

Psychology Today published an article on six keys to being happy. Here were their conclusions:

- 1) Accept yourself and love yourself.
- 2) Connect with other people.
- 3) Be aware of the inner you—your thoughts and feelings.
- 4) Accept change because all things change.
- 5) Accept that life is difficult.
- 6) Have a purpose by setting goals.

Well if you take those suggestions, I promise you this, you will not end up happy. In fact, you will probably end up miserable. The one key ingredient that people need for happiness is God. It is one's relationship with God that really determines how happy one will be in life. That point becomes very clear from Psalm 128.

Psalm 128 is a Psalm of Ascent. Psalm 127 ended with a “how blessed” statement and Psalm 128 begins with a “how blessed” statement. The theme of the Psalm is easy to see:

THE PERSON WHO FEARS THE LORD AND OBEYS THE WORD WILL BE BLESSED BY GOD IN MANY WAYS AND WILL HAVE A HAPPY LIFE.

The word translated in English “blessed” or “bless” shows up three times in this Psalm—v. 1, 4, 5. The word blessed in **verse 1** is a different word from **verses 4-5**.

The word “blessed” (asher) in **verse 1** is a word that carries with it the idea of being happy because one is in a right relationship with God. In fact, the word is actually translated “happy” in **verse 2**. This word stresses the close link between the state of happiness and one's relationship with God (Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 80-81).

The word “blessed” in **verses 4-5** (barek) is one that emphasizes the fact that God chooses to actually bless someone or prosper someone (*Ibid.*, pp. 138-139). **The Scriptures always associate “the fear of the LORD” with the blessing and favor of God.**

One who fears the Lord and obeys the Word has a “genuine happiness” because their relationship with God is so solid that God chooses gives numerous blessings to that person.

The thought that a person could potentially attain this status with God is an amazing demonstration of God's grace.

Now the idea of “fearing the LORD” is the idea of living life with a reverence for the God of the Bible. It is a reverence based on the fact that one realizes God is the Sovereign God who is capable of doing whatever He wants to do. He can bless or He can curse.

The idea behind fearing the Lord is the idea that one will govern his or her life with a healthy fear and reverence of God and His Word. This kind of fear is not only an attitude, but it also involves specific action, which according to **verse 1** means that one “walks in His ways.”

To walk in God's ways means to obey His Word and there are certain things one will do if one fears the Lord:

- 1) One who fears the LORD will Trust the LORD (Ps. 115:11);
- 2) One who fears the LORD will have been forgiven by the LORD (Ps. 130:4);
- 3) One who fears the LORD will Delight in God's Word (Ps. 112:1);
- 4) One who fears the LORD will Keep and Obey God's Word (Ps. 119:63);
- 5) One who fears the LORD will Hate evil (Prov. 8:13);
- 6) One who fears the LORD will Wait for God's mercy and lovingkindness (Ps. 147:11).

So one who fears the Lord will live life reverencing God and conforming himself to the Scriptures.

Now there are nine wonderful blessings promised for one who does this:

BLESSING #1 – The person who fears the Lord and obeys the Word will have fruitful labor.
128:2a

The Bible always assumes that one who fears the LORD will labor and work. Actually, working was part of the ten commandments because God said that one should labor for six days (Ex. 20:9). So the assumption is that if one fears the Lord, one will labor and work.

What God promises for one who does work and one who does fear Him is that his work will prosper. The person who fears the Lord and obeys the Word and works will discover that God will prosper his work. Does not matter what the job is, God will prosper the work. He may prosper the company for which one works or He may directly bless the work of the one working.

The blessing will be he will be able to eat of the fruit of his hands. In other words, God will see to it that He provides for and blesses his work.

BLESSING #2 – The person who fears the LORD and obeys the Word will be happy. **128:2b**

As we mentioned, the word “happy” is the word translated blessed in **verse 1**. This word emphasizes the happiness that one has because he knows his relationship with God is good. There is no better happiness one can have in this life.

BLESSING #3 – The person who fears the Lord and obeys the Word will be well. **128:2c**

The Hebrew word “well” (tov) is one that speaks of have a pleasant, sweet, glad, joyful and good life (*Ibid.*, p. 373). God will do some wonderful things and some good things in life for one who fears Him and obeys His Word. As one commentator observed, God will provide an “abundance of good” for those who fear Him and obey His Word.

God delights in doing good things for His people. Most parents delight in doing good things for their children.

When a child respects his parents and purposes to do that which is right in pleasing them, those parents delight in doing good things for them. That is the way it is with God.

This is a good parental tip to remember. God does not do a bunch of good things for children who are in rebellion. But when they purpose to obey Him and His Word and treat Him with reverence and respect, He opens the blessings of many good things to them.

BLESSING #4 – The person who fears the Lord and obeys the Word will discover he has a good wife. **128:3a**

A good wife is a blessing of God. A good wife will be given by God to the man who fears Him and obeys His Word. She will be a “fruitful vine within your house.” She will take care of her home. She will make the place where one lives a home. She will be loyal, faithful and hard-working. She will be fruit-producing. Having a wife like this is a blessing of God.

BLESSING #5 – The person who fears the Lord and obeys the Word will discover his children will grow to become strong and mature. **128:3b**

An olive plant is a plant that takes time to grow, but eventually it grows to become a tree that ultimately produces fruit.

What God says He will do for one who fears Him and obeys His Word is cause His children to grow up to become productive and fruitful citizens.

One will be able to sit down at the table with the family and eat a meal because God has granted this life and blessing to one who fears Him.

In fact, **verse 4** drives that point home. This is a blessing given by God to one who fears Him and purposes to obey His Word.

Parents who fear the LORD and obey His Word may expect down the road they will live to see and live to eat a meal with children who have grown to become solid and mature. This does not mean that all children will turn out this way for one who fears the LORD. Solomon himself taught his own sons that there were two paths they could choose, the path of wisdom or the path of a fool.

BLESSING #6 – The person who fears the Lord will be blessed by the Lord from Zion. **128:5a**

The noun Zion refers to the land of Israel, Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. This is an amazing blessing. God promises that one who fears Him will be blessed by Him from Zion.

This is the place of residency of God and it specifically is teaching that when God reigns in Zion, the one who feared Him and obeyed His Word will be blessed. Again we point out that the word “bless” used in this verse refers to specific blessings and prosperity of God that God gives.

So what God is saying is that this one will actually be in Zion and will be specifically blessed by God.

BLESSING #7 – The person who fears the Lord and obeys the Word will share the prosperity of Jerusalem. **128:5b**

Look at what is promised to one who fears Him and obeys His Word. In the end, he will see the prosperity of Jerusalem forever. Daniel predicts that there will be a specific resurrection of O.T. Israel to enjoy all of the blessings of God in Jerusalem (Dan. 12:2).

BLESSING #8 – The person who fears the Lord and obeys the Word will see his grandchildren. **128:6a**

The blessing of being able to see grandchildren is a result of God permitting a person to live a long life. Living long enough to see grandchildren is a blessing of God. Many cut their lives short because they do not fear the Lord and obey the Word.

BLESSING #9 – The person who fears the Lord and obeys the Word will ultimately see peace in Israel. **128:6b**

Now when all of this finally happens, there will be peace that will exist not only in Israel, but upon Israel. What that means is that Israel will be at peace forever.