

You Don't Need Someone's Approval to Be Happy

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You can be happy in life if you don't let other people control your attitude. In Philippians 1:15-17, Paul talks about different kinds of people who are affecting his ministry while he is a prisoner in Rome. There are some whom he considers comrades and encourage him in his ministry. Others are criticizing, competing with, or conspiring against his ministry. *"Some of them preach Christ because they are jealous and quarrelsome, but others from genuine good will. These do so from love, because they know that God has given me the work of defending the gospel. The others do not proclaim Christ sincerely, but from a spirit of selfish ambition; they think that they will make more trouble for me while I am in prison"* (Philippians 1:15-17 GNT).

Few things rob your happiness faster than being criticized or feeling like others are working against you. Why? Because we all want to be loved. We all want approval. We all want people to like us. Yet even with the negativity toward his ministry, Paul says in Philippians 1:18, *"It does not matter! I am happy about it—just so Christ is preached in every way possible, whether from wrong or right motives. And I will continue to be happy"* (GNT).

You don't need other people's approval to be happy. You're as happy as you choose to be! If others are unhappy with you, that's their choice. If you haven't earned someone's approval by now, you're probably not going to get it—and you're going to be miserable if you try to live for the approval of everybody else. Paul later explains in verses 29 and 30 why you can be happy no matter what: *"For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him. We are in this struggle together. You have seen my struggle in the past, and you know that I am still in the midst of it"* (NLT).

Paul says it is a privilege to suffer when you're doing the right thing, because that's when you're most like Jesus. Don't let what other people say or do control your happiness. Your joy comes from the Lord!

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