

ACTION GUIDES

THE QUEST FOR HAPPINESS PRODUCTIONS

DustiHowell.com/ag/



ACTION GUIDES FOR A THREE-WEEK QUEST FOR HAPPINESS

ACTION GUIDES are one-page PDFs that can be downloaded and followed for 21 days. I took some of the best tips and ideas from both the sermon and seminar and put them on one page. Look at these tips and pick the ones that will help you move toward greater happiness. I recommend that you start on Friday, Saturday or Sunday and then rate your happiness each week as you work on one of these spiritual laws (<https://DustiHowell.com/ag/>). Let me know if I can facilitate your journey. I'm praying for you! God Bless, Dusti Howell (happy@tekeffect.net)

How to use the Action Guides

- 1) Rate yourself on happiness overall from 10 (incredibly happy) to 0 (incredibly sad).
- 2) Rate yourself on how well you are using each Spiritual Law from 10 (full) to 0 (empty).

7 SPIRITUAL LAWS OF SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS

1. LOVE GOD FAITHFULLY WITH ALL YOUR HEART
 2. LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF (THE GOLDEN RULE)
 3. REJOICE ALWAYS (Focus on the Positive)
 4. IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS (Express Gratitude)
 5. FEAR GOD & KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS
 6. GET WISDOM (Turn Your Screen Off)
 7. BEAR MUCH FRUIT (Claim the Promises of the Bible)
- 3) Focus on one Spiritual Law for one week. On the weekend review questions 1 and 2. After three weeks, share an email of your results to happy@tekeffect.net. Was this time well spent? Why or why not? Would you recommend this to others? What helped you most on this quest?

EXAMPLE EMAIL SCORES & COMMENT

Begin: I scored myself ___ on happiness overall and ___ on Spiritual Law ___.

Week 1: I prayed about this spiritual law every day and now scored ___ and ___ on the two scales.

Week 2: After 14 days, I've Bible studied this law and prayed about it and now scored ___ and ___.

Week 3: After 21 days, I scored ___ and ___.

Comment:

ACTION GUIDE #1: LOVE GOD FAITHFULLY WITH ALL YOUR HEART

Dennis Prager says, "The cause that has given more men and women meaning and happiness than any other is religion." What is the quality of your faith? When we have an active relationship with God, we find true happiness and success. How can we grow our faith?

Here are some ideas. Choose what God leads you to do.

1. **Get More Involved in Your faith.** Studies show that religious involvement (those that regularly attend church and walk in their faith) have greater happiness, joy and life satisfaction. Invest time, energy, and resources in your church and become more religious and faith-filled.
2. **Choose to Find the God of the Bible.** Since religion gives more meaning and purpose in life. Choose to study the Bible, the best-selling book of all time, while praying to know God. Every day set aside time to pray and study your Bible.
3. **Meditate on the Following Verses.**
 1. LUKE 10:27 So he answered and said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself"
 2. JER 9:24 "But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord.
4. **Pursue the Bigger Questions in Life in Your Bible Study.** Why was I born? What is the purpose of life? Religion is arguably the best place to find meaning because it has answers. It also addresses questions of pain, suffering, eternal life, and happiness. These answers draw us closer to God.
5. **Find Greater Meaning and Purpose in Life.** PSALM 139:13-18 says that God formed and designed you when you were in your mother's womb. He designed you with a purpose. Pray and ask God to reveal your path. Draw closer to God and ask Him to reveal what He created you to do?
6. **Repent and Be Baptized** into the covenant relationship with God. (ACTS 2:38)

JOIN THE THREE-WEEK QUEST FOR HAPPINESS

- 1) Rate yourself on happiness overall from 10 (full & incredibly happy) to 0 (empty & incredibly sad).
- 2) Rate yourself on how well you love God from 10 (full of love) to 0 (no love).
- 3) Focus on one spiritual law for three weeks. After three weeks, share an email of your results to happy@tekeffect.net. Comment: ~Was this time well spent? Why or why not? Would you recommend this to others? What helped you most on this quest?

Example of an email you might send me after 21-days:

Before starting, I scored myself 4 on Happiness and 3 on Spiritual Law # 1.

Week 1: A week later, after praying about this Spiritual Law I scored 5 and 4 on the two scales.

Week 2: After 14 days, I've studied the Bible on this law and prayed about it and now scored 6 and 6.

Week 3: After 21 days, and using ideas from the action guide, I scored 7 on happiness and 7 on Law # 1.

Comment: I would say that this was time well spent. My happiness has improved and I'd recommend this because my love of God is growing. Action Guide tips 2 and 3 helped me the most! Mr. B. Happy (age 23)

ACTION GUIDE #2: LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF (THE GOLDEN RULE)

When we love our neighbors as ourselves, we treat them like gold. Over time, this treatment provides excellent benefits as we learn to have more profound outgoing concern for others.

Here are some ideas to help you improve in this area. Choose what God leads you to do.

1. **Study the Parable of the Good Samaritan** (LUKE 10:25-37). Perhaps compare the NIV with other versions like The Message and King James Versions. What ideas opened up for you?
2. **Meditate on the Following Verses.**
 - a. I John 4:20-21 *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.*
 - b. John 13:34 *A NEW commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ...A new [unused, uncommon] commandment.*
3. **Watch This TED Video.** (<https://youtu.be/8KkKuTCFvzI>) Harvard wanted to find what keeps us healthy and happy as we go through life. Having great relationships is a secret to a great life.
4. **Forgive and/or Patch up Unresolved Issues with Others.** Henry Wright stopped praying for people with arthritis after none were healed. Then 5 ladies with arthritis asked for anointing. They all had unresolved issues with others. He led them in a prayer of repentance and forgiveness. At the end of the prayer, all were healed, yet he had not prayed for healing.
5. **Serve Someone in Need.** A newly widowed Christian told her pastor she was having a tough time and was lonely. He told her to host a Thanksgiving dinner for a very poor couple in the congregation. She reluctantly agreed and had one of the greatest Thanksgiving dinners ever.
6. **When We See a Person in Need, First Run to God and...**
 - a. **Ask** GOD, Is this a conversation for me to enter? [If NO = just pray for the person]
 - b. **Ask** GOD, Is my personal experience relevant to this person's situation?
 - c. **Ask** if there is truth I am meant to speak into the situation.
 - d. **Ask** that whatever GOD wants me to share is delivered and received in peace.

JOIN THE THREE-WEEK QUEST FOR HAPPINESS

- 1) Rate yourself on happiness overall from 10 (full & incredibly happy) to 0 (empty & incredibly sad).
- 2) Rate yourself on how well you love your neighbor from 10 (full of love) to 0 (no love).
- 3) Focus on one spiritual law for three weeks. After three weeks, share an email of your results to happy@tekeffect.net. Comment: ~Was this time well spent? Why or why not? Would you recommend this to others? What helped you most on this quest?

Example of an email you might send me after 21-days:

Before starting, I scored myself 4 on Happiness and 3 on Spiritual Law # 2.

Week 1: A week later, after praying about this Spiritual Law I scored 5 and 4 on the two scales.

Week 2: After 14 days, I've studied the Bible on this law and prayed about it and now scored 6 and 6.

Week 3: After 21 days, and using ideas from the action guide, I scored 7 on happiness and 7 on Law # 2.

Comment: I would say that this was time well spent. My happiness has improved and I'd recommend this because my love to my neighbors has greatly improved. Action Guide tips 2 and 3 helped me the most! Mr. B. Happy (age 23)

ACTION GUIDE #3: REJOICE ALWAYS (Focus on the Positive; Be More Optimistic)

Are you a positive person? Would your closest friends say that you are uplifting, encouraging, and loving? Are you fun to be around?

How can you improve your life in this area and become more positive? Here are some ideas.

1. **Are Your Words Positive and Inspiring?** What's your favorite word or phrase? Jesus said that we would be judged by our words. (MAT 12:36-37) Replace a negative/neutral word or phrase that you use often with a positive word or phrase for the next three weeks!
2. **Meditate on the Following Verses.**
 - a) 1 THES 5:16 *Rejoice always.*
 - b) PHP 4:4 *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!*
 - c) PHP 4:8 Follow the Apostle Paul's mandate and aim at thinking about highly positive things.
3. **Learn to Think Optimistically:** "What do you think when you fail?" Your habitual way of explaining bad events, your explanatory style, is the hallmark of whether you are an optimist or a pessimist. Positive Psychology has helped many people find a more optimistic outlook on life. Marty Seligman started the field of Positive Psychology. His book *Learned Optimism* (1998) has been life-changing for many. He is a leading authority on learned helplessness and on explanatory style. Hundreds of experiments also show that optimists do much better in school, at work, and on the playing field. Pessimists can learn to be optimists by learning a new set of cognitive skills. Here are three helpful techniques Seligman writes about:
 - a) **DISTRACT Yourself** when negative thoughts occur. Try to think of something else. Paul gives us eight things to think about (PHP 4:8).
 - b) **DISPUTE** thoughts that keep occurring: 'Disputing' negative thoughts is more effective in the long run because successfully disputed beliefs are less likely to recur again and again.
 - c) **Stop RUMINATING:** Brooding and thinking about how bad things are, starts the sequence. Learn to sing praises to God and learn to ruminate on positive things. If someone in your life is driving you crazy, forgive and forget (MAT 18:21-35). The only one that you are hurting by ruminating on sad things is yourself.
4. **Choose to React Positively in Negative Situations.** It's easy to sit back and blame others for our unhappiness. Victor Frankl, survived a horrendous ordeal in a Nazi concentration camp while his family died. The Nazis couldn't control how Victor reacted to all this. He reacted positively and survived. Think of a terrible situation that you went through. How could you have reacted positively?
5. **Cultivate a Positive Philosophy of Life:** Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people? How do we deal with the bad things that happen to our friends or family?
 - a) What Bible verses show a time is coming when ultimate justice will occur?
 - b) Find a positive element in what has happened. Something positive can be found or created from almost every negative development. This idea helped me face the accidental deaths of my father and my brother. (ROM 8:28) "All things work together for good" is a tremendous comfort in times of tragedy. After each of these tragic accidents, it took some time before I could see the good that had emerged from them.

JOIN THE THREE-WEEK QUEST FOR HAPPINESS

- 1) Rate yourself on happiness overall from 10 (full & incredibly happy) to 0 (empty & incredibly sad).
- 2) Rate yourself on how positive and optimistic you are from 10 (positive) to 0 (negative).
- 3) Focus on rejoicing more for three weeks. After three weeks, share an email of your results to happy@tekeffect.net. Comment: ~Was this time well spent? Why or why not? Would you recommend this to others? What helped you most on this quest?

ACTION GUIDE #4: IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS (Express Gratitude)

Is there a secret to happiness? Prager shares this incredible gem. *Yes, there is a “secret to happiness,” — and it is gratitude. All happy people are grateful, and ungrateful people cannot be happy.*

How can you learn to be more grateful? Here are some ideas.

1. **Learn to Express Gratitude Whenever Possible!** By doing this, we learn to savor the beautiful things in life! Expressing gratitude to others is something that makes us more likeable. We should also express more gratitude toward God in prayers and praises to Him.
2. **Meditate on the Following Verses.**
 1. 1 THES 5:18 *In everything give thanks.*
 2. PHP 4:6-7 *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*
3. **Keep a Prayer Journal.** For 21 Days in a row, write down three new things you’re grateful for. Make sure not to repeat the same observation twice. I did this in a PRAYER JOURNAL writing down things I was grateful to God for. Research has found that your brain will learn to continually scan for positive items, especially on bad days. This can help us get over some rough spots more positively.
4. **Be Satisfied and Content Like the Danes.** Why is Denmark the happiest country on earth? The Danes are very satisfied! For more than 30 years, Denmark has ranked first in European surveys on satisfaction. More than two-thirds of Danes are “very satisfied” with their lives. Be content and satisfied with what you have!

JOIN THE THREE-WEEK QUEST FOR HAPPINESS

- 1) Rate yourself on happiness overall from 10 (full & incredibly happy) to 0 (empty & incredibly sad).
- 2) Rate yourself on how grateful you are from 10 (full) to 0 (empty).
- 3) Focus on one spiritual law for three weeks. After three weeks, share an email of your results to happy@tekeffect.net. Comment: ~Was this time well spent? Why or why not? Would you recommend this to others? What helped you most on this quest?

Example of an email you might send me after 21-days:

Before starting, I scored myself 4 on Happiness and 3 on Spiritual Law # 6.

Week 1: A week later, after praying about this Spiritual Law I scored 5 and 4 on the two scales.

Week 2: After 14 days, I’ve studied the Bible on this law and prayed about it and now scored 6 and 6.

Week 3: After 21 days, and using ideas from the action guide, I scored 7 on happiness and 7 on Law # 6.

Comment: I would say that this was time well spent. My happiness has improved and I’d recommend this because my thankfulness has improved and I had an amazing thanksgiving. Action Guide tips 2 and 3 helped me the most! Mr. B. Happy (age 23)

ACTION GUIDE #5: FEAR GOD & KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS

There are two elements to focus on here, fear & obedience, which makes this a bit more challenging.

What can we do to improve our lives in these areas? Here are some ideas.

1. **Learn to Fear God by Studying His Word**, Praying, and by Developing a Deeper Relationship with Him. Add more time to your daily walk with God.
2. **Learn How to Keep All Ten Commandments from a Spiritual Perspective.** Jesus amplified the law for commandments 6 and 7 (MATT 5:17-30). Study and pray to figure out how to amplify one of the other commandments.
3. **Meditate on the Following Verses.**
 1. ECC 12:13-14 We should fear the LORD because it is the first thing that God requires of His people and is the whole duty of man. This summation of wisdom is from the wisest man in the Bible. Compare this verse with PSALM 112:1.
 2. Study PROV 2:1-5 and seek to understand the Fear of the LORD.
 3. Why is fear a key to the stories in DAN 6:26-7 and ACTS 10:35?
 4. MARK 10:17-21 What does the rich young ruler need to do to inherit eternal life?
 5. What does the last book of the bible, Revelation, have to say about fearing God (REV 11:18; 14:7; 19:5) and keeping the commandments (REV 12:17; 14:12; 22:14)?
 6. PROV 9:10a *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*
4. **What Are You Afraid Of?** What does Jesus say about that? (MATT 6:25-34) Notice verse 25 begins with "therefore." When we are afraid of other things we are serving two masters (see verse 24). There are so many things today that people are afraid of. Yet we should fear the LORD and trust in Him foremost! As we grow in the fear of the LORD and draw closer to Him, we will become wiser and more knowledgeable. We will also worry less about the typical fears that many people worry about. This is a rewarding journey that will indeed bless us with both eternal success and happiness.

JOIN THE THREE-WEEK QUEST FOR HAPPINESS

- 1) Rate yourself on happiness overall from 10 (full & incredibly happy) to 0 (empty & incredibly sad).
- 2) Rate yourself on how well you Fear God & Keep His Commandments from 10 (best) to 0 (poor).
- 3) Focus on this spiritual law for three weeks. After three weeks, share an email of your results to happy@tekeffect.net. Comment: ~Was this time well spent? Why or why not? Would you recommend this to others? What helped you most on this quest?

Example of an email you might send me after 21-days:

Before starting, I scored myself 4 on Happiness and 3 on Spiritual Law # 3.

Week 1: A week later, after praying about this Spiritual Law I scored 5 and 4 on the two scales.

Week 2: After 14 days, I've studied the Bible on this law and prayed about it and now scored 6 and 6.

Week 3: After 21 days, and using ideas from the action guide, I scored 7 on happiness and 7 on Law # 3.

Comment: I would say that this was time well spent. My happiness has improved and I'd recommend this because my fear of God and commandment keeping are improving. Action Guide tips 2 and 3 helped me the most! Mr. B. Happy (age 23)

ACTION GUIDE #6: GET WISDOM (Turn Your Screen Off)

Solomon tells us that if we are looking for happiness, get wisdom. Wisdom is the source of wealth and health and pleasantness and peace.

How can we get more wisdom? Here are some ideas.

1. **Pray for Wisdom.** JAMES 1:5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*
2. **Read the Bible for 21 Days.** Read another version of the Bible you haven't read before.
3. **Increase the Amount of Bible Study You Do Every Day.**
4. **Meditate on the Following Verses for Wisdom.**
 1. EPH 5:15-16 *See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise...*
 2. Study the following Proverbs (PROV 3:13-18; 8:11; 9:10).
 3. Read a chapter of Proverbs every day from the NLT version. Whatever day of the month it is, read that Proverb. If it is October 26th, then read the 26th chapter of Proverbs.

Control Your Technology and Minimize Your Screen Time

Screen time is like sugar. A little bit is great. Too much is hurting your quest for happiness.

1. **Minimize Your Screen Time:** If we spend more time being entertained by screens (smartphone, television, computer) than we do learning from God in the Bible, that is an indicator that we need wisdom. In 2018, researchers discovered that Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram increased unhappiness. They found that Less Social Media, Less Smartphone and Less Screen Time lead to increases in happiness. Find out where you are using the most screen time. Determine to use less.
2. **Don't Compare Yourself with Others.** A big problem with screen technologies is that we can start comparing. In an era of paparazzi and reality shows, everyone lives in glass houses, and the more we see, the less happy we become. When you look at other people's lives, particularly on Instagram, it's easy to conclude that everyone else's life is cooler or better than yours.
3. **Meditate on the Following Verses about Being Satisfied and Not Comparing.**
 4. PSALM 23:1 *The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want...*
 5. GAL 5:23 Develop Self-Control and strive to be satisfied and not compare.
 6. LUKE 15:11-32 Read the parable of the prodigal (wasteful) son. But think about this story from the perspective of the prodigal's brother. The prodigal's brother should have focused on the fact that he had made better choices and hadn't lost anything. He should have celebrated that he had gained his brother back and enjoyed a great party. How many opportunities do we miss because we don't choose to have a positive mindset?

JOIN THE THREE-WEEK QUEST FOR HAPPINESS

- 1) Rate yourself on happiness overall from 10 (full & incredibly happy) to 0 (empty & incredibly sad).
- 2) Rate yourself on how wise you are from 10 (full) to 0 (empty).
- 3) Focus on getting wisdom for three weeks. After three weeks, share an email of your results to happy@tekeffect.net. Comment: ~Was this time well spent? Why or why not? Would you recommend this to others? What helped you most on this quest?

Example of an email you might send me after 21-days:

Before starting, I scored myself 4 on Happiness and 3 on Spiritual Law # 4.

Week 1: A week later, after praying about this Spiritual Law I scored 5 and 4 on the two scales.

Week 2: After 14 days, I've studied the Bible on this law and prayed about it and now scored 6 and 6.

Week 3: After 21 days, and using ideas from the action guide, I scored 7 on happiness and 7 on Law # 4.

Comment: I would say that this was time well spent. My wisdom has improved. I'd recommend this because I'm smarter. Action Guide tips 2 and 3 helped me the most! Mr. B. Happy (age 23)

ACTION GUIDE #7: BEAR MUCH FRUIT

NOTE: This is not a 21-Day Challenge action guide. For the most part, bearing much fruit takes time. Fruit trees take years to produce. However, we should know what our strengths are and in what areas we are fruitful. We should be actively using these talents to make life better for others.

We Are Judged by What We Do

In the end, it is not what we say that is as important as what we do (MAT 21:28-31). The scriptures tell us (ECC 12:14; 1 PET 1:17; REV 20:12) every one of us will be judged on Judgment Day (ROM 2:5-6) 'according to our deeds' and (2 COR 5:10) 'reward[ed] according to his own labor.'

The Parables Show Keeping Score is Important

The parable of the wheat and the tares showcases the difference between people that bear fruit and those that do not bear fruit (MAT 13:24-30). Wheat and tares look the same. The difference is that wheat produces grain that can be made into bread. Tares produce nothing useful and are therefore burned. If you are not producing fruit, you are taking up space. In the parable of the sower Christ explains several different conditions that would impact our ability to bear fruit (MAT 13:18-23). In this parable, just like the parable of the talents (MAT 25:14-30), we see that God is interested in HOW MUCH fruit we bear.

Jesus' Final Words of Wisdom

Hours before Jesus was crucified, He shared incredible information with His disciples. What does He talk about in His final hours? He talks about bearing fruit. He calls Himself the true vine, and His Father the vinedresser. He says the Father takes away those branches that don't bear fruit and that He prunes those branches that do bear fruit (JOH 15:2). Interestingly, even before Jesus began His ministry, John the Baptist said that "every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire (MAT 3:10; LUK 3:9). The clear message is that Jesus is very much interested in our bearing MUCH fruit.

So how much fruit are we bearing?

Fruit can be hard to measure. Our church has a flower committee? They beautify the stage (ISA 60:13). The ambiance of services is improved by this committee! Their work is pleasing to God and to those that worship. But how much fruit does this bear? How do we measure it? It's difficult. Therefore, we must pray for God to open our eyes to see our fruit from His perspective. Here are some areas that should be measured.

1. OURSELVES: Start with the nine fruit of the Spirit. Are we bearing fruit of the Spirit (Love, Joy, Peace... GAL 5:22-23)? This is internal fruit in our hearts, minds and souls. How would we score ourselves on each of these elements?
2. OUR HOMES: How are we doing in raising children, the fruit of our loins?
3. OUR WORK: Are we bearing spiritual fruit at work or are we a 'closet Christian'?
4. OUR CHURCH: Are we bearing MUCH fruit with our spiritual families?
5. OUR COMMUNITIES: Are we a lamp on a hill?

How are we using our talents to make life better for others?

In the parable of the talents, everyone was given at least one talent. What are we doing with our talent(s)? What area is God nudging you to spend more time in? Can you share your fruit with others? Can you measure your growth? How MUCH fruit are you bearing?

Please share your results, comments and suggestions! happy@tekeffect.net.

CONCLUSION

All these laws point to pleasing God with the way we focus our minds and our actions, so that the world may know and all can grow in true joy and HAPPINESS!

The Bible is our owner's manual. We should read it and know it like the back of our hands.

The Tree of Life is available for you. That is what the Bible is all about. At the end of the Torah, as Moses gives final instructions to God's people, God tells them to choose life! (DEU 30:19)

Choose LIFE! Choose blessings. Choose to be successful. Choose to accept the gift of eternal life.

Choose to Be Happy. Choose the abundant life.

(JOHN 10:10b) I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

An abundant, happy, successful life is waiting for you! In fact, Jesus tells us to ask for it.

(JOHN 16:24) Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.