

RE: Should happiness be the purpose of life?

1. Key People

Jesus of Nazareth	A Jew who spoke out against those who said people could only be with God in Heaven if they closely followed Jewish traditions and/or Jewish religious writings.
The Buddha	Originally a prince, Siddhartha Gautama left a luxurious life in search of enlightenment. He is said to have found it as he was meditating under a fig tree.

4. Concepts

Living a Good Life	morality 	self/spirit/consciousness 
Ultimate Questions	Happiness? 	relationships 

2. You need to know...

- Some translations of the Bible use the word "**blessed**" instead of "happy"; this might show that happiness is something to be seen as a **gift from God**, instead of something humans cause for themselves.
 - Many Bible passages about happiness are to do with **actions towards others**, not about how a believer feels or a relationship with God. For Christians, the most famous is where Jesus says, "**Love your neighbour as yourself.**"
 - Many Bible passages say happiness comes by being **faithful** to God and worshipping God.
 - Saint Paul wrote that eternal happiness is a joy to be **hoped** for, something to help Christians **cope** with the challenges and stresses of life.
 - In the **Sermon on the Mount**, Jesus gave the **Beatitudes**, which say that if someone is **humble** and **righteous** (does right by God), they will be with God.
- The Buddha's main teaching is that there are **Four Noble Truths**:
1. That all beings **suffer** (dukkha)
 2. That **craving** (tanha) is the cause of suffering
 3. That it is possible to bring **an end** to suffering
 4. That the **Noble Eightfold Path** leads to the end of suffering
- According to Buddhism, if people **accept** that things change and live compassionately so that they can reduce suffering, they can one day become **enlightened** and stop suffering once and for all.
- Members of the **Action for Happiness** movement pledge to try to generate more happiness in the world around them. People of all beliefs can join the movement.
 - The **Sunday Assembly** is a monthly event where people of any belief can celebrate life, in a non-religious way.

Contexts

- As a Jew, Jesus would have been raised with the idea that following the mitzvot (God's commands) would lead to people taking care of each other, which would bring happiness
- The UK is just one place where the numbers of people who are "religious" is declining. Even so, many people still look beyond their everyday experiences for meaning and purpose.

3. Key vocabulary

happiness	Feeling, showing or causing pleasure or satisfaction.
contentment	Being pleased with your situation and not hoping for change or improvement.
asrey/ashrey	A Hebrew word for "happy" or "blessed".
makarios	A Greek word for "happy" or "blessed".
agape	A Greek word meaning selfless love for others.
metta	Loving kindness
karuna	Compassion
nirvana	A state of freedom from samsara.