

Grit 'n' Grace — The Podcast
Episode #195: What if Happy is Holy?

So Amy, tell me some super-duper hyper-happy cliches that you tend to hear, especially in churchy circles that make you just cringy-crazy.

Well, I think they're so perfect these my list is particularly bad because they sort of are true. But so my first one is when one door closes, another one opens. And my response now is like, could you let me sit in my disappointment for two seconds? Just two seconds. That'd be really nice. Um, the another one is, there's always someone who has it worse than you. Can I confess that I did this to my son this morning, talking about how the church doesn't deal with single people well, and I said, Well, you should be a single woman. Let me tell you some of the stories my friends have told. And I went back and apologize because I was like, well, I remember diminished his situation. But this is the one that I do to myself. That's what I realized. There's always someone who has it worse than you what I don't want to sit in my own emotion.

Oh, gotcha, gotcha.

And then the third one is turn that frown upside down. Because I'm so smiley people will usually say like, let me see a smile. Come on.

Ah.

Oh my god. I'm old and sassy though.

Well, and of course, the thing that makes it you know, just listening to you. I'm cringing at how dismissive each of these are. Yeah. And how especially that last one. They're basically looking at your face and saying your face doesn't work for me right now change it, so I feel better, but it comes out as if they're trying to make you actually happy. So all right. Well, some that come to mind for me are everything happens for a reason? And it's like, No, I think something's just happened and they're bad and we move on from them but this whole idea that there is some kind of real significant reason behind everything. And you know, okay, even if it's true, don't need to tell me that in the moment. Don't tell me that in the midst of something, you know, empathize with me sit with me just say I know it's hard or it's even just say, it sounds hard.

That'd be so much better. And then the next one is so hard for me as a highly sensitive person. Oh, just put it out of your mind. Really? Really? Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Do you? Like do you know how to go into my brain and unhook the little wires that keep the repetition going? Because if you do, please tell me and I will be grateful for it. But the whole idea that you can just put it out of your mind, like, like, like pulling out a white hair. I don't know. You probably don't pull white hairs anymore.

I don't know. writing my wife.

You know, I'm like, just

put it on your mind just like taking the

tweezers going pink. Okay, no, it's gone. No, it doesn't work that way. And then I don't even know what to do with this next one. It just wasn't meant to be like, what does that even mean? And how is it supposed to make me feel better?

Well, so the point is right, fake happy is not what we're shooting for here. We want some real happy, but let's not do toxic, fake happy. So, today is all about how to find the real happy.

Well, this is Cheri Gregory. And I'm Amy Carol, and you're listening to grit and grace, the podcast that equips you to love who you're not love who you are, and live your one life well.

Today we're talking with Katie Orr, author of Secrets of the happy soul experience the deep delight you were made for. Katie Orr is passionate and equipping everyday women to experience God daily. She's a gifted writer and speaker and her innovative Bible study methods are used by thousands around the world in addition to Secrets of the happy soul She's the author of seven Bible studies and contributes regularly to online and print publications. Katie and her husband and their three children live near Orlando, Florida.

Can you do the second sentence again, starting with Katie or is passionate?

Yep. Katie Orr is passionate about equipping women. Sorry. Katie Orr is passionate about equipping everyday women to experience God daily.

Beautiful. On behalf of our listeners. On behalf of all our listeners, we want to say a big grit and grace and thank you to Katie Orr and her publisher, Bethany house for making this week's interview and next week's combo possible.

Here's the back of the book description for habit. Here's the back of the book description for Secrets of the happy soul.

Excuse me. How do some people do it? they rise above the circumstances and distractions of life and remain consistently happy even in tough times. They have a quiet sense of peace about them.

Examining the Bible and her own life Katie Orr has discovered that deep happiness and satisfaction are only possible when we're reading God and pursuing his good and specific purpose for each of us.

Secrets of the happy soul is your invitation into a deeper, more fruitful relationship with God and His Word. As Katie walks you through key teachings from the book of Psalms, you'll recognize how the world's definition of happiness pales compared to the daily delights God has in store for you.

draw closer to Him and your soul will go from lonely to connected from overwhelmed to level and lead from aimless to commissioned and unique. God doesn't promise the storm for you life but he is the anchor of every that he is the anchor every happy soul needs.

listeners, we are delighted that you all are joining us for an eye-opening conversation with Katie Orr today.

Katie, tell our listeners about your own spiritual journey and how your experiences led you to write Secrets of the happy soul.

Yeah, yeah. Well, I grew up in Christian school, but in Southern California, and I didn't go to church, so I knew a lot about God and have it, you know, couple young memories of maybe VBS, that type of stuff. But it wasn't until middle school that I was officially like a child of God. I knew all about God, but it was just sitting in my bedroom and it was, you know, this this spirit

the spirit was just saying you don't know me you don't know me you know all about me, but you don't know me. You're not trusting in me for salvation. You will not be with me for eternity. It was just like all the teaching I'd heard through school kind of came together. So that was a moment that I started my journey. But man, I just kind of stayed there for a very long time. And it wasn't until I was 17 year old in college, my first year at Auburn University where, you know, I just was in the motions like, Oh, I guess I should be a part of a Bible study because I'm Christian. And I found myself sitting around the room with other women my age, these young women, freshmen in college, and they talked about Jesus, like they were had just had coffee with him that morning, you know, when they were when they were studying their Bible and stuff, and I didn't study my Bible. I just went to the Bible study. I didn't put the two together that you actually study the Bible. And I had tried before, and it just, it failed. It was crickets. It was frustrating. It made me feel like a failure and I don't like failure. So I just avoided it. But through that it was through the Ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ now crew, that and seeing these women who was like, I'm missing something. I know God, I am saved. But I don't know God like these women know God, and I want that and just through The Ministry of crew of hearing the hows and whys of Christianity, not just the do's and the don'ts which are important, but I understand why or how I didn't know how to study my Bible. I didn't know what it you know how to be a light for Jesus, whatever that means instead. That was just a huge, huge time of growth for me. And it's certainly been a process. How that comes into play with this book is my own journey has certainly shaped my my writing ministry speaking mission, what I do, why I do what I do, because I want women to who were just like me feeling like I want to know God better, but I don't know what that looks like. I want to study my Bible, but I don't know what that looks like. And I was really drawn to Psalm one. And I love that passage. And I just wanted to study it in hopes to maybe write about if that happens. I did not set out to write a book about happiness. To say that right now I did not so I was in the camp of God doesn't want your help. He wants your holiness. God doesn't you're not allowed to be happy you you could be joyful though. I mean, I was fully fully in that camp. And so but as I studied, and I studied, and I studied, and I studied, and I was in seminary too, and I did my systematic theology paper on Psalm one and the teaching of happiness, and it just radically changed my view of happiness. And where this comes from, is right off on Samuel, Psalm one. And the Christian Standard Bible really translates the essence of this happy is the one who are blessed. It is the one who does this doesn't do that. It's like a tree that is firmly planted by streams of water, but also into Psalm two, because I realized as I studied, those two, those two psalms were meant to be an introduction to set up the entire book of Psalms. And so I just dove all in into those two and that's where the secrets of the happy soul came about, is

through looking at the teaching Have someone into and what does that have to do with our lives today?

Well, fantastic because now we are more excited than ever about this interview, because we might have heard those very objections that you just expressed on our Facebook page. So we're excited to dive in.

Absolutely. Well, and I love your subtitle experience, the deep delight you were made for the way I signed my emails is in his delight, I just love that word delight. So let's start out tell us what exactly is the happy soul you discuss in the book? I'm drawn to the concept but I don't know. I don't understand. Right? Yeah.

Well, and I kind of did if I took this happy soul kind of created this I wanted there to be a name because when you look at and I'm not a Hebrew scholar, but I read a lot of books on what the Hebrew scholar says about this. But when you look at that Hebrew word right off the bat Happy is the one or or less it is the one it's actually Or sometimes it can be pronounced a share and I don't quite understand why that so maybe a Hebrew scholar can help me with there but the bottom line is they all teach the same thing that this is like a it's a name of God's people. Bless it is the one it's like it's it's it's an exclamation it's a yes, it's an adjective. And yes, it's defining, but it's more of like a happy is the one like somebody walks in the room and they go happy, are they blessing that person is blessing. And we do that to ourselves, don't we, we say, Man, I am so blessed. We would never say I am so happy. But I am so blessed. And what we're doing, we're recognizing the reality of because we are in Christ, there is something that we are and that we have been given. That is not from us. It's from God. And so this is our part of our identity in Christ that we are a happy soul. It's like our spirit part of our spiritual DNA that we are Happy we walked into the room and someone would say Happy soul like that's who they are. Just like we would say, I mean, I'm an Auburn grad. So we would say I'm an honor grad. You know, like, there's just something that with that identification, it's it's that kind of idea in the language, that this is part of our identity that we are happy and I've just named it. We are a happy soul. Hmm.

Fantastic. Well, when you were talking about your salvation story earlier, yours is so very similar to mine. And early in the book, you mentioned that because you receive salvation, you thought you wouldn't struggle anymore. But what does the Bible teaches about this misconception?

Yeah, one of the things that really helps me grasp my, you know, put my head around this concept is, is understanding that salvation is a process. Now I'm not saying we are saved more than once. I don't hear that. I'm saying we are saved once. But our salvation as we usually talk about it for me it was sitting on that Paisley bedspread in my in my middle school bedroom. Like I said earlier, that was my salvation. But that was the starting point, not the finish line. That was the starting point of my salvation. The finish line of my salvation will be one day when I stand in front of Jesus face to face and I am fully and completely like him. That's what the Bible teaches. It teaches three very distinct stages of our salvation. The first is the our justification. And it's really nice stage because it's an instant thing. It's an instant salvation. And that's how we tend to think of our salvation. It was instant it was that moment. But then from that moment, until I see Jesus face to face, I am now in the process of sanctification of becoming more and more like Jesus. So it is a process in that and then that third stage That last step is our glorification when we are made complete and everything that is true of us in Christ is realized fully. So I thought it was just like one and done. You know, I thought it was just like I'm saved and so now I should automatically be able to read my Bible I should be obedient because I'm a Christian now, I shouldn't want these old things anymore because I'm a Christian now, and I got me in so much trouble because then I was in this you know, this place of guilt and feeling less than feeling there's something wrong with me. Maybe I didn't do it, right. Yes, I walked out several times, you know, as a as a student. I was one of those. I got saved every time we went on a retreat because I was worried I hadn't done it right, because it didn't seem to stick. Anyone else.

Preach, keep preaching. Yeah.

Oh, my goodness. Thank you so much, and I appreciate you. spelling it out like that. It makes it easy, easy to use. Understand, and I know I'm not the only one. I'm not the only Gritten grace girl who identifies with that whole sense of guilt and the feeling like I must not be doing it right, because it doesn't feel right. Or because I'm not seeing the fruits. I'm not. I'm not like the other women I see. So. So speaking of which you say part of being a happy soul is knowing God through reading the Bible. But that's not always easy. You said earlier. You tried it, and you heard crickets. So thank you for that honesty. So what should we do when we hear crickets or we read the Bible? And it seems confusing.

There's a lot of things we can do. I think the very first thing we need to do is pray. We need to remember that this is God's will for our lives, right? It's God's will for us to know and treasure and obey God's word. That's, that's his will. For us. It's very clear in Scripture. And so if we, the Bible also talks about our prayers, that when we pray according to God's will, he's going to hear that word that he's going to hear that and he's gonna answer He, it's his will for us to to be in the Bible and to understand it. But we've got some work to do but start with praying. And the second tip I would be I would tell you is to get in community, whether that be online, prioritize being in your local church, if your local church has a Bible study and you can physically make it be there, even if it's not your favorite topic, even if you don't really like the Bible study person. I don't know just get there because there is something special that God does when we are among God's people face to face. Obviously, that can't always happen, either because of the schedule or pandemics or you know, fill in the blank. There's so many things that keeps us from stages. Some stages of life are really hard to do that. But if you can do it, do it. You will learn more studying around the Bible with a bunch of other women than you will on your own. And you'll have a place built in place to ask questions when you are confused. But as far as learning how to study I would give you one tip and really learning how to do Bible study is just Learning how to ask good questions. And the number one question that we need to ask when we come to Bible is not what does this mean to me? or What am I supposed to do about it? Those are okay questions to ask. But if you only did one question, you need to ask this one first. What is true about God here? Just come to a Bible, come to your Bible, read a passage and ask yourself what's true about God here, and just sit there for a while. You may not understand all that other stuff there. But there's usually something that you can hold on to that this teaches that God is full of love. This teaches that God is merciful. This teaches that God will provide for me, and there's a lot of good application there just in remembering who God is.

Mm hmm.

Well, thank you for giving us that one simple step that you know one of the things that is always on my heart is teaching women to study their Bibles on their own because they have lots of amazing teachers around them and authors like Katie or around them writing great books, but Also that like God wants to interact with us one on one, through his words. And that is such a great tip, Katie. So, Secrets of the happy soul teaches us that just knowing God's ways or knowing what our Bible say, isn't enough to be a happy soul. So what's the next step? What do we have to do to become that happy soul in addition to studying our Bibles?

Yeah, well, we need to remember that you you we are happy so but we're not right. We were immediately declared a happy soul in that just that process of salvation. We are immediately declared you were happy now and credit like that's who you are. All of those things are characteristics. The the picture it's almost like the perfect portrait. It's kind of like Psalm 31. I mean, yeah, Proverbs 31. That woman, you know, it's not a real person. It's an ideal. It's the perfect portrait. It's kind of like this. This is what you want to be right. Don't you want to be that I think everyone every one of us goes That's what I want to be. So same idea and someone that this was not a real person. It's a this is who we can be in Christ. And so we but how do we work that out? It's through God's word for sure. And so we first we need to know it for ourselves. I think there's a lot of us that there might be a small portion, maybe you are just brand new to all this Christianity stuff and you know, zero about the Bible. In some ways, you're in a better place than those of us who maybe grew up around a lot of teaching. And we have to do the sifting of what was somebody's opinion versus what's actually in the Bible. There was a lot of things that I've been taught. And I think that the, the motives behind the more good it was for my good, but it was a bunch of rules that actually aren't in the Bible. Again, they were good. They were helping, you know, like, your neckline needs to be high, not low. I mean, good idea, but it's not. Well, there is there is some specific, there's no specific command that you're letting Line needs to be a certain, you know, inches above your cleavage. That is not in the Bible. But there is a general principle that we as women should not be so worried about an external appearance and that we need to be modest. So we need to know it for ourselves though, we need to start there, because we can't act on we may be spending a lot of time acting on God's word, when we're really acting on someone else's opinion about God's word. So we need to know it for ourselves and then we need to treasure it. This is like the idea of like, this is a secret family recipe that you're not gonna let go of, you know, like, you just, it's just yours, you own it. And it's just, of course, we need to give God's word away, but that same, that seems treasuring idea. We need to treasure it and then we need to embrace it. And when we fully embrace a way of life, it permeates everything we do. And so as happy souls if we want to fully realize who we can be in Christ, we need To see God's word not as something we dread, not as something that is just this duty if we do have there is a sense of duty, but it needs to be more of this treasuring and embracing in a way that everything we do is shaped by the Bible. And I think that instead of giving us a list of Okay, how do I act on God's way? It's, it's more of a, like I said, that embracing that affects everything we do.

Mm hmm. That makes so much sense. So we asked our listeners for some questions, and they came up with some doozies. Katie, are you ready for this? Kind of a lightning round here. And

you know, I'll just say up front that there was a lot of suspicion about the word happiness like, I got private messages from people saying happiness is just a worldly emotion like, and then nobody actually said it. But I there was this undertone of why are you even doing an interview on this topic, so I'm I'm not going to say it was outright hostility. But I will say that there was some concern that was expressed so

and I get it, too, I get it too, and a lot of women that I was banking on this, and thankfully, it went my way. But there was a lot of people that have followed me for a while and have known my teaching. And they said, if this was written by anybody else, I wouldn't have bought it. But I knew, because I knew you and I knew what you you would have used what you've said, For years, I knew that it must have been not what I thought it was. But this book absolutely is meant to draw the one in who feels like the spiritual failure who feels like they would not pick up a Bible study because they feel like Bible studies, not for me. So the title that everything is absolutely hoping to see. It's for everybody. But I really want to reach the woman who is just feeling like I'm a failure at this Christian thing. But hey, I want happiness. Like let's do that. Let's do that. And hopefully, and yeah, we can talk about A little bit more about what I mean by happiness. Well, let's do that. So,

first listener question was should happiness be a goal? And at what cost? Huh? Yeah.

Well, I think it depends on how you define happiness. Each one of us if we had to give a definition for happiness, it probably be totally different. And so it depends on how you define happiness. But if we can go back to that ASHRAE word, or share word, that Hebrew word, I don't know. I'm so confused. But anyway, it's this, this ASHRAE word is if you go back to the original audience to their picture of happiness, who knows if they actually had a word that was called happiness, but what it's what it's trying to communicate is abundance and safety. You get this picture of someone who is lying under the shade because they didn't have air conditioning, right? So they're lying under the shade of this beautiful, fruitful tree. It's giving them shade. It's giving them food. It's abundant. They didn't have irrigation, they had the stream of water. And if that stream went dry, then there goes their food, there goes their shade. So there is this picture of abundance, happy one is in a place of abundance, but also safety, that they're not worried about the worst breaking out or battle back breaking out, you know, there was a king on the throne who was in control, and there was safety that was given. And so there's so much there that obviously, not one of us would get that just by reading the first reading someone but when you dig into the original audience, you see that and that, I

mean, is that not the picture of happiness, though that each of us want, we want abundance, and we want safety and when we are in a place of abundance and safety, we feel happy, and we shouldn't feel guilty about it. But the reality is, this is where we get it different is that it's not talking about physical abundance or safety. It's a spiritual abundance. Safety, and every one of us can have complete happiness in Christ. Really one day, you know, on this earth, there's always going to be something threatening our abundance in our safety, especially physically, but even spiritually, but yes, I think we can make happiness a goal, if we're defining it biblically. And it's as and if we are seeing that it is only through the presence and provision of God, that we will experience that abundance and safety.

Beautifully said beautifully said. Okay, so next question. Is happiness, a journey or a destination? And do we ever stop seeking is finding God our ultimate happiness? You kind of answered pieces of that in your first answer?

Yeah, so we've talked about it, is it a journey or a destination? Yes or no? First and foremost, it's an identity. It is who we are in Christ. We are chosen, we're adopted where you know if you if you have ever done a study On our identity and crisis, very helpful to know I'm a I'm a daughter of the king, you know, people like that's a good coffee cup, you know, thing. I'm adopted, I'm chosen by God, I'm redeemed, I'm saved. I'm also happy. I'm also have that abundance and safety in in Christ. So it is, it's not our one identity, it's part of our identity in Christ. But just like all those other things, we all are in a process of this inward identity becoming an external reality. That's that sanctification piece that we talked about. Our inward identity is holy, but I'm surely don't feel holy. Right? My my inward identity when God looks at me right now he sees the righteousness of Christ. I am completely wholly in God's eyes, but I am certainly not completely holy. Today, by any means. Same thing. We are completely wholly happy. We are completely wholly chosen, adopted all those things, but we don't always feel like that. That's the reality. And often it's not our reality, we act as if it's something different. We act like orphans instead of chosen, adopted part of God's family. And so that's this process of our inward identity becoming an external reality so that when things don't go my way, I can still experience soul level happiness, that contentment, joy, peace, all of those semantically, the meaning of those words in the Bible. They're more like kissing cousins than than they are. I don't know, that might have been the right word to say, but they're really close. They're really close cousins. These words joy, gladness, happiness, contentment, peace, all of those, they're overlapping. They're not the separate identity. It's they're, they're just, they're cousins. And

they're, they're more similar than they are, are not similar. And so all those things become true of us as we work them out. I'm sorry, go ahead.

No, I just keep thinking About how I'm excited to hear you describe that. And I keep thinking, if we as Christians lived that inward identity as an external reality, how many more people will be drawn to Jesus? That's I just keep thinking that, that the dour Enos, with which we go about our faith does not make us faithful. Yeah, it just makes us It puts up barriers. So interesting. Sorry, just an aside. I got excited.

You know, what's interesting is that in part of my research, also one of the one books that I read that was extremely helpful and it's super detailed, and it's, it's called happiness by Randy Alcorn. It's about this thick and I mean, he just, he just, it's the whole book is an argument for why we it's okay for us to be happy. It's really it's okay, it's okay. Christians chill out. That's my words is so. And it really was just so eye opening and in every chapter, he's got another quote from people that we know like CS Lewis And Spurgeon and Tozer and all of these you know if those words mean anything to you then their quote should do and they use the word happiness and they say things like, if anybody in this world should be happy, it should be us. And, and he is happy who possesses God. I mean, there's just some amazing quotes out there that nowadays we would we would amen if it said joy in there but Huh, nope, it says Happy I shut it. So, again, I was there too. I would have been a little skeptical about that chose your guy. He told me I'm supposed to be happy.

Love it.

Me. Let's go ahead and do the last question because I'm afraid that number eight will actually take us off in too much of a different direction.

Okay. So Katie closes out today. Tell us what is your prayer for the woman who reads this book.

My prayer is that you realize that we're all on a journey. And that you if you were in Christ, you already have full capacity to live a happy life. You are happy Be, it is part of your identity. It's who you are. But another word to use, I think in this conversation is flourishing right back to that Psalm one tree that is flourishing and fruitful and green and resilient. It is it can be our reality to flourish as a believer, and it is as we commit to to start that over again.

as we could.

I'm sorry, I just went editing for Yeah,

I just had to do that. But it's like, totally also my brain did this last night too. I was trying to think of a word it just shut down.

But as we focus on who God is, as we treasure, his word, and as we obey His word, our lives will become flourishing. He's giving he has given us the prescription for happiness, in His Word, and it's through his presence with his people. And by the of his spirit. And so that's what I really hope a woman walks away with this book that scene. It's not something they need to conjure up themselves. It's not because they need to be a happier person. Naturally, I'm not a naturally happy person. I'm a pessimist. I'm a grumpy one. But in Christ, I am already happy. And through the power of the Spirit, I can help that inward identity become more and more of an external reality.

We hope you've enjoyed Episode 195 of grit and grace, the podcast.

Listeners, we're so grateful that you join us each and every week.

And we're so grateful for this week's sponsor Katie Orr, author of Secrets of the happy soul experience, the deep delight you were made for, and her publisher Bethany house.

Check out our web page at [grit and grace, the podcast.com slash Episode 195](http://gritandgrace.com/episode-195). There you'll find our transcript links to Katie's website and social media and a direct link to order Katie's book Secrets of the happy soul experience the deep delight you were made for.

If you're not yet a member of our Facebook group, we would love to have you join us just search fate. Just search Facebook for grit and grace, that community and you'll find us we'd love to have you join In the conversation, and also ask your questions for upcoming guest interviews.

Join us next week as we process what we learned from today's interview with Katie Orr, author of Secrets of the happy soul.

For today, grow your grit. Embrace God's grace. And as he lights the path along the one beautiful life, he's planed for you. Take the next step and LIVE IT!