

discussion guide for february 25th

"The Pursuit of Happiness – part 3"

Matthew 5:7-8 (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)

We Americans are obsessed with being happy. But we are also terribly confused about what happiness is. As a result, we seldom find a happiness that lasts. . . . And if we don't find what we consider to be happiness, we are likely to develop what the French demographer of early America, Alexis de Tocqueville, called "a strange melancholy in the midst of abundance."

- What do you think Alexis de Tocqueville meant by "a strange melancholy in the midst of abundance."
- What reasons would you give for this French demographer's observation of our culture's "pursuit of happiness"?
- Do you agree that people tend to be gracious with their own faults and more demanding when considering the faults of others?

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

➤ **BREW IT** (11:10 am)

The word "blessed" can be translated happy, fortunate, or approved by God. The Bible teaches, "Happy are the big-hearted and the pure-hearted!"

1. When it comes to dealing with the faults of others, we should be big-hearted.
[Espresso: Jesus said when we show mercy because we realize how much mercy we need ourselves, we'll find the mercy of God.]
 Read Mt. 5:7 (p. 1252, DSB*). Why will the merciful be shown mercy?
 - Any flaws in this interpretation? "I'd better show mercy so I can get mercy when I need it."
 - How does showing mercy apply to both the sin of a person (forgiveness), and sin's consequences or effect in their life (ministry)?
- Read Luke 17:3 (p. 1372, DSB*). Is rebuking (holding someone accountable) an act of mercy as well as forgiving? Why? Why not?
2. When it comes to dealing with our own faults, we should be pure-hearted.
[Espresso: We are to be uncompromising, single-minded, pure, and undivided in the goal of pleasing God.]
 Read Mt. 5:8 (p. 1252, DSB*). Discuss the meaning of "pure in heart." What do the PIH see?
 - Is it possible to have more than one priority? Why? Why not? Is "my #1 priority" redundant?
 - Do you believe you will see God and give an account for the life He gave you? How does this impact your decisions in life?

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

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➤ DRINK IT (11:40 am)

Pastor Tom said, "in our series now, we've looked at six Beatitudes, and there seems to be a flow."

- (1) Blessed are the poor in spirit: we recognize our spiritual bankruptcy, then
- (2) Blessed are those who mourn: we grieve over what is broken within us and around us, then
- (3) Blessed are the meek: Broken-hearted, we yield to God's direction for our lives, then,
- (4) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: we want desperately to live a life pleasing to God, then,
- (5) Blessed are the merciful: having received mercy, we must respond with mercy to others, then,
- (6) Blessed are the pure in heart: We must be rigorous and demanding of ourselves and our purity.

Lord, it is my commitment to live the life described in these verses. I see this as the path to true happiness.

Prayer Time: (11:45 am)

- Allow for silent prayer as people consider the commitment 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 discussed the need to be big-hearted toward others, and pure-hearted toward God. Will you learn to be gracious with the faults of others while being demanding concerning your own faults?

Monday, February 26: Read Galatians 6:1-5, (p. 1556-DSB*). The phrases: "Restore him gently" and "But watch yourself" – encourage us to be generous toward others' sins, and rigorous toward our own.

How do the other verses mirror these thoughts?
Tuesday, February 27: Read Ezekiel 11:19-20, (p. 1074-DSB*). What do these verses indicate about being pure in heart? Are you single-minded, double-minded, or multi-minded?

Wednesday, February 28: Read Psalm 86:11-13, (p. 738-DSB*). Did David realize the value of a pure heart? Did David recognize the mercy he had been shown? Did David show mercy to others?

Thursday, March 1: Read Revelation 3:19, (p. 1667-DSB*). Is it an act of mercy to hold people accountable for their actions? When we neglect discipline of our children, is that an act of love?

Friday, March 2: Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8, (p. 1583-1584DSB*). Paul explains how to live a life that pleases God. It is an elaboration of what it means to be "pure in heart." Will you be rigorous about your own sin? It will lead you to real happiness.

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