

**Father John Catoir**

# Formula for Happiness

Why go back to school? Because you want to graduate one day and be successful in life, right? Yes, but what does it mean to be successful? It means finding happiness, right? Yes, but what does that mean? There's a formula for happiness out there in the world which goes like this: "Believe whatever you want to believe and do whatever you want to do. As long as it's not illegal and you believe it's OK, you can do it, and no one has the right to tell you otherwise. It's your conscience and your choice."



This flawed philosophy has caused untold misery. Any formula for happiness which tells you that you don't have to change is false and dangerous. Life is consequential. We reap what we sow. Many people do whatever they want, but they reap a harvest of pain in the process. The growing legions of addicted individuals and broken families attest to the failure of a permissive morality which puts selfish desire before honor, duty and integrity. We all need God's grace to rise above ourselves.

There is a whole society of individuals who are self-destructing before our eyes because they insist on stressing their personal rights and their personal freedom. Some people justify doing whatever they want on the belief that God will love them anyway, no matter what they do. They forget that Jesus Christ called us to repent and change our ways. "Be ye perfect!"

Jesus also said, "Whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me." (Matthew 10:38) He chided people for their callousness, "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea." (Mark 9:42)

In the New Testament he warned us 92 times that if we fail to live up to the Supreme Commandment of love we will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 5:20)

Jesus has a different formula for happiness: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:29-30) His yoke is the law of love and self-sacrifice. Through the cross, Jesus offers us that peace and happiness which this world cannot give.

If you want to be happy and successful take up your cross. Perform the duties of your state in life cheerfully. The world will use you and abuse you, but Jesus has overcome the world. Trust him, and live the Gospel as best you can. Give it your best, but don't believe for a minute that you can do whatever you want and get away with it.

*[For a free copy of the Christopher News Note, To Pray as Jesus Did, write to The Christophers, 12 E. 48th St., New York, N.Y. 10017.]*