

Happiness

Throughout history, scholars and philosophers have tried to answer the question “what is happiness?” While this cannot be fully defined or explained in this one-pager, we want to have a biblical understanding of what happiness looks like in our lives. Consistently in popular culture and media, the world thrusts its idea of what happiness is or looks like in the form of goods, services, appearances, relationships, and much more. Looking from a Kingdom perspective, however, happiness stems from a deep connection and relationship with God.



World's View on Happiness	Kingdom's View on Happiness
Self-focused, subjective, money, control, no transformation needed, morally self-sufficient, opinion-based, hyper-focused on present circumstances, Works of the Flesh .	Christ-focused, becoming Christ-like, humility, giving, serving others, necessary transformation, morally bankrupt in need of a Savior, living for now and eternity, Works of the Spirit .

Short-Term v. Long-Term

To understand happiness, it is important to look at short-term versus long-term. In the short-term, it can be seen through the two questions of “Are you happy?” and “What would make you happy?” In the first, the response is yes or no based on current mood. In the second, the response would typically be a list of possessions, vacations, services, relationships, or having others do things you desire, like your kids cleaning up after themselves. These are all simply mood-altering things which provide short-term enjoyment, but do not provide long-term happiness.

Long-term happiness can be viewed through looking at Matthew 5. The word “blessed” in this passage comes from the Greek “makarios,” which in its definition nearly always includes the word happy, and certain translations actually use “happy” instead of “blessed.” Blessed is a long-term orientation of contentment, thanksgiving, grace, and pursuit of righteousness in the midst of our temporary contexts.

Responsibility

In general, people want to be happy and have a sense of meaning and satisfaction in their life. People can influence their own happiness through aligning with the Father’s will, Christ’s example, and the Spirit’s direction. While Regent is able to influence the context in which students live and learn, it is no one’s job to make another truly happy. People have a personal responsibility to pursue their own happiness, prayerfully in meaningful and virtuous ways, growing closer to God and deepening that connection.

A Gift Meant to be Shared

Happiness is a gift from the Lord which comes from deeply engaging with him. With this, it is not meant to be kept to one individual, but rather to be shared for the sake of creating a foundation to share the Good News and build the Kingdom of God. Happiness is not a temporary hollow shell of media-induced vanity and self-importance, but rather a long-term sense of engagement, meaning, blessedness, and satisfaction which leads to a moral transformation in our students and ultimately, human flourishing.