

HAPPINESS



Happiness is said to be a state of mind. When I was a boy, in the 1970's, the "happy face" was a popular image on t-shirts, decals, and other items. Variations of this face were also visible, but the happy face was image that brought a moment of gladness if not a smile to all faces present.

How is happiness acquired, or maintained? The great Greek philosopher and scientist Aristotle believed that happiness was found "in different ways" – the result of which was "different modes of life and forms of government." He also believed that "happiness depends on ourselves" – not on any other or any thing.

Different men seek after happiness in different ways and by different means, and so make for themselves different modes of life and forms of government.
-- Aristotle



You may know of Anne Frank, famous teen-diarist, who spent two years in seclusion during World War II. Narrowly evading the Gestapo police, she recorded her experiences in what later would be published as "Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl." At age 15, she died of a disease in a Nazi concentration camp; but still prevailed in her courage as a victim of the Holocaust.

Anne was clearly in a life and death circumstance, having every reason to lay aside her happiness. In spite of these grave circumstances, she believed *that people are really good at heart*. It seems impossible to understand how she could maintain such an attitude - yet she did!

"I keep my ideals, because in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart."
-- Anne Frank

Of all my mistakes in life, one of the majors was the notion that I could make others happy or, more specifically, that I must make others happy...that this is my responsibility. I struggled for years to fulfill this responsibility but, as certain, failed in the end of a long-term relationship. How much it would have relieved us both if I had simply admitted that I am not responsible and, though my promise is to love, honor and cherish, it cannot render certain happiness.

At the root of happiness is a personal decision that demands our attention to and desire for our source(s) of hope. For believers, the source of this hope is Jesus Christ. The book of Philippians tells us, *Delight yourselves in the Lord, yes, find your joy in him at all times*. I pray that you have found this source of hope, joy, and happiness.

In a **WORD**