

Chapter 1



Introduction

| *John 15:11*

- *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and*
- *that your joy might be full.*

Full joy? Is that even possible in today's life? Well I certainly know that there is ample pain in the world caused by evil that seems to dominate depending on your perspective and focus in life. Just look at the statistics of any given country, take South Africa for instance, 57 murders a day. I will not give details of the brutality by which these murders are performed or the other crude collateral crimes that are a means to an end and there is a 28.1% unemployment rate. The above mentioned situations are the obvious factors preventing joy, there are many more. Now tell me how is joy in full possible?

Do we even realize what full joy is? It is that the deepest desires of your heart are met, that everything you could have ever wanted is yours, that you lack nothing, you have all the happiness in the world. Full joy is what humans are yearning for and have been since the beginning. Every single human endeavour to acquire lasting happiness or joy ends in a complete failure.


Now before we go any further it is extremely important to determine exactly what the general definitions of joy and happiness are. The definition of happiness is summarized by the state of being happy, and happy is defined as feeling or showing pleasure or contentment, thus the Websters dictionary is accurate in defining it as a state of well-being and contentment. Joy is defined as a feeling of great pleasure and happiness. These definitions are cunningly deceptive in the sense that they appear mutually dependent upon each other. Society in general has merged these two words in a sense that both are acquired together, there is no real difference between them, but I would like to differ and will explain my reasoning later.

I believe in the infallible Word of God and that every aspect is applicable to daily life, therefore I will never hesitate in saying and concluding that full joy is without a doubt attainable for anyone in any stance of life through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. There are a few misconceptions

that have led us astray to believe otherwise and certain doctrines that must be refuted and dealt with as they are causing harm in the body of Christ.

Join me on a journey to discover true joy that is promised to us in the Bible.

Chapter 2



Happiness vs. Joy

The general society have merged the meaning and feeling of these two abstracts, but certain people facing the melancholic questions of daily life tend to see a different trend, like psychologists, philosophers etc. Cheryl MacDonald, a health psychologist, claims that happiness is temporary and comes from external sources, whereas joy is lasting and an inner conscious belief. She elaborated by comparing the presence of each in a life storm, leaving happiness as absent and joy as present. She also claims that one can cultivate joy in your life by practicing certain techniques and behaviours.

My reasoning begs to ask the question as to why joy is still the most sought after feeling or sensation in the world if it is so easily attainable as positive thinking, meditating and imagining?

Many people clarify joy as being an attitude of the heart or spirit and connect it's presence to your outlook on life.

I agree with the premise that happiness is external and based upon exterior events and is not lasting, for example you need to drive your bicycle to work every day, receiving a free car would indefinitely make you happy. Then reality kicks in and you realize that it needs petrol to run on and that you must start eating less, because you do not get your daily training anymore. Thus the source of the presupposed happiness just dried up and the happiness disappears, making it completely incidental.

Joy on the other hand is not explained in such a simple manner. The topic joy would fill a book in itself. I cannot, and no one could before me, define joy in a secular manner without the existence of God. The existence of joy is solely dependent on the existence and presence of God in your life. Joy is definitely from within as MacDonald stated, but I differ with the refined statements, as I say that it originates from an exterior source dwelling within you. That is to say if you are a born again Christian, baptized in the name of the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, hence the Holy Spirit lives within you being the source of your joy (1 Cor 3:16, 1 Cor 6:19, 2 Tim 1:14, Rom 8:11).

That also sounds too good to be true, because why are there so many proclaiming Christians that live miserably and without hope? Mahatma Gandhi once said “If it were not for Christians, Christianity would take over the world.” I guess he realized the infallibility of the gospel of Christ, but was at that stage too proud to admit it due to the conflict of interests with Christian nations/people.

I cannot go and blame Christianity, or Jesus, for that matter, because His followers are joyless, even though He promises joy to His true believers. That would be the same senseless argument in blaming a diet for not losing weight, whilst you ate five chocolates a day. In that case, I request to redefine insanity.

Joy is based on something far greater and out of human reach. It is not found in any earthly source whether living or non-living and is not achievable through any human efforts.

1 Peter 1:8-9

Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls..

Chapter 3



Hedonism

Hedonism - the pursuit of pleasure

Hegesias of Cyrenae was a 3rd century philosopher, also known as the death-advocate due to his proneness in supporting the so called “uselessness of life” with death being the solution.

The reason for this thinking is ultimately due to his subjectively assembled definition of “good”. He believed that the only ultimate, complete good is pre-eminently pleasure. According to him pain is the only complete bad thing. These guidelines were his basis to differentiate between good and bad, or more commonly known today as evil.

Hegesias’ philosophy agrees with an argument laid down by Cynic crates, “If we must put together the happy life from an abundance of pleasures... no end will be happy. Rather, if you want to calculate all the periods in an entire life, you’ll find many more pains.” Hegesias stated that, “Happiness is wholly impossible, since the body has been filled with many sufferings and the soul suffers along with the body and is troubled, and fortune prevents many things we hope for. For these reasons, happiness is non-existent.”

This circular reasoning brought about the supposed enlightenment in his head that desiring pleasure brings about pain or never actually yields pleasure, or when pleasure has claimed to be achieved it deceives the believing individual. Thus, concluding his philosophy that it is impossible to gain true pleasure and therefore one must rid oneself from pain in order to eliminate the bad and amplify the good to gain true pleasure and this can be done through death, hence the title – “Advocate of Death.”

Looking into the hedonistic view of life to acquire happiness is also somewhat a disaster. Value/Prudential Hedonism argues in the direction that all pleasure is intrinsically valuable and that only pleasure fulfils the standard. It also states that any form of pain and only pain is intrinsically disvaluable. The meaning of “intrinsically” is for something to be valuable for it’s sake alone, e.g. If I eat a sweet for no other reason than to acquire pleasure through the taste it is still valuable, in other words if it leads to no other benefit, it is still good to

experience. Motivational Hedonism, also entailing the psychological aspect, that the desire to avoid pain and encounter pleasure guides us. Normative Hedonism has an established criterion that an act is morally correct if pleasure is the providence. Two subgroups usually falling under Normative Hedonism is Hedonistic Egoism (do what is most in your interest) and Hedonistic Utilitarianism (The correct choice of action is the one yielding the highest total happiness for the action performing individual).

The origin of Hedonism is a long road into the radically misinformed minds of the wantons – humans. Cārvāka (c. 600 B.C.), an Indian philosopher, is the author of one of the first written encounters with hedonism in history, with a Hedonistic Egoist perspective, although he admitted that pleasure is often accompanied by undesired pain, which is bearable only due to the worth of the pleasure. Don't forget about Artippus and Cyrenaics (c. 400 B.C.) who took pleasure to a next defining step, placing physical pleasure above mental pleasure. Epicurus then completely redefined the Hedonistic framework by concluding that happiness exists due to the absence of physical and mental pains, these pains also included any fear of any gods. He took a minimalistic approach to life, advocating that one needs only the bare necessities. His teachings led people to avoid towns and places of core vanity, because they are only breeding grounds for desires to conceive in your heart and once those desires have been tasted, one will constantly undergo the mental pain in trying to acquire the pleasure that cannot always be acquired, hitherto leading to unhappiness as pain is present in the inability to acquire the desires of your heart. In the 18th century we then encounter Jeremy Bentham, being an advocate of hedonism and so the list will continue. Right through all civilizations of history the defiling strand of hedonism will be visible, but no conclusion as to it's origin exists.

What bothers me of today's society is that most people when asked for their stance on hedonism will completely disagree with it's reasoning and distance themselves from the philosophy even though their lives are hedonistically satisfied on more than one level. Our sexually depraved culture is evident in the obvious crude, degrading manner on television. These sexual scenes are what the viewers crave. What about the music industry? Music in itself is a pleasure producing element, but has in the past century become a visual

stimulator for pleasure as well. Just look at the explicit music videos and concerts that every age group is exposed to. It grieves my soul to say that even literature is hedonistically forced in school curriculums and is the preference of the common morally degraded society (Phil 3:18-21).

Placing hedonism in categories as mentioned above is a method of explaining its evolution, but utilizing them as the only categories of hedonistic views is absurd and narrow-minded. According to the Webster dictionary hedonism is the doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the sole chief good in life. In the Oxford dictionary it is defined as a person who believes that the pursuit of pleasure is the most important thing in life; a pleasure-seeker. Hedonism in the Cambridge dictionary is defined as living and behaving in ways that mean you get as much pleasure out of life as possible, according to the belief that the most important thing in life is to enjoy yourself. So you tell me, is there any defined categories present here? It refers to pleasure in general, the categories bring reference to specific preferences, but hedonism as a whole refers to any pleasure.

What is hedonism then today? Is our society hedonistic? Is Hedonism's future really looking as bleak as philosophers claim? Or is it disguised in everyday life?

Do not fret, the answer is not solely based on the pre-supposing power of hedonism or the philosophy thereof, but I believe it to be an integral part in understanding true happiness. After exposing it's origin and traces in our lives we can most certainly come to the conclusion as to what is stealing our joy and happiness.

Chapter 4



Origin of Hedonism

To trace Hedonism back to its origin is a mind blowing experience that is guaranteed to transform the core life-views you hold dear. What better place to start than the first book of the Bible, “in the beginning”?

Let’s examine “lucifer”, one of the covering cherubs. He craved being God, or even above God and therefore rebelled. What was the core of his rebellion? The craving to have the power and position of God. What does a sick mind like lucifer’s associate with power – pleasure. The pleasure of being in control and calling the shots, of ruling the world and having all under his dominion.

Exactly that view on life was deliberately and cunningly carried over to Eve. Let’s take a look at this event in Genesis:

Genesis 3:5-6

For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Once again she wanted to be as God, but not only that, focus a bit on the specific wording the KJV gives us in verse 6, “And when the woman saw that the tree was **good for food**, and that it was **pleasant to the eyes**, and a tree to be **desired to make one wise**, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

The fruit was good for food, meaning it will be pleasurable to the taste buds. It was very presentable and pleasurable to the eyes also. Even though there are three different pleasures being provided to Eve at this stage I still believe the one pulling the sin through unto action is the one of them being as God.

So we see that the fall of satan and the fall of man had both been grounded in some sort of hedonistic ideology. Well if that was the first sin spurred by evil, then what is the root of all evil?

1 Timothy 6:10

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The first thought coming to mind is, what does money have to do with the fall of man and satan? Well, quite a lot to be exact. Why did sin take place?

Satan – wanted to be like God

Man – Wanted to be like God


Money – grants you power and a means to an end to build your empire and be god over it.

All three instances point to being a god and having power, which ultimately provides so called pleasure, thus hedonism playing a part in the first sin ever committed.

Please understand me clearly, money in essence is not wrong, but the hedonistically motivated spirit within a man causing cravings for power and pleasure is the problem. Therefore, it is just simpler to say that money is the root of evil. So whenever you are in contact with money or money making schemes, beware lest ye fall into temptation and the root of evil gets a hold in your life. Money must be as water under a bridge. It is needed when it is needed accordingly provided by God. It must never be left to stand and spread its roots in your life and become the driving force that is the reason for you to stand up in the morning. Dear people, I guarantee you that sorrow will then be your destiny as stated in 1 Timothy 6:10.

It breaks my heart to see that there are certain Christian circles currently referring to a sort of “Christian hedonism” where God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him. Dear friends, firstly, why do we want to associate such a worldly term with our loving Creator. Secondly, since when was serving the Lord about our satisfaction?

Chapter 5



Who is your master?

Matthew 6:24

- *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

Evidently, what we observe here is the plainly stated fact that there is a T-junction ahead of every person. There are only two main roads that can be taken – the road of God or the road of satan. Yes, it is true that all, but one road leads to the road of satan, but more on that a bit later.

James 4:4

- *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

You either choose the saving power of Jesus and start the journey of trial and error to ultimately strive in becoming like Christ, or you go down the broad and easy road leading to eternal damnation. It is crucial for all to realize that you cannot wander on two roads at the same time. The road of God has literally no association with the road of darkness. Therefore, do not fool yourself in thinking you can walk on the narrow way, but enjoy certain pleasures of the broad way from time to time. That would be like fighting in a war for your country, but running over enemies borders, say once a week, to go eat at a restaurant which, to your tasting, has very delectable cuisine. Or better yet, driving to Cape Town from Bloemfontein, but wanting to stop for site seeing in the Kruger National Park. Its absurd to say the least, because it is in complete different directions. How is it that we all know it is impossible to go eat at the enemy's restaurant, but we expect everything to be just okay when we do it in the spiritual life? Is it acceptable to be a spiritual traitor, but not a physical one? How then can we keep expecting God to allow us to live in the kingdom of light, whilst occasionally enjoying several pleasures from the kingdom of darkness.

You see, dear people, what has happened here is Christianity today has taken the grace of God and used it for a licence to sin (Rom 6:15). Just let anyone tell them that, and they ferociously attack you as being judgemental and non-Christlike. Easily and unthoughtfully slurring sentences like, “Don’t judge me.”, “Who gives you the right to have the “holier than thou” attitude?”, “Jesus understands that I am human.”, “God never expected us to be perfect.” Etc.

Please hear me clearly, the grace of God is no one else’s than God’s, only He decides fateful decisions like Heaven and Hell. I do not have the power bestowed on me to decide or even just give an utterance as to who can go to Heaven and who cannot. Having said that it is of utmost importance to read the entire Bible in context and always let the Bible explain the Bible. For instance, what does the Bible say about living a holy life, endeavouring to abstain from ALL sinful desires and actions. Take a look at the following verses:

1 Peter 1:15-16

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; (16) Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

2 Timothy 2:21-22

If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

1 John 3:6-9

Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Do you see? Nowhere in the Bible does God in any way condone sin. He hates sin, has always hated it and will always hate it.

Side track – comment of caution

Before I go any further we must understand that when working with people of whatever background or belief, always remember you are working with people – human beings. They are not the enemy, instead we must identify the real enemy and address him with force in the name of Jesus, with no mercy and no exceptions.

▮ *Ephesians 6:12*

▮ *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

Please remember that the person is not the enemy, therefore when working with people try to adapt to this motto: “Hard on the rule and soft on the person.” Meaning you must never budge from the truth, plainly stated “sin is sin”, never condone or approve sin, never accept a flawed doctrine sprinkled with deception to save a friendship. But always, always whatsoever you do, do it in love, humbleness and kindness. Do not attack a person’s personality or methodology of thoughts, rather attack the problem and false/flawed doctrine.

It is just a matter of faith. Do we believe what the Bible says or don’t we? The Bible clearly states in Romans 12:1-2 that we are new creatures in Christ. Therefore I can say with confidence that the hedonistic, money and power loving urges passed on to us by satan is dead in the burial baptism with Christ. The old person, the old nature, the old thoughts are buried and we are clothed with Christ as new creatures in Him (Gal 3:27).

Why do we then still condone occasional life on the road of darkness? Or habitual sin?

Sure, the devil will not leave you be. He will attack you with thoughts of your previous life and desires, but the Word of God says: Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7). Do not let those thoughts take root in your life.

If you give sinful thoughts or desires a second of space they will invade and cause a moral decay in your life.

James 1:14-16


▪ *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren.*

A critical concept to understand is stated in James 1:14. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his **own lust**, and enticed. Do you see that you can only be tempted to a point of being drawn away with your own lust. Satan deliberately tempts you with the desires of your heart. Let me clarify my point: you cannot easily be tempted to desire a R2 million car if you don't care about having a nice car, whereas if you occasionally attend car shows and you know every specific spec of every car and literally come to a stand-still when you hear the roaring of a V12 it would be much easier to tempt you to desire a car of the same calibre. Then the process of James 1:14-16 is started in your life and it can lead to death. I am using the example of a car for a neutral explanation, but remember it is applicable to any possible sin e. g. ungodly desire for the opposite sex leading to pornography, affairs, before marital sex etc.

The temptation is not the sin, the sin comes when you have pondered on the temptations and the lust has conceived within your heart, meaning that you have decided to leave those thoughts in your mind and you are currently thinking about them or even thinking of doing the deeds associated with the lusts. Then it is sin, which will lead to spiritual death!

Quick referral back to Eve, the desire to be like God had to be in her heart for her to actually take the fruit to be like God. If the desire had not been in her heart and she was content in her current paradise she would have never eaten of the fruit.

Chapter 6



Renewal of the mind

We must come to the realization of who we are in Christ in order to resist the devil. As explained earlier, we are new creatures in Christ, the sinful human nature is dead. Let us stop allowing satan to try and resurrect (for a lack of a better word) our dead nature (old self).

Galatians 5:16

▪ *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

There is the key in it all. To keep your dead nature dead you must walk in the Spirit. Your actions, your thoughts, your entire life must be focused upon Jesus. Remember that satan wages a constant war upon your mind, therefore the Bible says in Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The only way we can conform to this world is by allowing our thoughts to ponder upon things of this world. Prevent the conformation and be transformed by renewing your mind to the likeness of Christ by constantly renewing your mind through diligent study of the Word of God and dwelling in His presence (Phil 2:5; Rom 8:6-10)

Do not allow satan to plant the seeds of lust within your heart, because that is equal to opening the door to spiritual death. When any ungodly thought arises, bind it and proclaim victory over it in Jesus' name and immediately ponder on the glory of our Saviour, whilst remembering 2 Corinthians 10:5. Bring every thought unto obedience to Christ.

Chapter 7



Contentment

My personal opinion is that joy and contentment are mutually dependent upon another. As you will not experience joy when you do not have what you want and you will not experience contentment if you are not joyful in your current situation. I think Job is one admirable example of how to be content in a situation that could easily be described as hell on earth.

Job 1:21

▪ *And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.*

You cannot be content in your current situation if your source of happiness is of a worldly origin. Only when you find your happiness in a stable foundation of God it will produce joy. Thus when the origin of your joy is found in the unconditional love of Jesus Christ and the knowing that we will one day walk on the new earth and in the new Jerusalem with Him, then we will be content with whatever situation we find ourselves in. It is ironic to think that our entire society is bent upon producing earthly pleasures and comfort not knowing that they are daily amplifying their feeling of emptiness and just increasing their threshold of experiencing happiness. Nothing of worldly origin will ever be enough.

Something that I picked up is that Paul learned to be content, it did not come from itself. Whereas joy comes the day when you give up all your worldly cares and burdens and place it upon the Lord and enter into His rest (Mat 11:28-29, Heb 13:5).


Philippians 4:11-12

▪ *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*

So as soon as you experience that joy, satan can attack it by planting thoughts of discontent into your mind, that is where the battle starts in learning to be content and not allowing that joy in your life to be stolen by the plans of satan.

Matthew 6:25-34 is the perfect example, when you seek first the kingdom of God these worldly pleasures will not be a problem for you, yet the Lord promises that you will have all you need. The peace that overflows in one's heart when you come to the knowledge that Jesus is enough and He will provide all your needs is unsurpassable (Phil 4:7).

Chapter 8



Where does it leave us?

Remember what it is to have joy. It is to have all your heart's desires fulfilled to where possible. The only way that is possible is when you are wandering so close to God and that your relationship with Him is so steadfast that you inherently desire what God desires. Therefore I can boldly quote any scripture saying ask anything in God's name and you will receive it, because John 15:7 says "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Do you see, dear people, we need to abide in Christ, then our lives will be conformed to His, then our wants and desires will conform to His and we will be fully content in whatever situation He places us, overflowing with incomprehensible joy, because we see the bigger picture when we are spiritually minded (Psalm 37:4, James 4:3, Phil 2:13-18).

Therefore I can conclude that full joy is definitely possible, but remember 1 Corinthians 2:14 states "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." So if your life is not built on the solid foundation of Christ, and you do not walk in the Spirit, but rather in the flesh, you will never comprehend the joy mentioned in the Bible. There will always be an emptiness in your life. Break free of our hedonistically satiated culture and enter into the presence of Christ. Be spiritually minded.

Only when you are born again, clothed with Christ, striving to live a holy life and constantly building your relationship with the Lord, you will gradually start to realise that the love for things of this world is decreasing and your love for Christ is increasing. Praise the Lord for getting rid of this temporal rubbish holding us back to experience His joy, hope, peace and love in the fullness it was intended (Col 3:2).

Christ is enough and in Him is perfect peace and joy.

Works Cited

Kesebir, P., & Diener, E. (2009). In Pursuit of Happiness: Empirical Answers to Philosophical Questions. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3(2), 59-74.

MacDonald, D. C. (n.d.). *Is there a Relationship between Happiness and Joy?* Retrieved June 28, 2019, from Health Psychology Centre: <https://healthpsychology.org/is-there-a-relationship-between-happiness-and-joy/>

Solovyov, V. S. (1897). *The Justification of the Good: An Essay on Moral Philosophy*. (N. A. Duddington, Trans.)

Weijers, D. (n.d.). *Hedonism*. Retrieved June 28, 2019, from Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <https://www.iep.utm.edu/hedonism/>