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Grace Notes

TITLE: How to enjoy life

SONGS: I'll worship only

That's how much I love you

INTRO: A young boy said to God one day...

"When I become a man here's what I want to make me HAPPY.

I want to climb tall mountains, live in a BIG house, drive a red Ferrari, marry a TALL, BLUE-EYED woman, have three sons, and own two St. Bernards."

As it turned out, the boy hurt his knee, so he couldn't climb anymore. Due to his business, he lived in a city apartment and took the subway into work. He married a SHORT, BROWN-eyed woman, had three loving DAUGHTERS, and adopted a fluffy cat.

One day he remembered his boyhood dream and said to God..

"Why didn't you answer my prayer and give me the things I asked for?"

And God answered him with...

"I could have, but I wanted to make you HAPPY!

Does God really want us to be happy? What is true happiness anyway? Today on Grace Notes Barbara Sandbek will answer these questions and more as she begins a study on the subject 'How to enjoy life'.

I can identify with the boy in that story. There've been times I thought I'd just die if I didn't have a particular thing or date a certain guy. But, I'm sure glad God withheld what He KNEW I didn't need, and gave me what I needed.

If you made a list of the things that would make you happy, what would it say? - a better job, new wheels, a winning lottery ticket? The truth is - the thing that will bring LASTING happiness is not material, it's spiritual. We need forgiveness for our sin against God. There's nothing we can do, in and of ourselves, to earn this. Jesus, God's Son, died and rose again to provide this forgiveness so we can be accepted, and KNOW the LOVE of our Creator. Jesus said in John 15:13...

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. God saw us as his friend long before we ever were. Romans 5:8 says..

God commended His love toward us in that while we yet sinners Christ died for us.

That's how much He loves us!

**** THAT'S HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU ****

Romans 5:1-2 says that when we ask Jesus to be our Savior, we're justified in God's eyes and are at peace with Him. The word 'justified' means 'just as if I never sinned'. Now that's forgiveness. Verse 3 continues with...

...we REJOICE (that's happiness) in the HOPE of the glory of God.

...And hope does not disappoint us, because God has POURED out his love into our hearts by the HOLY SPIRIT, whom he has given us.

Even in the middle of our pain and suffering, we can have hope. Verse 3 also says...

...we also rejoice (there's happiness again) in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Adversity does have a purpose - God uses it to remold us with the glory we lost due to sin. As Believers in Christ, we have hope because we're promised an abundant life and an eternal future with Christ.

We have a reason for living. God has a marvelous plan. Jeremiah 29:11 reads...

"I know the plans I have for you, plans to PROSPER you and not to harm you; plans to give you hope and a future."

So, if it's God's intent to prosper us, what can we expect? Does prosperity bring happiness? Webster used the word 'prosperous' to define the word 'happy' and then clarified 'prosperous' as 'having secure possession of good'. He then followed it with Psalm 144:15b which reads...

Blessed (or happy) are the people whose God is the Lord.

When we have the Holy Spirit in our hearts, we have SECURE possession of good, because GOD is good. Jesus said of those who believe in Him...

"I give unto them eternal life, and they shall NEVER perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." (John 10:28)

And everything good we receive comes as a result of God's goodness to us. James 1:17a says...EVERY good and perfect gift is from above...

But we must remember to keep a level head concerning material prosperity. Look what happened to the rich man in Luke 12. God had blessed him with many possessions. The man was going to tear down his barns and build bigger ones for his overflowing grain and goods. He said to himself...

"You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; Eat, drink and be merry."

What was Jesus' response concerning this...

"You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you."

He who has the most toys does NOT win!

Jesus said that this is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for Himself, but is not rich toward God. It wasn't wrong for him to have the wealth, after all, God gave it to him, but his wealth was his idol – his reason for living. Jesus said in verse 15 that a man's life doesn't consist in the abundance of his possessions.

Listen to Jesus' words in Matthew chapter 6, verses 19-21...

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The first commandment still stands...

Thou shalt have no other gods before me!

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