

LIFE GROUP NOTES:

SERIES: The Pursuit of Happiness

PART TWO: Happy or Holy?

One day as the crowds were gathering, he went up the hillside with his disciples and sat down and taught them there.

“Humble men are very fortunate!” he told them, “for the Kingdom of Heaven is given to them. Those who mourn are fortunate for they shall be comforted.

The meek and lowly are fortunate for the whole wide world belongs to them.

“Happy are those who long to be just and good, for they shall be completely satisfied.

Happy are the kind and merciful, for they shall be shown mercy.

Happy are those whose hearts are pure, for they shall see God.

Happy are those who strive for peace—they shall be called the sons of God.

Happy are those who are persecuted because they are good, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.



Matthew 5:1-10 (Living Bible)

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever heard the phrase, “God doesn’t want you to be happy; he wants you to be holy”? Too often we assume that happiness and holiness are mutually exclusive. We believe we can’t be both. The New Testament does teach that God wants us to be holy. But holiness and happiness don’t stand in opposition. It’s quite the contrary.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Last week, you were challenged to turn your attention to Jesus as your source for happiness. How did it go?
2. How would you define the word holiness? How do you think your definition has influenced your relationship with God?
3. Read Matthew 5:1–10. Do you have trouble believing that happiness follows from the list of behaviours Jesus describes? Why or why not?
4. What are some reasons it’s difficult for us to live as Jesus suggests? 1) in daily dependence on God, 2) in humility, 3) doing the right thing, 4) relationally generous, 5) pursuing purity and 6) seeking reconciliation? What do we lose when we live like that? What do we gain?
5. Read Matthew 7:24–26. To what extent have you built your life trusting that Jesus is right? How do you think that has affected your happiness?
6. If happiness is powered by the law of the harvest (reaping & sowing), what do you need to “sow” in your life right now so that you can “reap” happiness in the future? How can others and your life group support you?

MESSAGE SUMMARY

Happiness is an **OUTCOME**. It’s not instant. You end up a happy person in the same way you end up an unhappy person- you **SOW** and **REAP** your way there. The Beatitudes of Jesus (Matt 5:1-10), and the whole of Jesus’ ‘Sermon on the mount’ (Matt Ch. 5-7) are practical things that you can do to sow your way to happiness. They are not just things to agree with. This will gain you nothing. They are things to start doing. If at the end of the day you want to build your life and sense of wellbeing on something solid you have to trust that Jesus is right and put them into practice.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

What makes you Happy? Our answers so far-

- 1) NO Thing
- 2) SOWing

*“Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. **Matthew 7:24–26***