

## Mission: Getting to Happy

Written by Timothy Houston

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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year are familiar sayings that are known to all. It marks the season of giving followed by the beginning of a new year full of hope and promise. Unfortunately, this is not true for all. For some, the word happy is a distant memory of times long ago, and for others it is a present reminder of sorrow and depression. According to some experts, more people suffer from depression during the holidays than any other time of the year. Now more than ever, it is necessary for all of us to take deliberate actions to aid in our quest for happiness.

Everyone deserves to be happy. The pursuit of happiness is the sovereign right of every man and woman endowed to them by the Creator, and it should be exercised by all. The word "pursue" implies that one must go after it. Deliberate actions are required to battle the things that work against our happiness. We will all experience life's ups and down. For some, it may be as temporary as the loss of a job while for others; it may be as permanent as the loss of a loved one. Therefore, we must all take action to prepare our hearts for these unknowns. You can get to happy. Your pursuit of happiness is a part of the American dream. It is your sovereign right given to you by God. Here are a few steps to help you get there.

First, to get to happy, you must make room in your heart. When I think of this I am reminded of the words of my favorite Christmas carol, "*Joy to the world, the Lord is come, let earth receive her king. Let every heart prepare him room* ." Every heart must prepare room. This requires you to get rid of unforgiveness, anger, bitterness and wrath. This will make room for joy and happiness, peace on earth, and good will towards men. The good of mankind is only made possible by the good of the individual. The world is better when the hearts of men and women become better.

Secondly, you must simplify your life. Clean out the clutter from your physical and emotional closets. Say goodbye to friends, clothing, collectibles, and conversations that do not add value to you. No more broken things in your life. For my physical closet, I have a personal rule that if I have not used it in a year, then I must dispose of it during my spring cleaning. This should be applied to your emotional closet as well. Get rid of old relationships and the emotional baggage that comes along with them. If you do this, your new year will be full of new possibilities!

Next, you must think happy thoughts. Your thoughts create your environment. They are the building blocks for your actions. Your thoughts are the greatest defense against life's adversity. When negative things happen that are beyond your control, remember, you still get to choose your response. You can think the best or you can think the worst. Always think the best. A line for an anonymous poem says it like this, "*If you think you are defeated you are, if you think you*

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*dare not, you don't. If you like to win, but you think you can't, it almost a cinch that you won't. Life's battle doesn't always go to the stronger or faster man, but sooner or later the man who wins is the one who thinks he can."*

Finally, to get to happy, you must make peace with God. The pursuit of happiness as expressed in the constitution comes from the Creator. This is a spiritual necessity. The peace of God will bring peace with others. Without internal peace, there can be no external contentment. War and warfare never bring about happiness. Peace with God brings about peace with all. This is the greatest pursuit of all, and it is the reason why this country's founding fathers wrote about it, and it is the reason why we sing about it today. The pursuit of happiness is the pursuit of peace. During this Christmas season, may you find peace on earth and good will toward men! Happy New Year!

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