

the best *you can be*

Lesson

6

A HAPPY *woman*

"You will show me the path of life;
In Your presence is fullness of joy,
At your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Psalm 16:11, NKJV

THERE ARE MANY THINGS in life that can take away our happiness and steal our joy. But we can make a choice whether or not to allow this to happen to us. We can choose to be happy and find our peace and joy in knowing and trusting God. At times we will need to consult a professional person to help us make those right choices, but at every turn we can trust God to see us through. In this lesson there are practical guidelines to help us understand how to be happy. As you read and follow the suggestions, let your happiness flow. Determine to be positive, not negative.

God's Word says, "You make known to me the path of life; you fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand" (Psalm 16:11).

Bianca Rothschild had every reason to be unhappy and bitter. At the end of World War II, she was the only survivor from a large family. All the others had died in concentration camps. She herself had suffered greatly—broken ribs and wrist, mangled leg, back injured when a guard stomped on her with his heavy boots. During one air raid, she ran outside and prayed for a bomb to kill her. When she finally survived, she wondered what purpose God had for her. One day she read, "We have a right to the joy of giving so others may receive. We can give material things, we can give moral support, we can give a friendly ear, and best of all, we can give love." She chose the way of love, asking God to help her. After the war she moved to the USA where she became the "Sunshine Lady" in her community, sending hundreds of get well cards to sick people in her town and beyond. She chose to be happy and positive, rather than bitter or negative.

Sometimes the circumstances of life hang over us like a dense fog. Do we have no control, no choice? Why do we so often get off course? What keeps us from being happy and positive? How can we stay on course and not be negative?

FOUR BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

- 1. God understands our feelings.** Jesus faced similar trials. He longed for human acceptance. He suffered emotional pain, injustice, rejection, loneliness, and grief. He cried. (See Hebrews 4:15; John 11:35.)
- 2. Contact with God transforms negative emotions.** Jesus has a balm for every emotional sore spot. He can give us joy for our depression and peace for our pain. He can give love for our hatred and relief for our bitterness. He has hope for our despair and acceptance to apply to our low self-worth. (See Isaiah 61:3.)
- 3. God can supply our emotional needs.** Many women have struggled for years, trying to do and be everything. They have searched many sources but found no emotional fulfillment. Only God can supply all our needs, the emotional as well as the physical. He can husband us and supply us with love, acceptance, comfort, and security. (See Philippians 4:19; Isaiah 54:5.)
- 4. Feelings follow actions.** Positive feelings follow positive actions. We can ask the Lord to replace our negative feelings about a person or a situation with positive feelings and love. Then we can step out in faith. (See 2 Chronicles 20:20-22.)

SIX WAYS FOR TURNING SADNESS TO JOY

Suggestions for coping with emotional pain and loneliness:

- 1. Nature.** Walk in nature and talk with God. Learn to identify birds and plants. Breathe deeply.
- 2. Singing.** Sing praise songs, prayer hymns, or add your own words to familiar tunes.
- 3. Helping others.** Visit others worse off than yourself. Visit the sick, the old, and shut-ins. Let them know you care.
- 4. Exercise.** When angry or depressed, walking and other exercise can boost your mood.
- 5. Learning.** Take the focus off problems by learning something new. Enroll in a class or study on your own.
- 6. Journaling.** Write out prayers. Insight and strength often come when we write our thoughts.

The story of Corrie Ten Boom is a wonderful example of what God can do with our negative emotions. Whenever she thought of the cruel guard at the Ravensbruck concentration camp, she felt hatred and said, "I can never forgive him." But eventually God spoke to her heart and told her to write to him. Deciding to obey God and try to forgive, she wrote that letter. However, to become seeing the former guard in person two years later was very different. After she had spoken to a large crowd, he came forward to speak to her. He stuck out his hand and said, "Fine message. How good to know that all our sins are at the bottom of the sea." Instantly she recognized him and was horrified. He did not remember her but she

remembered him. He asked for forgiveness for the cruel things he had done. She prayed silently, not wanting to shake his hand. But she thought she could at least begin the process by lifting her hand. As she did so, God supplied forgiveness which flowed through her.

RATE YOURSELF

Below is a list of NEGATIVE emotions. Put a check beside those you are feeling now or have felt recently.

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Frustration | Anger |
| Rage | Envy |
| Jealousy | Hatred |
| Pessimism | Fear |
| Anxiety | Self-pity |
| Discouragement | Depression |
| Regret | Shame |
| Guilt | Grief |
| Bitterness | Low self-worth |

Following is a list of POSITIVE emotions. Which ones do you feel in particular need of at the present time?

| | | |
|-----------|-----------------|--------------|
| Love | Understanding | Compassion |
| Peace | Forgiveness | Acceptance |
| Joy | Patience | Tolerance |
| Trust | Tranquility | Security |
| Happiness | Expectancy | Strength |
| Hope | High self-worth | Self-control |
| Power | Assertiveness | Adventure |

PERSONAL GROWTH EXERCISES

1. Search for Bible verses that promise the very positive emotions you need. Look up the promises in various versions. Type or write out these promises on cards and put them in strategic places where you can read them often.
2. Try paraphrasing Bible promises. Put your name in the verse at appropriate places. What message is God giving you in that verse? Write in your journal what you hear Him saying to you.
3. The Psalms are full of references to emotions. Read through a psalm, underlining negative emotions in one color and positive emotions in a contrasting color.
4. Choose an incident from the life of a Biblical woman. Read of her experience in Scripture and in E. G. White's writings. Try to imagine the emotions she was experiencing in that situation. How would you have felt if you had been in her shoes? How did she deal with her negative emotions? What can you learn from her experience?
5. Read chapter "Rejoicing in the Lord" in *Steps to Christ*, by E. G. White. Make a list of positive actions we can take when dealing with negative emotions.

SUCCESS PRINCIPLE

With God's help we can choose to replace negative emotions with positive ones.

MY PRAYER FOR TODAY

Dear Heavenly Father, Thank You for happiness. Thank You that You are interested in my happiness and want me to live in Your presence where there is fullness of joy. Help me to live in that knowledge and banish the negative thoughts that sometimes plague me. Lord, let nothing steal my joy and peace. I choose today to trust You and to accept the happiness You offer.



WOMEN'S MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD
20904 USA | Ph: 1-301-680-6636
www.adventistwomensministries.org