

Perspectives

Much of life's joy is not about things or events or even relationships. Before you throw me under the bus, let's consider how we think about the things we own, the events we experience and even the relationships we have.

Each generation has certain situations in which we grow. Consider Adam and Eve: they had no cell phones, not electronics, no 3 bedroom home, no mode of transportation (other than legs) and not even any fancy clothes from Neiman Marcus! Yet they were happy in their idyllic setting - until, of course, they broke God's law! Then they had more *things* but were far less happy!

Down through the ages various centuries presented more technology, from horseback to wheeled buggies, from buggies to open horseless carriages, to enclosed model T's and on to Cadillacs and now Tesla electric cars. Add countless items you can see all around you as you read this article - refrigerators, cook stoves, indoor plumbing, cell phones, TVs, every electric appliance known to man, and, last but not least my new recliner that has a motor to lean back, and heat and back massage... is this heaven?

Curiously, as technology serves us keeps us in touch with grandma, why do we have an increase in depression and even suicide? Obviously it is *not* for lack of things, or electronic communication or transportation or any physical *thing*!

And why on earth are some people in poor countries far more happy and peaceful and even satisfied than those in advanced, first world nations who "have everything?"

Let's consider perspective. Happiness is often the comparison between what we expect and what we have. If I expect Tesla Plaid (yes, it's a car - the fastest accelerating production street car on earth) but I have a Toyota, I'm going to be quite frustrated. But if I have a beat up Studebaker (like the one I had in high school) and then I get a nice F150 4x4, joy will overflow all the way to my remote mountain campground!

The apostle Paul had not only learned, but *mastered* the secret, "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me," (Philippians 4:10-13).

Having deep, genuine contentment means I'm happy just like things are for me *right now*. It's a bit like golf. Golf is exceedingly simple - hit the ball into the hole. Simple in concept but challenging to do. Happiness, contentment, joy, peace - all are fairly simple in concept, but challenging in daily life.

So we must remember that the not so secret, secret is keep my perspective God's perspective. I can only do things through Him who strengthens me *if and when I master Paul's (God's) approach to life, to be content with what I have rather than being stressed about what I don't*. We can, indeed learn, "the secret" as Paul called it in verse 12. We can truly do all things through Him who strengthens us, if we keep God's perspectives!

Ray Wallace