

The Secret of Happiness

Time magazine ran an article entitled *14 Ways to Squeeze More Joy Out of Every Day*.

The author, Ellen Seidman, began: "Sometime this morning, during your shower or at work, you probably did a mental run-through of your day. You decided when you'd tackle various tasks and errands. Perhaps you vowed to hit the gym at lunchtime. Maybe you plotted to get out of something (apologies, PTA meeting). The one thing you forgot to plan for: happiness."

The author then gave a list of *14 Ways to be a Happier Person* suggested by Barbara Fredrickson, a social psychologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The list, among other things, includes the following suggestions about how to be happy:

- Make happiness your goal.
- Know what makes you happy. Reflect on the things that make you come alive.
- Prioritize it.
- Smell the shower gel. The act of savoring – mining pleasant moments for their joy – is a proven happiness booster.
- Think perky thoughts. Recall something that made you happy, and you can get a boost.
- Buy some happy. Spend on experiences (like tickets to a Broadway show) rather than things (another black sweater).
- Find purpose in pleasure, like volunteer work or taking a cooking class.
- Make Sunday future-fun day (make plans for the next weekend).

Those ideas are nice and appealing. But there is a better source of happiness, and it is in the spiritual realm.

A man living in the 3rd century was dying when he wrote these last words to a friend: "It's a bad world, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a joy which is a thousand times better than any pleasure of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. They are a truly joyful people. These people are the Christians ... and I am one of them" (From *Riding the Joy Train* by Wanda Jo Pence).

We who are Christians, followers of Christ, have learned a great secret: Jesus is the reason for the joy of joys. His presence in our lives and the promise of eternal life in heaven with Him bring a transcendent joy to any set of circumstances.

And that secret drives us to be better servant leaders in the mission in which we are engaged.

If you want to squeeze more joy out of everyday life, fit more of Jesus into it!

Jesus said: *If you keep My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete* (John 15:10-11 NIV).

– Beecher Hunter