

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE

MY STORY

1 What was the best thing that happened to you this week?

2 What do you look back on as the happiest days your life?

Were they really that good? Why or why not?

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or something that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

DIGGING DEEPER

This week we heard how the trials that change our character can be better than our own happiness. In the *Sermon on the Mount*, Jesus listed a number of attitudes and actions that result in a blessing but would be considered by most as a challenge to put into practice. Read the *Sermon on the Mount* in Matthew 5:3-12 and write down the challenge followed by the blessing and then answer the questions below.

Verse Blessing

Challenge

v. 3

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

v. 4

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

v. 5

Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

v. 6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for
righteousness, for they will be filled.

v. 7

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

v. 8

Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

v. 9 -12

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because
of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
all kinds of evil against you because
of me. [12] Rejoice and be glad, because great is your
reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted
the prophets who were before you.

Of the eight Beatitudes, which two do you most desire in your life right now? Which of these qualities are you most tempted to avoid?

2

The happiness God has for us is usually the result of doing the “right thing” as opposed to pursuing happiness in and of itself. That’s why when we do the “tough, but right thing,” a sense of contentment, joy or happiness can result. How could, making what is stated in the following verses, a priority result in contentment or happiness? How could pursuing happiness instead of what these verses state actually result in discontentment?

Proverbs 28:14

Blessed is the man who always fears the Lord,
but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble. [NIV]

James 1:25

But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does. [NIV]

Psalms 146:5

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord his God, [NIV]

Job 5:17

"Blessed is the man whom God corrects;
so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. [NIV]

TAKING IT HOME

1

What *outside* force is most likely to upset your contentment? Since God does not always change negative outside forces, what can He change IN YOU so that contentment is possible?

As a result of this week's teaching and/or study, is there anything you need to change, add or delay in your pursuit of happiness?

PRAYER REQUESTS

Celebrate Recovery uses the "Serenity Prayer", written by Reinhold Neibuhr, as a result of the Nazi regime persecuting Jews in Germany. His prayer was written to console, strengthen and help those searching for happiness to know exactly how to find it, no matter what the circumstance. Read the prayer carefully and share with the group what part of the prayer do you need to implement more into your life.

**God, give us grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things
which should be changed,
and the Wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.**

**Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
Taking, as Jesus did,
This sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it,
Trusting that You will make all things right,
If I surrender to Your will,
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with You forever in the next.**

Amen.

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