tell you the hard truth: I am not, by nature, a very happy person. By genetics, chemical malfunction, and a history of some bad theology, I really struggle with depression. I have sometimes met with counselors, and I have sometimes used the medications they prescribed.

I fully believe in Jesus, but I can relate too well to today's verses. Though God has richly blessed me, on many days my soul is like a dead battery on a winter morning. I say to myself, "Hey—wake up! What's your problem? Put your hope in God!" Sometimes that helps, and sometimes it doesn't. So when I write to you this month about "happier-ness," I am not talking in the abstract.

Some Christians are just naturally bubbly for Jesus. The rest of us, I'm afraid, have to fight for happiness by faith. I find that I need to choose it, discipline myself for it, and make hard choices in order to apprehend it.

Psalm 42 is the story of a believer battling back-and-forth for faith and for happiness of soul. If you struggle for happiness, that does not mean you are a bad Christian or a failure. You are just a normal human being, like the psalmist, coming forward by faith in a malfunctioning world. Keep working at it, friend. We'll fight by faith together.

Prayer

Father, comfort and bless us in our struggles. I am weak, but you are mighty. Be gracious to us, and awaken our souls to your goodness. For Jesus's sake, Amen.

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