



Topic: Should happiness be the purpose of life?

I need to know:

- Compare and explain different ways to happiness (Christian, Buddhist and non-religious).
- How Christians use the Bible in deciding what the purpose of life is.
- Explain how Buddhists use teachings of the Buddha and other sources in deciding what the purpose of life is.
- Show how beliefs and teachings can affect people’s views on whether or not it is important to achieve happiness.
- How research findings can affect people’s views whether or not it is important to achieve happiness.

Categories for happiness include: **Emotions, purpose, pleasure, flourishing in life, something beyond the material world and satisfaction.**

Buddhism –The Four Noble Truths (happiness)

1. Life is characterised by Dukkah. There is much discontentment in the world.
2. Humans cause discontentment through craving and hatred.
3. We need to be aware of our craving and hatred and not allow them to drive our actions.
4. Follow the middle way (The Noble Eightfold Path). The end result will be a state of happiness and peace (Nibbana).

Christianity

The Bible uses the terms **asrey** in the Old Testament and **makarios** in the New Testament. Both can be translated as ‘happy’, although many translations use the word ‘blessed’ instead. This would indicate that happiness is a gift from God.

Two key ideas...

- happiness in relationship with God.
- happiness derived from action.

Happy are those who respect the LORD, who want what he commands. Psalm 112.1

Happy are those who consider the poor. Psalm 41:1

Happy are all who take refuge in God. Psalm 2:12

Key Words and Definitions

- **Happiness** - A state of well-being and contentment. A pleasurable or satisfying experience.
- **Asrey** – Used in the Old Testament meaning ‘happy’ or ‘blessed’.
- **Makarios** - Used in the New Testament meaning ‘happy’ or ‘blessed’.
- **Dharma** – ‘Universal law’ or ‘ultimate truth’. The teachings of the Buddha.
- **Dukkha** – ‘suffering’, ‘unsatisfactoriness’ or ‘imperfection’.
- **Samsara** – The circle of life, Birth, death, rebirth.
- **Karma** – Intentional actions have consequences in this and future lives.
- **Nibbana** – the state of secure peace that results after removing cravings and desires.
- **Utilitarianism** – An action is morally right if the most amount benefit from it.



Buddhism - The Noble Eightfold Path (action for happiness)

Wisdom

- Right understanding of life and Dharma
- Right intention having the right attitude and motivation)

Morality

- Right speech. Speak positively to and about other.
- Right action. Have positive relationships and behave well.
- Right livelihood. Have a job that makes a positive contribution.

Mental Training

- Right effort to make all thoughts and actions worthwhile.
- Right mindfulness and ensuring you are alert to what is going on inside and around you.

The Sunday Assembly

This is a non-religious (secular) gathering of people, which aim to replicate a Church – but without any faith in God. For example, they may sing uplifting songs and have an inspirational talk. The first took place in London in 2013.

Utilitarianism

Jeremy Bentham was the founder of Utilitarianism. Utilitarianism is an approach to ethics and to making moral decisions. It is based on the principle, the greatest happiness of the greatest number. A moral decision or action is right, if it results in the greatest number of happiness of people in a group or society.

Action for happiness campaign

- Giving
- Relating
- Exercising
- Awareness
- Trying out
- Direction
- Resilience
- Emotion
- Acceptance
- Meaning



Arrow Tasks You could enhance your learning by visiting one of the suggested websites regarding happiness such as <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/49487510> <http://worldhappiness.report/> www.sundayassembly.com/ Evaluation question challenges – ‘It is possible to achieve happiness by practising the Noble Eightfold Path in the twenty-first century.’ Discuss. ‘Happiness should be the purpose of life.’ Discuss. ‘Unhappiness is caused by cravings and selfishness.’ Discuss.