

If You're Happy and You Know It

Description

Clap Your Hands!

A familiar song surely inspiring the Pharrell Williams [hit song with its catchy chorus](#).

Happy New Year!

A fresh start, a new beginning. There's something so comforting and refreshing about that. When life gets hard, and we start to complain about how hard we have it, it's good to pause and refocus on the big picture. Reset our expectations. "Think celestial" and then move forward again.

We didn't take many pictures this week for some reason. We didn't go anywhere exotic, just had a lot of office work and back and forth communications with our Area Welfare Specialists, the Thurstons. Lots of disappointment and frustration about how slowly project and other issues get worked out.

But two experiences stand out.

We ended the old year last Sunday with a delightful evening at our branch president's home. He invited us to have dinner and enjoy the gathering with his and his brother's family, all wonderful people whom we love. The food was tasty and filling (they also want us to eat more than we can) and they just treat us so respectfully. We played games with the kids, which was a ton of fun, even though in the few pictures we have from that evening we look pretty serious. It was serious fun!



Good people, good food



The other experience was being complimented by the salesclerk at a store we shop at often.

We just were there to buy some chips. While checking out, we both got out cash to pay 320 Rupees. I didn't have enough, but Taunya did. The clerk, a cute Nepalese young woman with a shy smile normally, had a big one for us as she said, "You're a nice couple!" We think she was watching us interact, with gentle cooperation and no harshness or demeaning manner, the way that (usually) feels natural and right. We think this is unusual behavior that she saw, that couples normally don't interact in this manner. It's sad that some women at church complain that their husbands don't treat them respectfully. It made us realize even more that people watch us and judge all us foreigners by our words and actions! Talk about motivation to try to be Christlike in everything we say and do!

Family is key to our pursuit of happiness. Evidenced by our immediate family (the two of us) and the demandingly close relationship we have and the work we collaborate on that so stretches us in all kinds of ways.

I never knew my paternal grandfather. He died when I was two and I have no memories of him. Fortunately, I am blessed to have many fond memories of my maternal grandfather — Gramps, as we his grandchildren affectionately called him. Gramps was a loving, positive, happy man, and a pleasure to be around. We had many, many family reunions where his signature saying when everyone was listening was "Is everybody happy?" to which we all, with great enthusiasm, chimed in unison, "I should say!"

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, an Apostle of the Lord, in his [talk given at BYU-Idaho](#) on 23 September 2014, quoted many people on the subject of happiness. He titled his talk from Nephi's "Living After the Manner of Happiness" (2 Nephi 5:27).

I was privileged to be there, and I heard him with ears and heart attuned. I'll end this post with his powerful conclusion, his testimony and his Apostolic blessing:

My testimony to you is that God, your Eternal Father in heaven, is always encouraging and applauding your pursuit even more lovingly than I. I testify that He wants you to be happy, to have true joy. I testify of the Atonement of His Only Begotten Son which provides the

right path and, if necessary, a new start on it, a second chance, a change in our nature if necessary. In the power and authority of my office I leave an apostolic blessing on each of you that you will know that Christ is “the way, the truth, and the life”—that no one comes to true happiness except by Him. I bless you to know that someday, sometime, somewhere you will have every righteous desire of your heart as you live the gospel of Jesus Christ, thus living “after the manner” that leads to those blessings. I testify and I bless you in the name of Him who is the Good Shepherd, the Chief Cornerstone of this Church, the High Priest of good things to come in your life, even the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

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