

If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.
John 8:31-32

Every day we have opportunities to choose bondage or freedom. We can remain in bondage to our circumstances, beliefs or feelings, or we can choose to be free. In her book, Lessons in Truth, Dr. Emily Cady says, *Everyone believes himself/herself to be in bondage to the flesh and to the things of the flesh. All suffering is a result of this belief.* Cady is saying that humanity instills in us beliefs in lack and limitation, which make our lives difficult.

I believe that everyone wants to be happy. If being happy is difficult, it might be because we don't know the true cause of our unhappiness. Much of our unhappiness and suffering comes from our emotions, which are triggered by our beliefs and feelings. Once we understand this, the path to freedom becomes clear.

We often think that our unhappiness stems from having to face a barrage of unwanted situations, even though we are making every effort to have the kind of life we want. Most of us know that we cannot control the people around us or the unfolding of events in our lives. But even armed with this knowledge, we still experience pain and unhappiness. We may long for close, intimate relationships with others, but our feelings are often so overpowering that we can't find the way to open up to others and relate to their experience.

Our emotions change from moment to moment. We may feel happy about something in one moment and sadness the next; we never know how often our feelings will change or how long they will last. Many of us recognize that our emotions can get out of control, or sometimes be in control of us. We can be so focused on how we feel that we may become self-protective and defensive, constantly worried that others will hurt or take advantage of us. These feelings of self-protection can be part of an ongoing emotional cycle, feeding even stronger emotional reactions that cause chaos in our minds and our interpersonal relationships.

Strong emotions like anger, attachment, jealousy, and arrogance can be poisonous to our happiness. They can poison our connection with loved ones, friends, coworkers, our community and the world. We often put the blame for our unhappiness on people and situations outside of ourselves. When someone speaks to us in a way that we do not like, our ordinary reaction is to resent the person we feel has wronged us.

We have the power to transform our state of mind from resentment to peace and contentment. If someone treats us badly, or a situation is difficult, or if our needs are not met, we can still choose to experience happiness.

It is our emotions that are the problem. They are what is causing us so much pain. We suffer because we do not know how to deal with our emotions and emotional reactions. We do not realize that blaming others for our unhappiness can never bring us happiness. We suffer because we continually choose to identify with and focus how we feel. Identifying with our unhappy emotions is a sure recipe for more unhappiness.

Happiness is available to us when we choose to let go of our strong emotions and relax. By reducing the focus we place on our emotions, we become more willing to let small situations go, and we begin to feel more relaxed. When we relax and let go, we identify with our emotions less, we are less self-protective, less emotionally reactive, and we are happier.

Affirmation: I am free. I am unlimited. I move easily beyond the boundaries of my limited thinking, and I experience the freedom of God.