

discussion guide for february 11th

“The Pursuit of Happiness – part 1”

Matthew 5:3-4 (p. 1252-DSB*)

GRIND IT
BREW IT
DRINK IT
SAVOR IT



"Yes, I try to find **common ground** with everyone." 1 Corinthians 9:22b NLT

➤ **GRIND IT** (11:00 am)

Pastor Tom said, “Our nation’s founding document declares ‘the pursuit of happiness’ as a fundamental right. But the right to *pursue* happiness is no guarantee you will *find* it. According to one survey, only 20% of the people in the U.S. claim to be happy.

[Use one of the following to launch today’s discussion.]

- List things our culture promotes as pre-requisites happiness.
- What are reasons the 80% might give for not being happy. (“If only _____, then I’d be happy!”)
- Is happiness something you pursue or something you just are? Explain your response.
- Someone said the Beatitudes should really be called the “Be-Attitudes.” Do you agree? Why? Why not?

*“DSB” - The “Discovery Study Bibles” on common ground tables.

➤ **BREW IT** (11:10 am)

The word “blessed” can be translated happy, fortunate, or recognized by God. It is the glow you might feel standing before God and hearing “Well done!”

1. The Pursuit of Happiness begins with emptiness.

[Objective: As long as we are spiritually self-sufficient we cannot experience real happiness.]

- ☐ Read Mt. 5:3 (p. 1252, DSB*). What did Jesus mean by “poor in spirit”? What do the Poor in spirit receive?
 - Is it natural or un-natural for a person to be “poor in spirit”? Why? What 1 truth must be accepted?
 - Describe what it means to experience the kingdom of heaven as a “poor in spirit” person.
- ☐ Read Lk. 18:9-14 (p. 1373, DSB*). What does the Bible say about each man? Which one was approved? Why? What was Jesus teaching?
- ❖ INVITE – Based on this discussion, what is needed before a THEM is ready to cross the bridge of faith?

2. The Pursuit of Happiness begins with brokenness.

[Objective: Until we are broken, mourning our own sin and the sin around us, we cannot experience real happiness.]

- ☐ Read Mt. 5:4 (p. 1252, DSB*). What did Jesus mean by “those who mourn”? What do they receive?
 - What does it mean for a person to be broken over the brokenness within them? Around them?
 - Why does the path to happiness lead through the valley of sadness over sin?
- ☐ Read 2 Cor. 7:8-10 (p. 1540, DSB*). What does the Bible mean by “godly sorrow” as versus “worldly sorrow”? Which one yields happiness? How? Why?
- ❖ LIVE – Based on this discussion, how can you live your life with a sense of true joy no matter what may come?

*“DSB” - The “Discovery Study Bibles” on common ground tables.

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➤ DRINK IT (11:40 am)

Jesus turned the world upside down. The beatitudes are a series of seemingly upside down statements. Are you willing to let Jesus turn your world upside down in order to experience real happiness? Consider praying one or both of these prayers today.

- Lord, I have been spiritually self sufficient, not recognizing my desperate need for You - not understanding I must empty myself in order to experience you and your kingdom at work in my life. I repent of my spiritual pride and embrace my emptiness. Lord, please fill me with your Spirit and use me in your kingdom's work from this point on.
- Lord, I have been guilty of spiritual apathy over my own sin and the sin around me. Today Lord, I come to you broken over the brokenness I see in me and in my world. Search my heart O God and forgive me for those stubborn sins that I have been holding on to. Give me a clean heart and a contrite spirit. Use me to infect my world with true happiness as I walk in your grace and love.

Prayer Time: (11:45 am)

- Allow for silent prayer as people consider the prayers written above.
- Pray for needs of people outside the group.
- Pray for needs of members in the group.
- Pray for absentees by name.

Go Deeper: Use the “*Savor*” section this week in your personal daily devotionals to reinforce the commonground experience.

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➤ SAVOR IT (all week long)

Last Sunday you learned that the path to real happiness begins with accepting your own spiritual emptiness and continues through mourning over the brokenness within you and around you. These verses and questions should help reinforce those truths as you incorporate them into your daily walk with the Lord.

Monday, February 12: Read Psalm 34:4-8, (p. 690-DSB*), and Psalm 40:16-17, (p. 286-DSB*). What did you learn about a prerequisite for real happiness in the Lord? Are you poor in spirit today?

Tuesday, February 13: Read John 15:3-5, (p. 1420-DSB*). What can a person who is not “poor in spirit” accomplish? What is the key to full participation in the kingdom of heaven?

Wednesday, February 14: Read Psalm 32:1-11 (p. 686-688-DSB*). What is the result of holding on to the sin within? What is the result of confession, repentance, and forgiveness?

Thursday, February 15: Read Ezekiel 18:30-32, (p. 1083-DSB*). What does it take to experience real life and happiness? Are you willing to do what it takes?

Friday, February 16: Read Ezekiel 9:3-4, (p. 1072-DSB*). Why were these people marked by God and set aside for approval? Do you mourn over the sin you observe in the world.

*“DSB” refers to the “Discovery Study Bibles” available in common ground.