

Light of Joy

*Lift up the **light** of your face upon us, O LORD!*

Psalm 4.6

Light of Joy



I'm not happy
Bob.

Not. Happy.

Light of Joy

Are you happy?

“Not really...

but I have a deeper joy.”

Light of Joy

0. Introduction
1. Our Happiness Matters
2. Our Barriers to Joy
3. Our Roadmap to Joy

Light of Joy

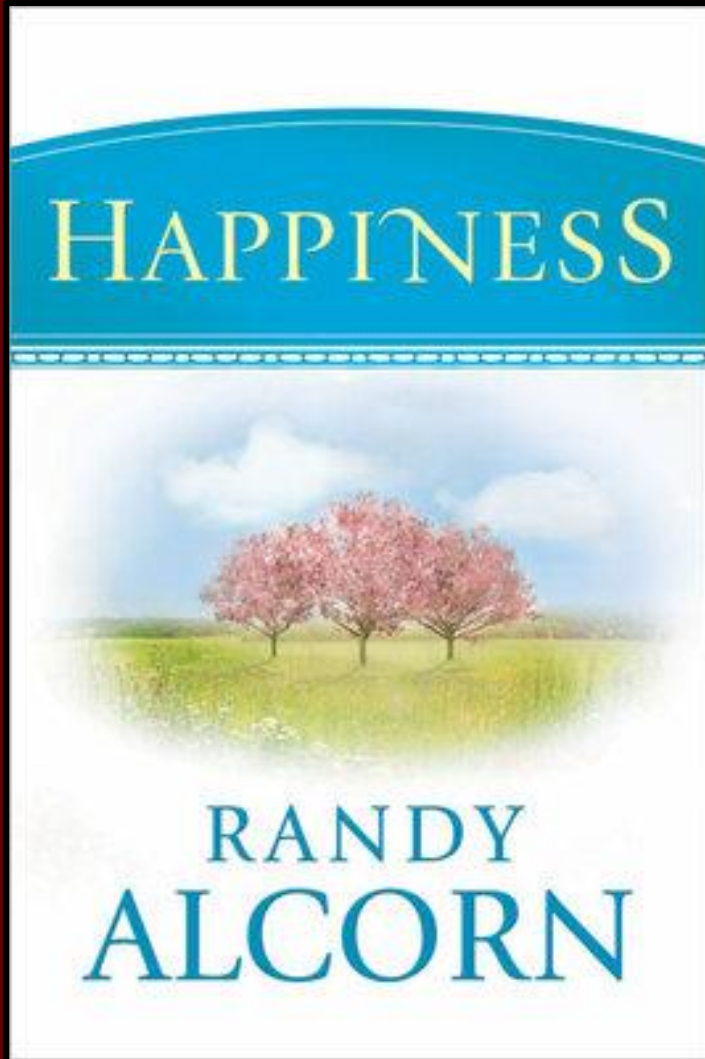
0. Introduction

1. Our Happiness Matters
2. Our Barriers to Joy
3. Our Roadmap to Joy

Light of Joy

Joy vs. Happiness

False dichotomy?

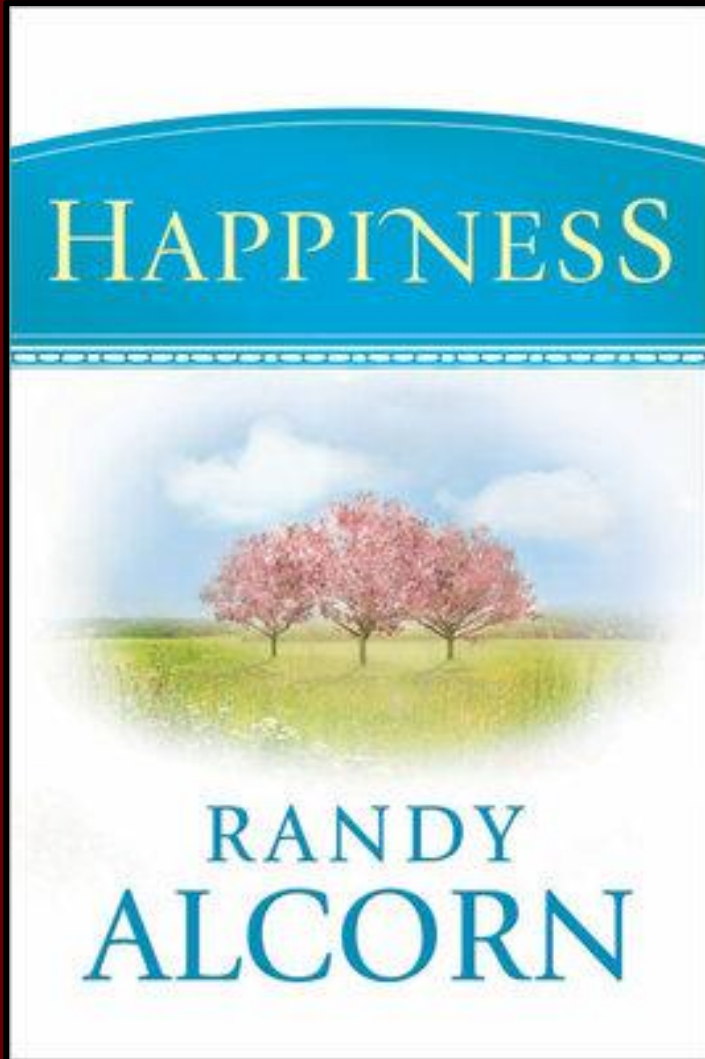


Light of Joy

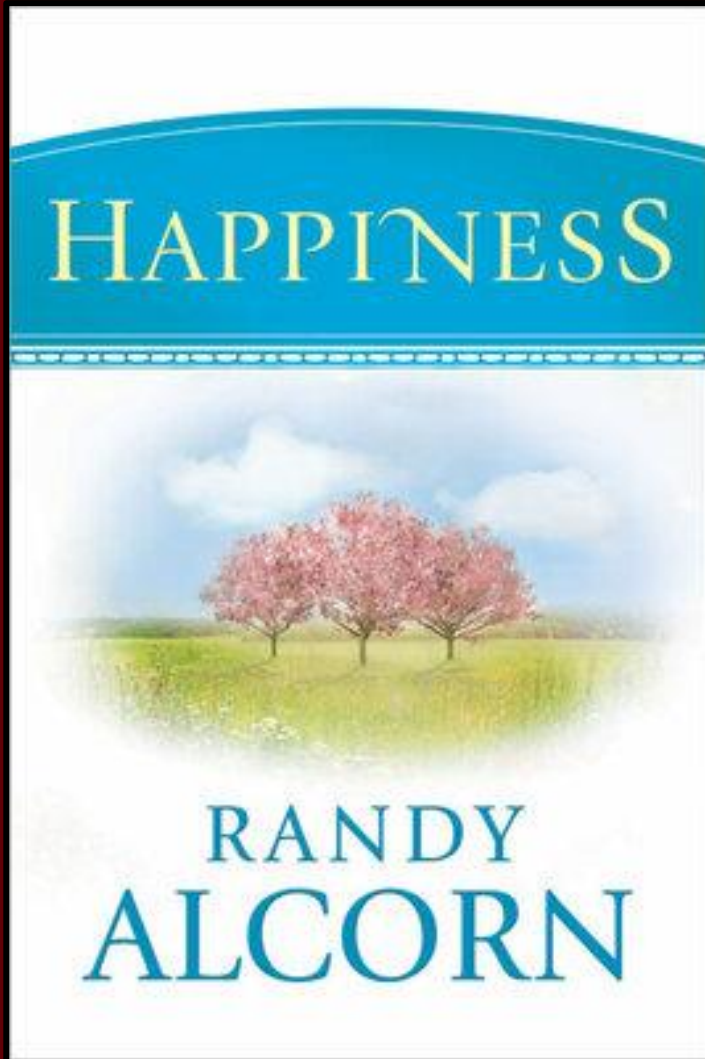
“Among Christ-followers,
happiness was once a positive
desirable word.

Only in recent times have
happiness and joy been set in
contrast with each other.”

Light of Joy

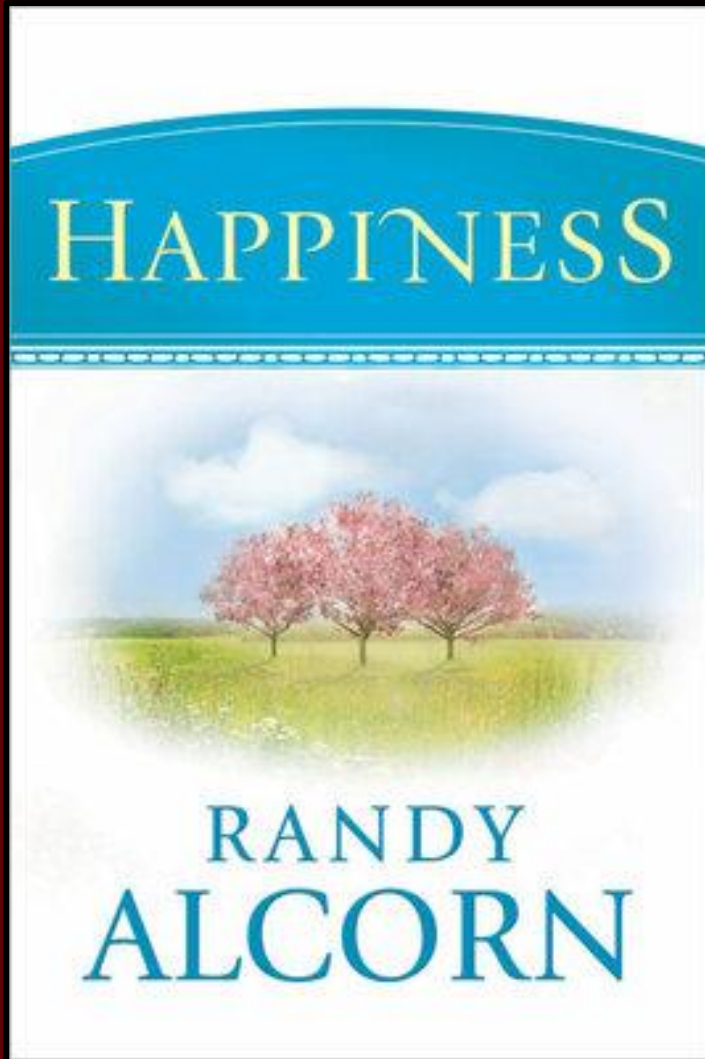


“I believe this is biblically and historically ungrounded and has significant downsides.”



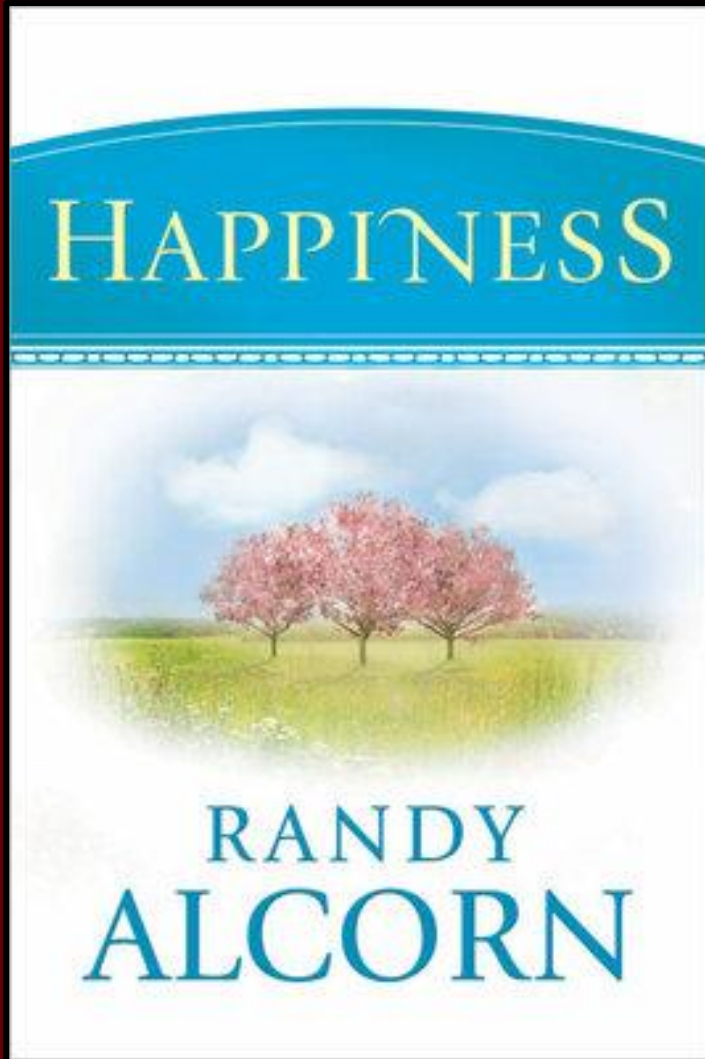
Light of Joy

“Are laughter, celebration, and happiness God-created gifts, or are they ambushes from Satan and our sin nature that incur God’s disapproval?”



Light of Joy

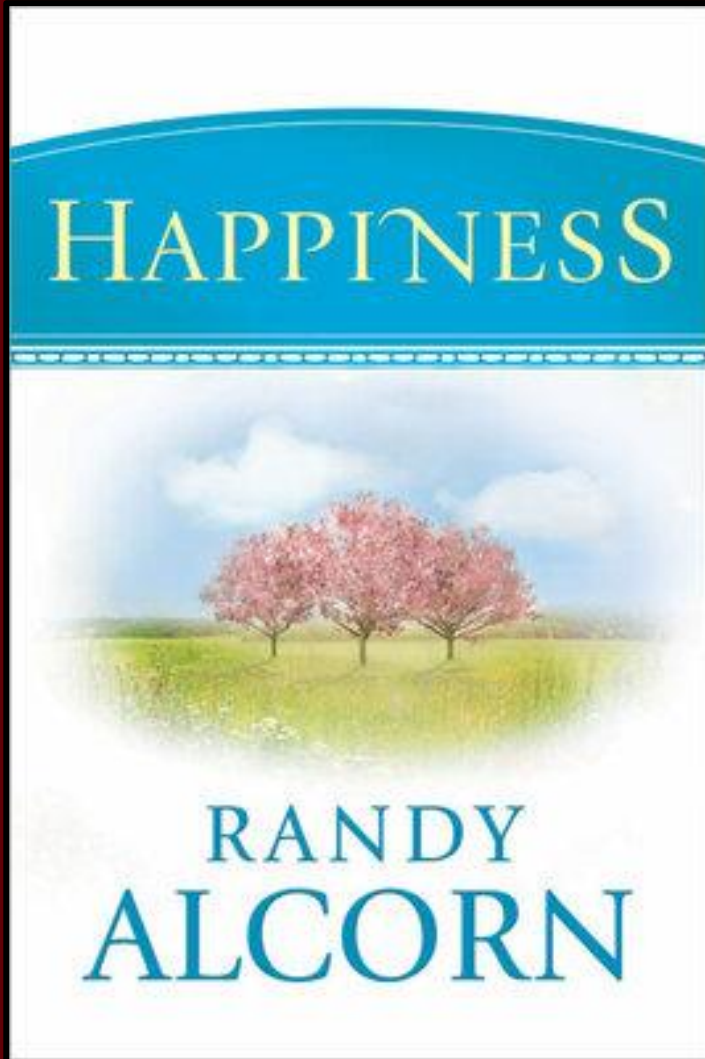
“Our answer determines whether our faith in God is dragged forward by duty or propelled by delight.”



Light of Joy

p.265

“Happiness without joy is shallow and transient because it’s based on outward circumstances rather than an attitude of the heart.”



Light of Joy

“As for joy without happiness,
it’s a spiritualized lie.

The Bible does not separate
joy and happiness and neither
should we.”

~ Mike Mason

Light of Joy

1 Peter 1.8

Though you have not seen him,
you love him.

Though you do not now see him,
you believe in him and
rejoice with joy that is inexpressible
and filled with glory.

Light of Joy

...rejoice with joy...

“*chara*” (used 58 times in the NT):

joy, rejoicing, happiness, gladness

Light of Joy

Blessed (*Psalm 1*)

Hebrew: *asher*

Greek: *makarios*

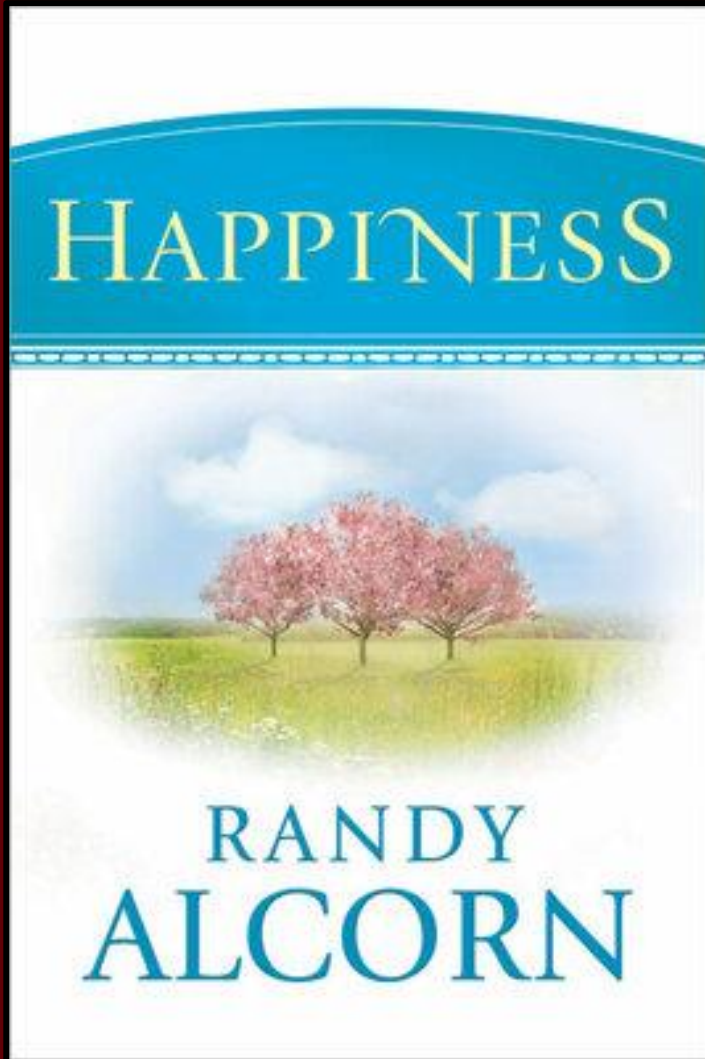
Closest English translation: *happy*

Light of Joy

Blessed (*Psalm 1*)

While most believers don't know what
blessed means,

Most unbelievers don't care what it means.

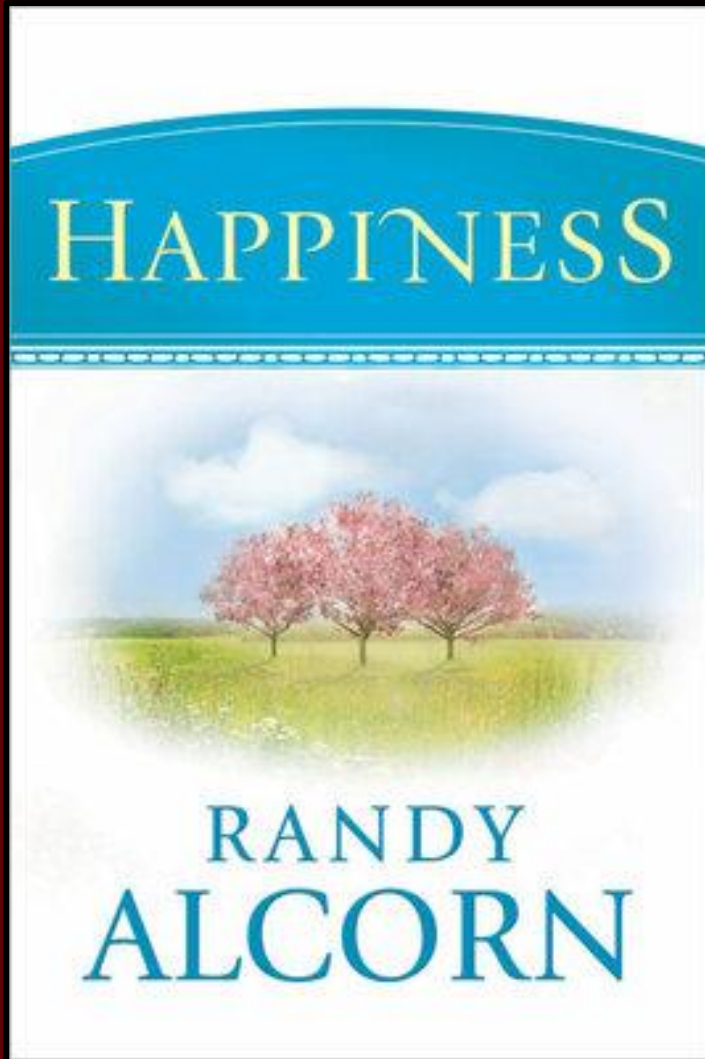


Light of Joy

A pastor writes that many people thought him to be unhappy:

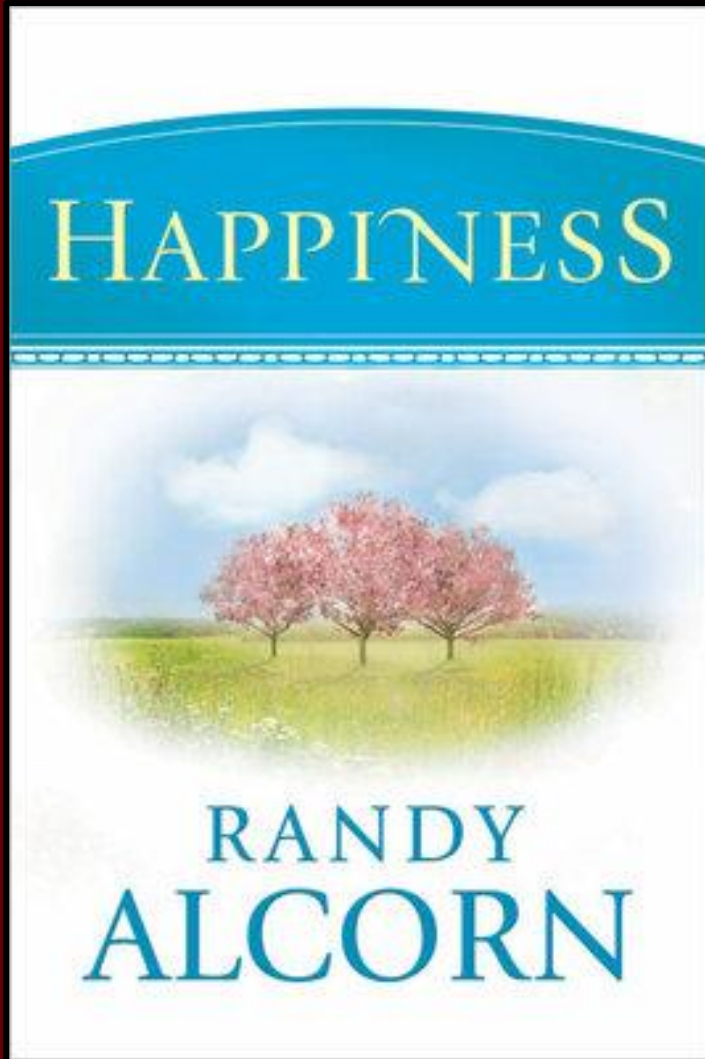
“Cheer up,” people would say.

“Why are you so serious all the time?”



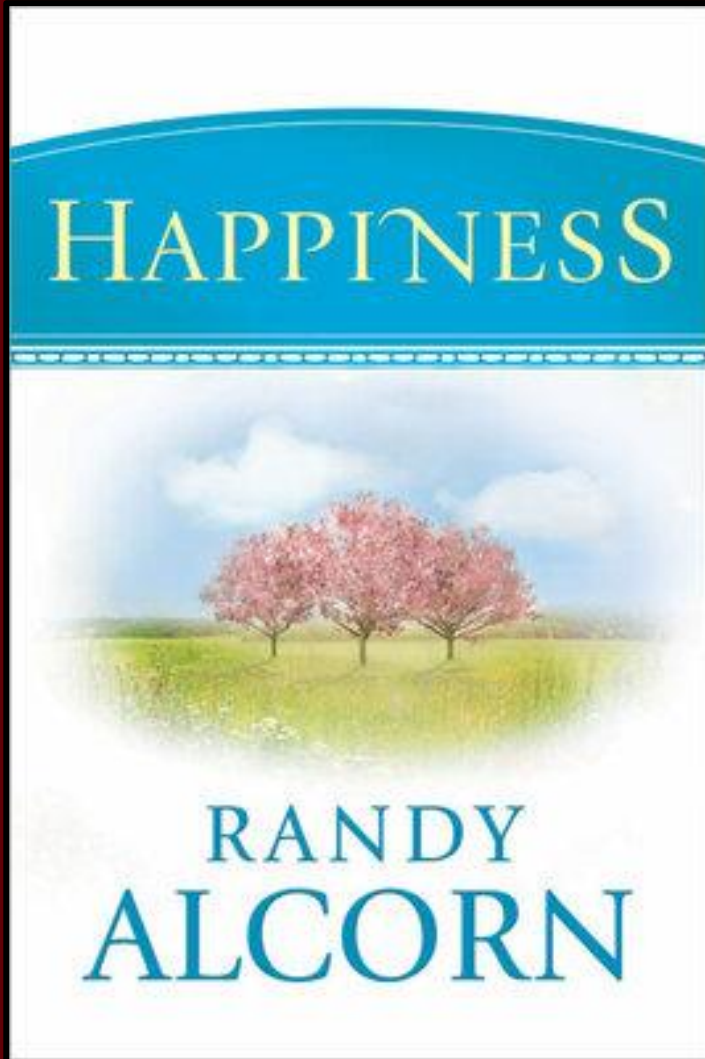
Light of Joy

My many and varied explanations over the years may have faltered, but could have been summed up in one word: *makarios*. To these myopic observers I may not have appeared happy,



Light of Joy

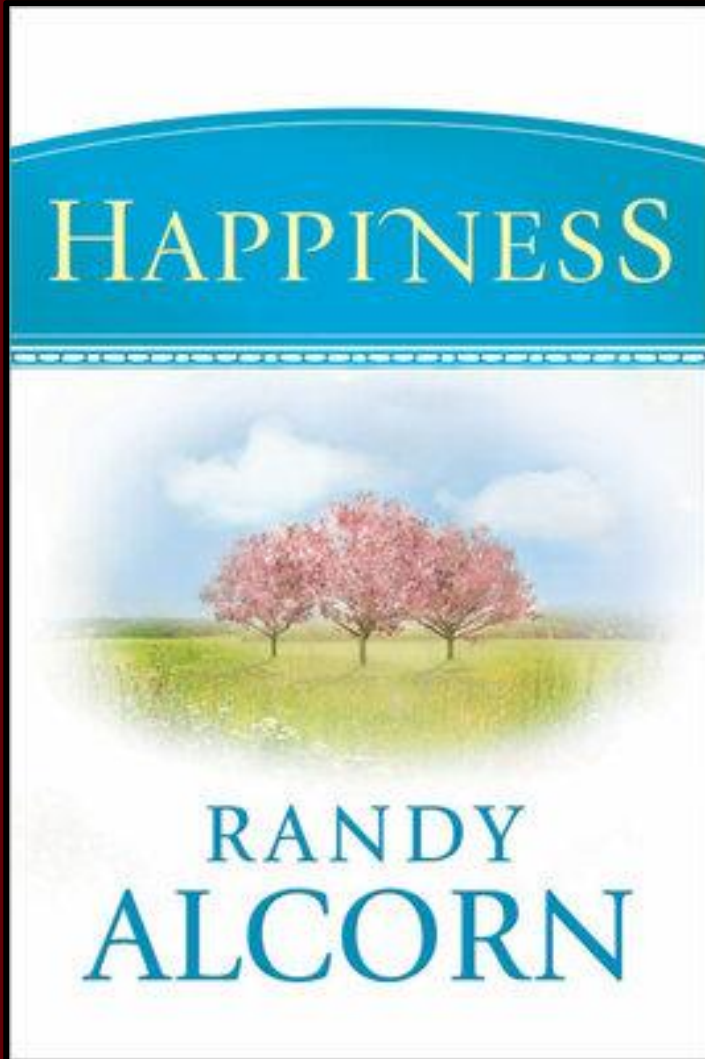
because I had long since moved past “happy” to the more substantial state of Spiritual “joy”. There is a deep, profound Spiritual joy that is far superior to any amount of superficial happiness.



Light of Joy

Alcorn's comments:

Certainly we should seek a deep joy, but is happiness something we are to “move past” to reach an unemotional “joy” that others actually mistake for unhappiness?



Light of Joy

Attempts to make *makarios* lofty and super-spiritual can rob happiness in God of its rich, emotional warmth and delight.

When Jesus used the word, it meant deep happiness, not deeply hidden happiness.

Light of Joy

Synonyms:

Joyfulness

Gladness

Happiness

Delight

Light of Joy

Outward expressions:

Prov 15.13 - A glad heart makes a cheerful face

Job 8.21 - He will yet fill your mouth with laughter

Ps 16.11 - In Your presence there is fullness of joy

John 15:11 - These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

Light of Joy

Outward expressions:

Genuine Smiles

Laughter

Encouraging Words

Sparkling Eyes

Play - happiness in motion

Light of Joy

Are you happy?

Are you able to express your happiness?

Do others notice?

Light of Joy

Questions to ponder:

1. Are you known as a person who laughs often?

Did Jesus laugh?

2. Should “play” only be suitable for children?

Did Jesus play?

3. Is having “fun” something you should pursue?

Do you think Jesus ever had fun?

Light of Joy

Analogies:

Joy is to Happiness

as

Love is to Like

Light of Joy

Growing up, I knew I was “loved”
(and for that I am extremely thankful)
but I didn’t always sense that I was “liked”.

What if “liking” someone is actually a
deeper, richer, more authentic form
of loving them?

Light of Joy

We are supposed to love family members
but it's sometimes much more difficult
to like them — to like being around them.

Be honest.

Light of Joy

I want my children to know that I not only love them, but that *I really like them* — that I like being around them and like spending time learning all about them.

And...I want them to **like** each other!

Light of Joy

And so it is with happiness and joy.

What if happiness is actually a deeper, richer, more authentic form of joy?

We know Jesus was joyful...(*Ps 16.11*)

It's vital to also know that He was extremely happy!

Light of Joy

Conclusion:

Let's reclaim *Biblical happiness!*

And not let it be defined as a
“merely superficial term” that should be
avoided at all costs in order to make room
for a “deeper, more profound joy”.

Light of Joy

0. Introduction
1. Our Happiness Matters
2. Our Barriers to Joy
3. Our Roadmap to Joy

Light of Joy

0. Introduction
1. Our Happiness Matters
2. Our Barriers to Joy
3. Our Roadmap to Joy

Light of Joy

Our Happiness Matters

Why do runners wear
headlamps in the dark?
Not to see so much as
to be seen!



Light of Joy

Our Happiness Matters

Christiana Tsai was born into a wealthy home in China. When attending a high school run by missionaries, she came to Christ.

In her autobiography, she tells of how her Buddhist family reacted to her conversion with extreme anger.

Light of Joy

Our Happiness Matters

They tore her Bible to pieces and threw it in her face. But eventually her brother asked her about Christianity. The reason he gave was simple:

“You seem much happier than you used to be.”

Light of Joy

Our Happiness Matters

It wasn't messianic prophecies or dynamic preaching that opened him to the gospel – it was his sister's happiness.

“Good news of great joy” should produce happiness, and when it does, people notice. They're drawn to happiness like iron filings to a magnet.

~Randy Alcorn

Light of Joy

Our Happiness Matters

In “*A Christmas Carol*”, Charles Dickens wrote,
“It was a great surprise to Scrooge...to hear a
hearty laugh...

there is nothing in the world so **irresistibly**
contagious as laughter and good-humor.”

Light of Joy

Your “headlamp” of joy and happiness
is **irresistibly contagious**
to a desperate world full of desperate
people longing for happiness.

Light of Joy

0. Introduction
1. Our Happiness Matters
2. Our Barriers to Joy
3. Our Roadmap to Joy

Light of Joy

- 0. Introduction
- 1. Our Happiness Matters
- 2. Our Barriers to Joy
- 3. Our Roadmap to Joy

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

1. Sin

2. Selfishness

3. Stoic view of God

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

1. Sin

Worry and Anxiety –
fear of being unprepared

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

1. Sin

Guilt and Shame —
fear of being exposed

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

1. Sin

Doubt and unbelief —
fear of being unforgiven

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

1 John 4.18

*There is no fear in love, but perfect love
casts out fear.*

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

John 16.22

*I will see you again,
and your hearts will rejoice,
and no one will take your joy from you.*

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

1. Sin

2. Selfishness

3. Stoic view of God

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

1. Sin

2. Selfishness

3. Stoic view of God

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

2. Selfishness

What about me?

What about what I want?

What's the best way to manipulate others?

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

2. Selfishness

Definition: A stable tendency to devote one's time and resources to one's own interests and welfare — and unwillingness to inconvenience one's self for others.

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

2. Selfishness

Research paper “The Altruism Paradox”:

Those whose activities are devoted to bringing themselves happiness...

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

2. Selfishness

Research paper “The Altruism Paradox”:
are far less likely to be happy than those whose
efforts are devoted to making others happy.

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

2. Selfishness

Research paper “The Altruism Paradox”:

Remarkable Conclusion: Do unto others as you
would have them do unto you. (*Luke 6.31*)

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

Isaiah 58.10

*if you pour yourself out for the hungry and
satisfy the desire of the afflicted,
then shall your light rise in the darkness and
your **gloom** be as the **noonday**.*

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

I do all these things but I still feel gloomy...

Why do you do what you do?

~ to be noticed and appreciated by others?

~ or possibly to feel better about yourself?



Light of Joy

1 Corinthians 4.3

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

I have a very low opinion of your
opinion of me —
but - I also have a very low opinion
of my opinion of me.



Light of Joy

The essence of gospel-humility is not thinking more of myself or thinking less of myself, it is thinking of myself less.

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

1. Sin

2. Selfishness

3. Stoic view of God

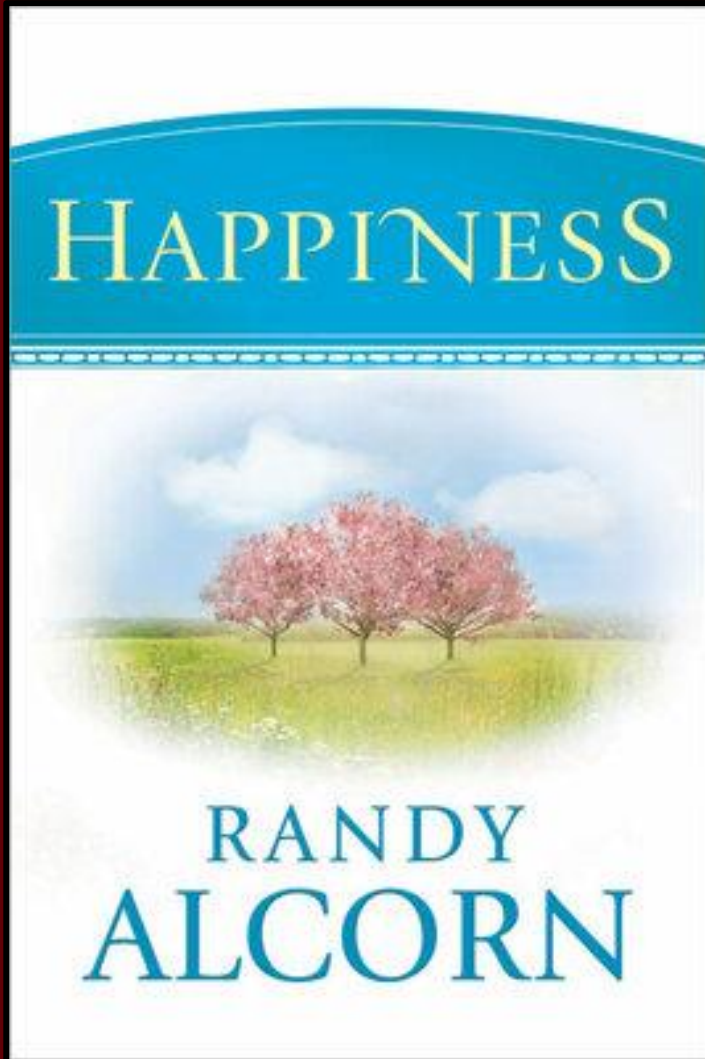
Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

1. Sin

2. Selfishness

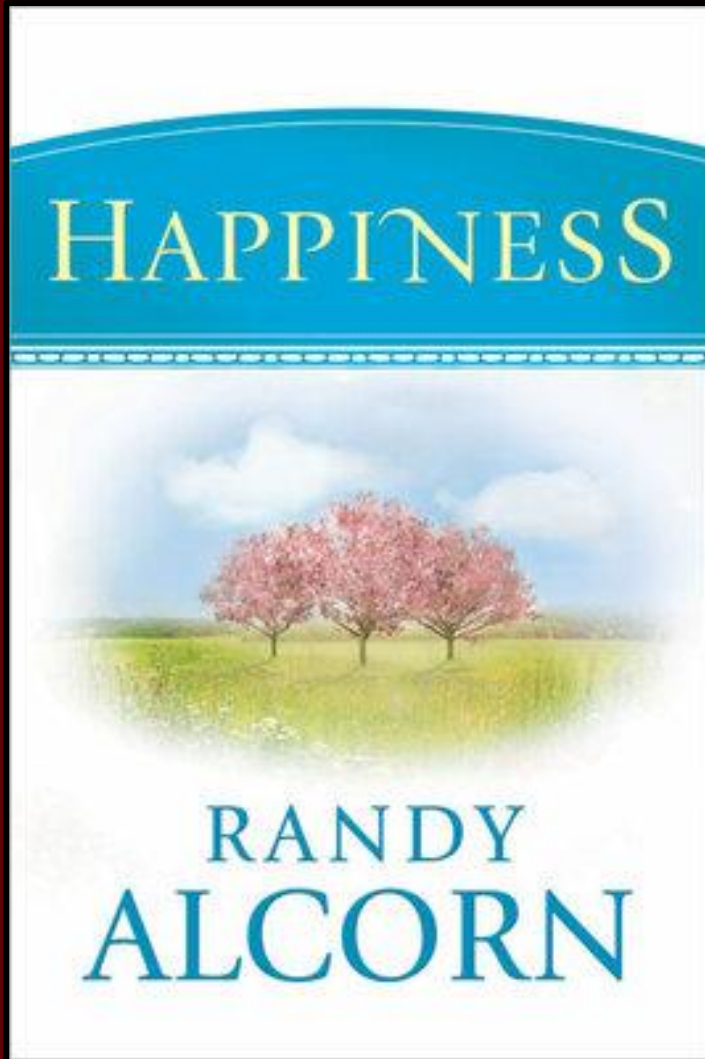
3. Stoic view of God



Light of Joy

Nearly all Christians believe that God is good, but many don't believe that he's good natured.

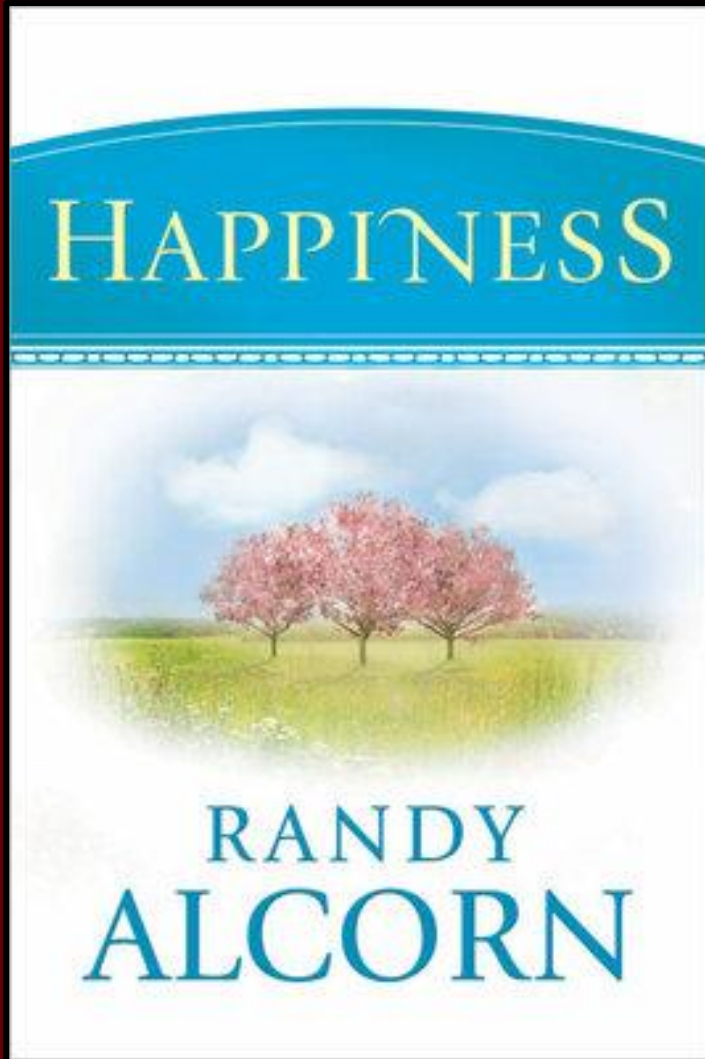
When we think of God as happy, we see how happiness overflows in all he does.



Light of Joy

If your grumpy neighbor asks, “what are you up to?” you’ll see it as a suspicious, condemning question.

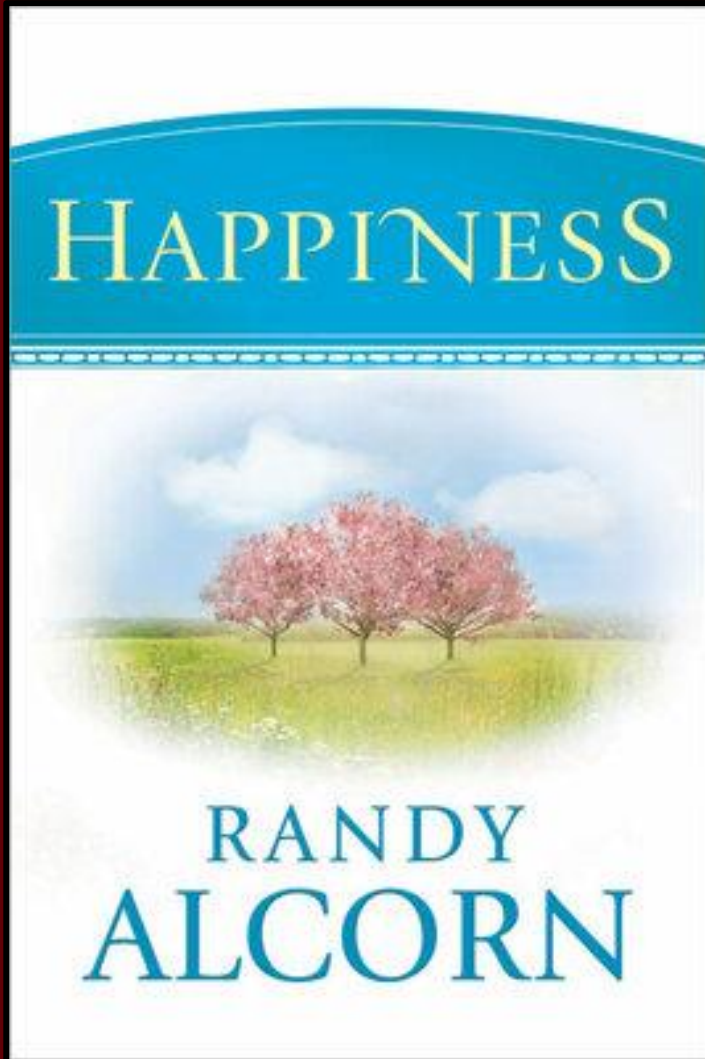
But if your cheerful neighbor asks the same thing, you’ll smile and talk about your plans.



Light of Joy

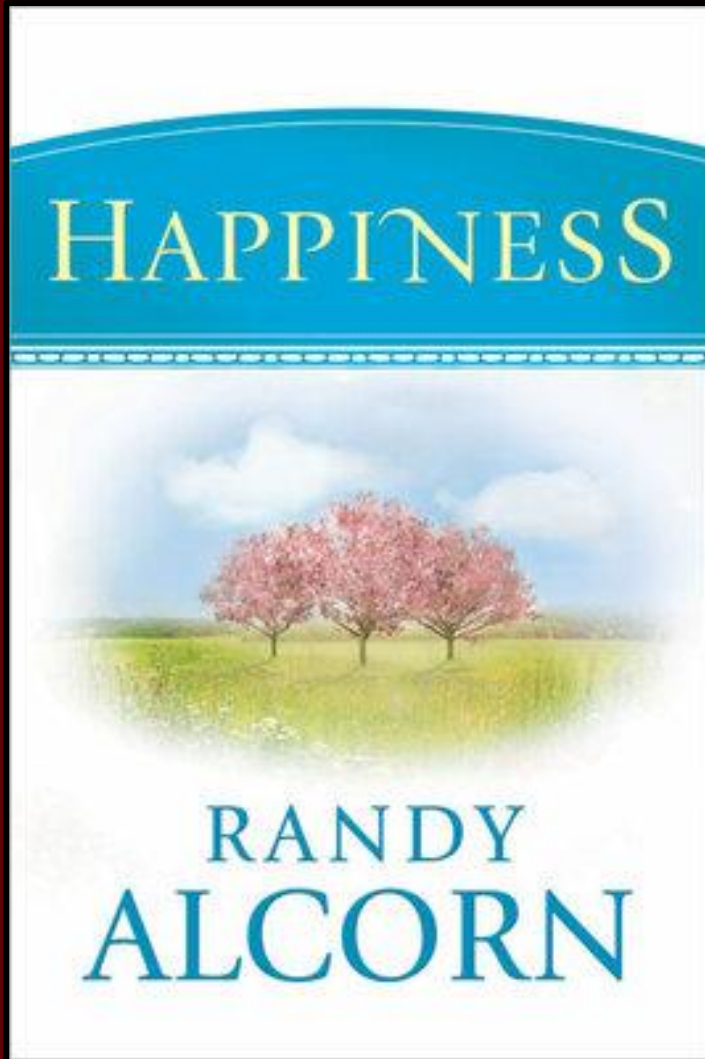
We interpret people's words according to how we perceive their character and outlook.

So it is with our view of God.



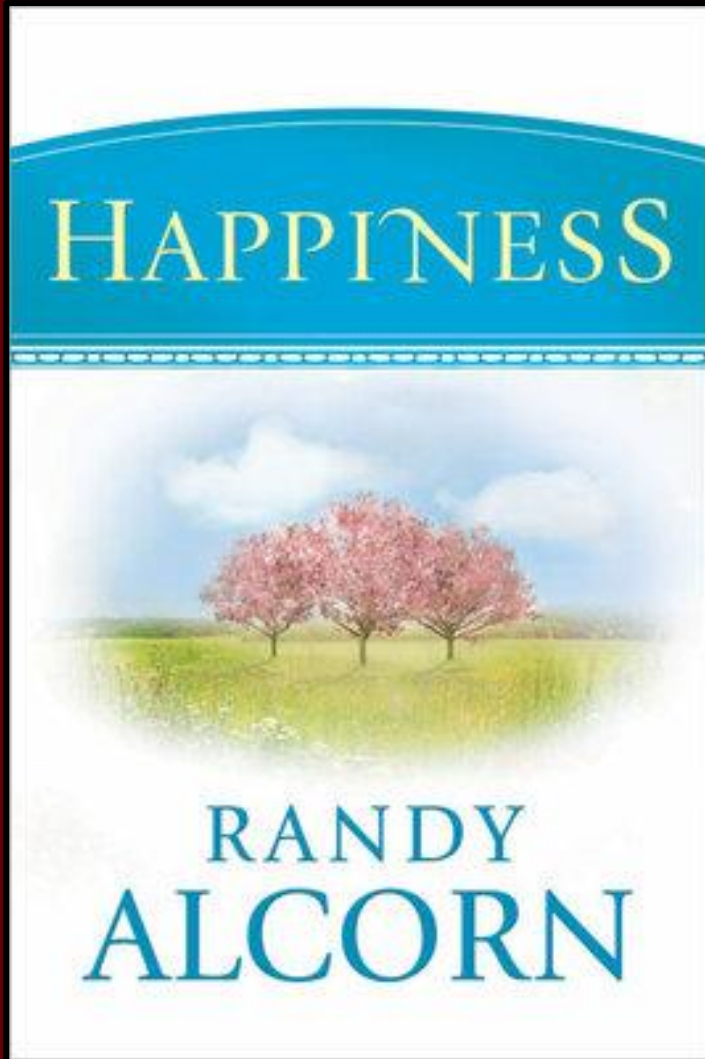
Light of Joy

We [should] realize that the happiness we feel in gratitude for what he's done for us makes God happy too. I believe it's vital that we not leave our children and future generations of Christians...



Light of Joy

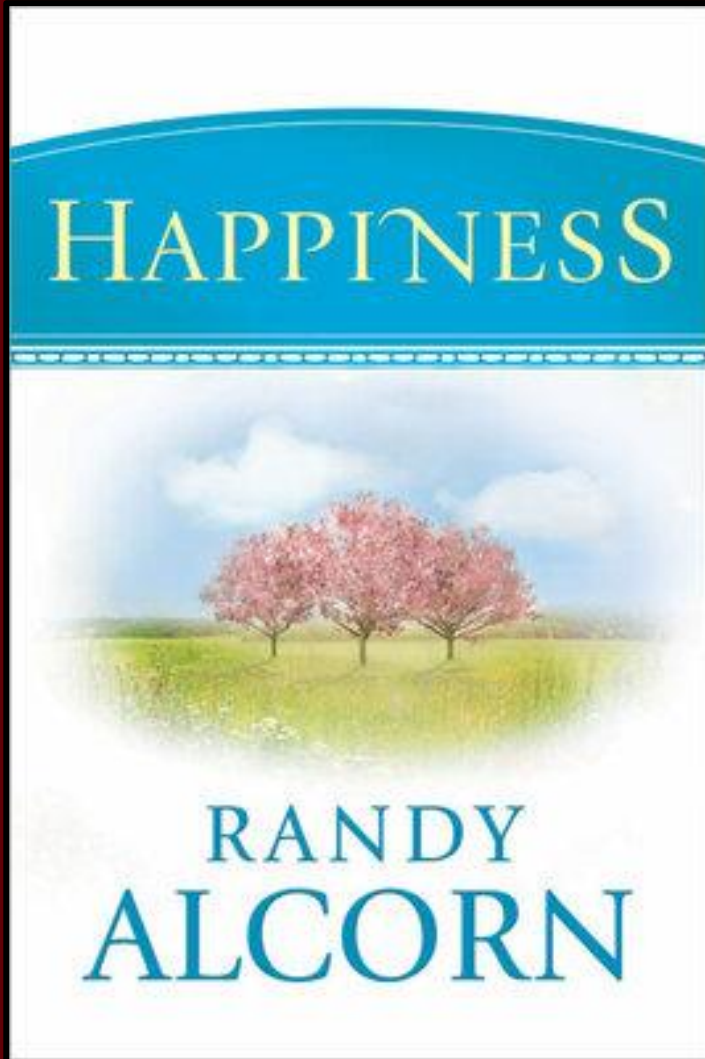
to figure out for themselves that God is happy. Most never will. How can they, unless their families and churches teach them and demonstrate God-centered happiness in their own lives?



Light of Joy

We need to tell them that sin, suffering, shame, and unhappiness are temporary conditions for God's people.

Teenage boy example
page 110...



Light of Joy

Christianity is seen as a list of things we should do that wouldn't make us happy... and a list of things we shouldn't do that would make us happy.

Light of Joy

Silly and Rare?

~or~

Serious and Common?

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

1. Sin

2. Selfishness

3. Stoic view of God

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

Isaiah 40.2

*she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.*

Light of Joy

Our Barriers to Joy

Isaiah 40.1-2

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

Light of Joy

Charles Spurgeon

I confess I have no sympathy with the good man,
who, when he went down to the Rhine, dived
into the cabin that he might not see the river and
the mountains lest he should be absorbed in them
and forget his Savior. I like to see my Savior on
the hills and by the shores of the sea!

Light of Joy

Charles Spurgeon

I hear my Father's voice in the thunder and listen to the whispers of His love in the cadence of the sunlit waves. These are my Father's works and, therefore, I admire them and I seem all the nearer to Him when I am among them.

Light of Joy

0. Introduction
1. Our Happiness Matters
2. Our Barriers to Joy
3. Our Roadmap to Joy

Light of Joy

0. Introduction
1. Our Happiness Matters
2. Our Barriers to Joy
3. Our Roadmap to Joy

Light of Joy

So what do I do when I am unhappy
in my life because there seem to be
too few favorable and far too many
unfavorable circumstances?

Light of Joy

1 Thessalonians 5.16-18

Rejoice always,
pray without ceasing,
give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God
in Christ Jesus for you.

Light of Joy

Rejoice (but I really don't want to...)



Pray (but what should I pray?)



Thank God for who He is and what He is doing

Spend enough time in thankfulness and you
will find yourself rejoicing!

Light of Joy

Should we be happy due to favorable
circumstances?

Can we be happy during unfavorable
circumstances?

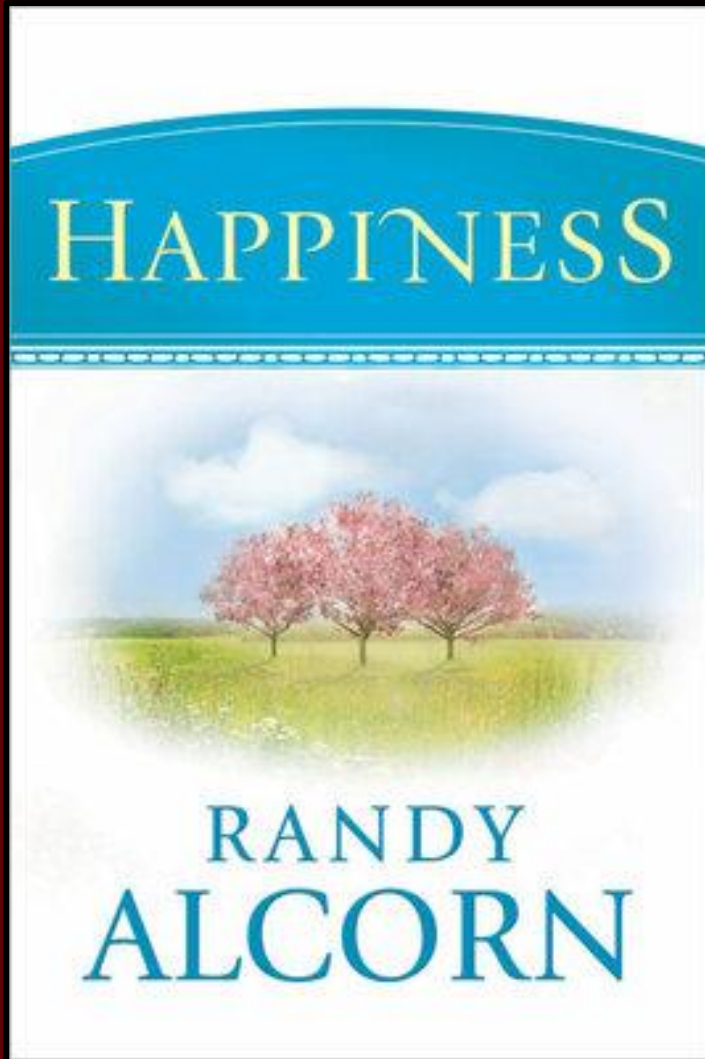
The answer to both is... **YES.**

Light of Joy

But only because we follow a joyful Savior!

Hebrews 12.2

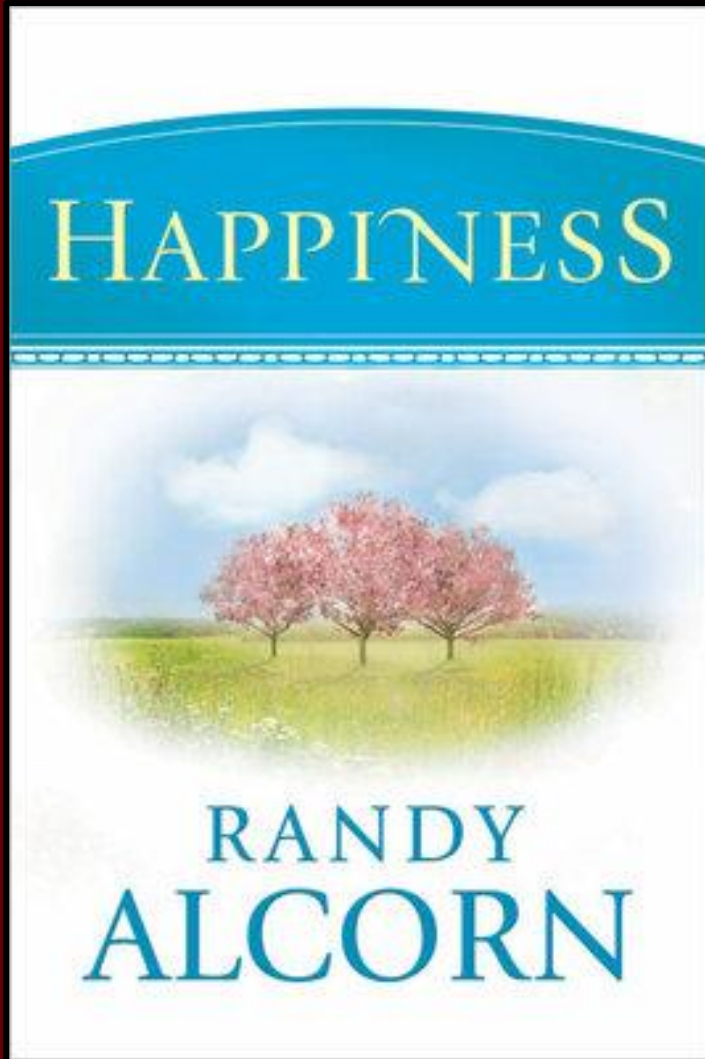
looking to Jesus,
the founder and perfecter of our faith,
who for the **joy**(*chara*) that was set before him
endured the cross...



Light of Joy

To become happy, we must do
what happy people do.

Both modern research and
Scripture put the ball in our
court. Happy people give
generously, serve others, and
seek to make others happy.



Light of Joy

Happiness doesn't precede
giving and serving; it
accompanies and *follows* it.

Light of Joy

Want to be happy?

Look for opportunities to
help others find happiness.

You can do this in thousands of ways!

(Do some Olympians think this way?)

Allyson Felix:

11 Olympic
medals.

Most of any track
and field athlete.

Light of Joy



“All glory
to God...”

Imagine the joy
when we start to
do all we do
simply for the
happiness of God
and others.

Light of Joy

*Lift up the **light** of your face upon us, O LORD!*

Psalm 4.6