

Your Best Life Now

Week 8: Choose To Be Happy

Now I'm sunny with a high of 75,
since you took my heavy heart and made it light.
It's funny how you'll find you enjoy your life,
when your happy to be alive.

--Relient K

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today
that I have set before you **life** and death, blessings and curses.

Choose life so that you and your descendants may live.

--Deuteronomy 30:19

See, **now** is the acceptable time; see, **now** is **the day of salvation!**

--2 Corinthians 6:2b

...there's so much **beauty** in the world... and I can't feel anything but **gratitude** for every single moment of my stupid little life... You have no idea what I'm talking about, I'm sure.

But don't worry... you will someday.

--Lester Burnham

What we do defines us (says a post-modern 'half-truth).

We **dwell**—we linger and make a home—between the questions:

“*what do you want me to do for you?*” and “*what does ‘thy kingdom come on earth’ mean?*”

And **our life's answer is a decision** we make over and over again,
a decision to live with a “**faith frame**” or a “**fear frame**” in our transactions with the world.

As **layered, human happenings** and **co-creators** made in the image of God,
we can **position ourselves in ways that matter** in this world.

With **courage** (not fear), **compassion** (not selfishness), and **delight** (not fixation),
God is already bringing **blessings** to our poverties, **(in)sight** to our blindnesses, and **freedom**
from our bondages. With God's help we are writing **a new script** for our lives.

And **this role** will be one characterized by **gratitude** (for so much beauty),

focus (on promises and changeables), **worship** (awe/wonder at the Mystery),
fellowship (friends in faith), **laughter**, and most of all, **GRACE** (God's unmerited favor).

--Dave

Now, you know that **God has great things in store for you**. It's time to relight your fire; recapture your enthusiasm and adopt a fresh, positive, happy attitude... Get up each day expecting good things... This could be the day things turn around... God doesn't want you simply to feel a little better for a few days after you read this book. No, **God is in the long-term restoration business...**

Make a decision that from this day forward you are going to be excited about the life God has for you: **enlarge your vision, develop a healthy self-image, discover the power of your thoughts and words, let go of the past, stand strong against opposition and adversity, live to give, and choose to be happy...** and you will be living your best life **now!**

--Joel Osteen

- **Your Thoughts and Insights**

- What have you learned/had reinforced by reading this book/taking this class?
- What do you see as some of the strengths/weaknesses of this book?
- What are you going to do next?

- **Joel's Key "Choose To Be Happy" Point:**

*Happiness is a choice. With **gratitude** for all that God is doing, **decide** (every morning and every moment) to be a person of **excellence** and **integrity**, living with expectant **enthusiasm**. Smile and dare to believe that God is bringing you your best life **NOW!***

Joel Osteen's Nutshell Points

- **BIG PICTURE POINT:** What **we think and do matters** or our **expectations** and actions **shape the good that God wants to do** in our lives."
- **ENLARGE YOUR VISION: Making room for God's "more" in your mind means seeing with the eyes of faith:** letting go of old negative patterns of thinking (wineskins/strongholds) and picturing, believing, expecting and declaring a new vision of God's favor in your life.
- **DEVELOP A HEALTHY SELF-IMAGE:** You will bring forth into the world the thoughts you hold in your heart about yourself. **Your mental "self-portrait" is key to living your best life now.** Shed the "grasshopper mentality" and agree with God, **seeing yourself the way God sees you:** precious, beautiful, chosen, and blessed.
- **DISCOVER THE POWER OF YOUR THOUGHTS AND WORDS: Your life will be framed and formed by the things that you think about and the words that you inhabit.** Change your thinking, Renew your mind. Dig new rivers. **Dwell** upon God's promises, not your problems. Declare God's goodness aloud. And you will experience transformation in your life. The word becomes flesh and dwells among us!
- **LET GO OF THE PAST: Life is painful.** And our hurts haunt us in the form of sorrow, regret, anger, and bitterness. To experience God's best for your life right now you must **quit dwelling on the wounding setbacks and disappointments** of your past. Anger and bitterness foreclose on God's best for you if they take root in your life. **Focus on the God** who restores and heals human hearts. **Let go** of the past and allow God to make things right. Forgive others. Forgive God. Forgive yourself. Press on!
- **STAND STRONG THROUGH DIVERSITY: Life** in the real world of struggle and stress requires **faith, determination, and courage.** We must learn how to **"get up on the inside" until God**—sometimes suddenly—**changes our situation** at the right time. Many, if not most, of the difficulties we face can be used by God to strengthen our character and prepare us for some good to come, even when life seems senseless. With a sustaining faith, trust God to be at work in and through your situation in ways that may only be clear from the standpoint of a future deliverance. Your **life's "crooked lines" are already being bent to God's saving purpose.** Swing Away!
- **LIVE TO GIVE:** We were **made to love and share and give** compassionately. We are **blessed to be a blessing** in a hurting world. And the measure of our generosity shapes the good things that we receive. Cling less, share what you have with others, and watch God bless this expression of your faith!
- **CHOOSE TO BE HAPPY:** Happiness is a **choice.** With **gratitude** for all that God is doing, **decide** (every morning and every moment) to be a person of **excellence** and **integrity**, living with expectant **enthusiasm**. Smile and dare to believe that God is bringing you your best life **NOW!**