

Elder Claudio R. M. Costa

The difference between fun and happiness

About four months ago I received the assignment to serve in Bogotá, Colombia, and moved there. One day, as I was trying to find the way to my new ward's meetinghouse, I stopped at a park to ask for directions.

I could see many families enjoying a pleasant sunny morning. I stood there for a while, watching the children as they cheerfully played in the park. They had a special glow in their countenances; their cheeks were flushed from the sun and from the effort they made to run and play together. They were all very friendly with each other.

I could tell they were really having fun. As I watched them closely, I realized that, more than having a fun time, those pure little children were truly happy.

Later, as I was driving to the chapel, my thoughts went back to the time I was baptized in the Church. An old friend of mine came to me and asked what I had found so different there. I answered, "I have found true happiness." To which he replied, "There is no such thing as true happiness—only happy moments."

I understand that my good friend did not know the difference between *fun* and *happiness*. What he called "happy moments" were in fact the moments when he had fun. What he did not know then was that happiness is much more than just fun. Fun is just a fleeting moment, but happiness is a lasting thing.

Many people in this world do not understand the difference between fun and happiness. Many try to find happiness by having fun, but the two words have different meanings.

I looked them up in the dictionary to find out what each of them meant. *Fun* is play, pleasure, gaiety, merriment, source of enjoyment, amusement, to behave play-

fully, playful, often a noisy activity, and teasing. *Happiness* is contentedness, joy, delight, and satisfaction.

I was taught, after becoming a member of the Church, that there is indeed a big difference between fun and happiness. I learned, even before my baptism, that the Lord has a plan of salvation for all His children (see 2 Nephi 2:9). Through this plan, depending on what we accomplish here on earth, we shall return to our Heavenly Father's presence and live with Him forever in a state of eternal happiness.

Both fun and happiness are fine, but certainly happiness is the most worth seeking. Happiness can encompass fun, but fun alone will not ensure true happiness.

Prodigal son learns about happiness

In Luke, chapter 15, we find the parable of the prodigal son. In this parable the younger son asks the father to give him his share of the inheritance. The father does so, and this young man goes out into the world, seeking what he believes to be true happiness. He starts to have fun, and for as long as he has money, he is surrounded by many people who claim to be his friends. When his fortune is totally wasted with all the fun he has had with his so-called friends, all of them turn their backs on him, and he is left without a penny. He then goes through much suffering and disappointment. He starts working for a man feeding swine, and, starving, he tries to eat even the husks that the swine would eat. He thinks of his father's servants, who have enough bread to eat and to spare, and he does not have anything to eat.

He decides to return home to his father and ask him for a job as one of his hired servants. He returns, repentant from all he has done, and his father, a righteous man, greets him as a special son. He finally

understands that true happiness is there, in that simple life with his family.

True happiness comes from obedience

All who seek full happiness can find it in the gospel of Jesus Christ, taught in His Church. Through Christ's doctrine, we are taught that we can be part of the great plan of happiness that He has prepared for all of us, His sons and daughters. As we keep His commandments, we are blessed and come to know true happiness. We learn that happiness lies in doing small things that build us up, that increase our faith and testimony—small things we do in our everyday lives, such as:

We are happy as we pray every morning and every night, when we can feel that the Lord hears us and is always willing to bless, forgive, and help us. We are happy as we feel the promptings of the Holy Ghost in our lives—as we feel the Spirit when we have to make important life decisions. We are happy as we go home after a stressful and tiresome day at work to the arms of our families, as they express love and appreciation for us. We are happy to talk to our children, to enjoy the family, to get together on family night. In short, we can feel happiness every day in our lives through little things we do, and we are fully happy as we keep the commandments of a loving God, who cares about us.

True happiness comes from keeping the commandments of God. We are taught in 2 Nephi 2:25 that "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy," or, in other words, that they might be happy.

A young man illustrates true happiness

I have witnessed this happiness in the lives of many members of the Church. Several weeks ago I had the assignment to preside over a stake conference in Cali, Colombia. I met a very special young man

there who is a member of the Church and can well illustrate the meaning of true happiness.

His name is Fabián. His family belongs to the Church, and he learned of the plan of happiness when he was just a little boy. In 1984, when he was three years old, Fabián and his family lived in a house close to a large and busy avenue. That avenue was a route for many city bus lines.

One day, seeing the gate open, little Fabián tried to cross the avenue and got hit by a bus. Thanks to Heavenly Father's goodness, Fabián survived the accident. His parents took him to three different hospitals that indicated they could not treat him. They continued looking for help, and, upon finding the proper medical assistance, they learned the prognosis was not very good. After performing multiple surgeries, the doctors informed the family that the damage to his feet and legs was so extensive that to save him, they had to amputate his right leg.

Little Fabián started a different life then, without one of his legs. He slowly learned to control his body balance and to walk with the help of crutches. He went to school and had the support of his teachers and friends. Some people used to mock him, but he soon learned not to care about the jokes they played on him.

He wanted to participate in all physical activities and did so frequently. Even though winning was very hard to come by, he was always brave and ready to participate.

Fabián currently serves as a counselor in his stake Young Men organization. He attends institute of religion classes and is active in the student body organization. He plays basketball and soccer. He also plays Ping-Pong with his friends from the institute. He rides a bike and does everything a young man can do. He works as a volunteer teaching English at a foundation that cares for poor children.

Fabián wants to serve his fellowmen and God with all his strength. He has a smiling face and is always there to help those in need. He is truly a happy young man. With an overwhelming strength that comes from his faith and trust in God, Fabián is a great example to the citizens of his hometown.

His happiness comes from striving to live worthily every day and to obey God's commandments. He reminds me of a scripture found in Mosiah 2:41:

"And moreover, I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness. O remember, remember that these things are true; for the Lord God hath spoken it."

Being obedient to God's commandments, we will live happily for all eternity. Alma said in Alma 41:10 that "wickedness never was happiness."

Bishop Keith B. McMullin

Keeping your dish right side up

As we meet with Church members around the world, one challenge seems universal: having enough time to do everything that needs doing. Among those who have few resources, the need is for more time to secure the necessities of life. Among those who have sufficient, the need is for more time to attend to the niceties of life. The challenge is daunting because time is fixed; man can neither lengthen out the day nor extend the year.

The world is the culprit. As the world grapples with more efficient ways of man-

An invitation to happiness

As a servant of God and as a member of His Church, I invite you to be truly happy by giving heed to His counsel, by living His commandments, and by obeying the words of His living prophets.

I know that one of the factors that greatly influences our happiness is listening to the counsel of the living prophets who teach us in this Church.

I have a testimony that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. He gave His precious life for each one of us. I know that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God. This I know with all my heart. I know that the Book of Mormon is the word of God and that it can lead us to the pathways of happiness.

I know that President Gordon B. Hinckley is the prophet of God today and that he teaches with love and patience how we can be happy in this life and in the life to come.

These things are part of my testimony of the truth, and I share them with you, my brothers and sisters, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

aging time, it lures us into more and more earthly pursuits. But life is not a struggle with time—it is a struggle between good and evil.

What to do about all this can be one of the more vexing decisions in life. In 1872, the prophet Brigham Young counseled the Saints on this very subject. Said he:

"Stop! Wait! When you get up in the morning, before you suffer yourselves to eat one mouthful of food, . . . bow down before the Lord, ask him to forgive your sins, and protect you through the day, to preserve you from temptation and all evil,