

You Like What You Learn To Like

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One of the problems of our society is that people tend to like only what feels good or what meets their own needs. Instead of basing their lives on commitments, they float from relationship to relationship, job to job, city to city, trying to find the elusive feeling they call "happiness."

The problem is that happiness based on external criteria is like the fleeting pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Just when we get to where we think the rainbow is, we look up and see that the rainbow has moved.

Our only hope of happiness is to choose to be happy regardless of what our circumstances may be. When St. Paul was a prisoner in a dark Roman jail he wrote, *"I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, living in plenty or in want. I can do all things through God who gives me strength"* (Philippians 4:12-13).

A lady wrote once a radio talk show host and told how her first few years of marriage were unhappy and frustrating. Her husband didn't listen to her. She felt so unhappy that she thought her marriage was over.

One day, as she wept bitter tears over her unfortunate relationship, her three year old walked in and asked, "What's wrong, Mommy?"

"My whole world's falling apart," the young mother replied.

"I'll tell you what you can do," the child counseled. "You can smile!"

The woman said that she decided to take her daughter's advice. She changed her attitude and began to smile regardless of her situation. She finished her letter by saying that she and her husband have been happily married for 22 years.

A parent who walks out of a marriage because he or she is not happy teaches the children that being happy is more important than making commitments. Such a parent sends a message that it's okay to drop out of school if you aren't happy; that it's okay to quit your job if you don't like it; that it's okay to leave a family if it doesn't meet your needs.

However, the Bible teaches that happiness is a result of doing the right thing. *"To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness"* (Ecclesiastes 2:26).

When Steve Forbes campaigned for the presidency in the mid 1990's, a TV reporter interviewed his daughter and asked, "Do you like campaigning?"

"Yes," replied the smiling ten year old. "Did you always like it?" the reporter asked.

"No," the child replied. "Then why do you like it now?" the reporter inquired.

"Because," the girl said with more wisdom than most adults, "you like what you learn to like."