

C¹ onechurch

bigIdea

BIG IDEA: If you pursue happiness apart from God, then you will always be less than happy.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Talk about a time when you did the wrong thing because you thought it would make you happy.
2. Complete the following sentence with the first thing that comes to mind: "I would be happier if only . . ." or "I could never be happy if . . ." What do your answers reveal about your goals in life? How can pursuing happiness lead to misery? What is the difference between happiness and joy? Are you seeking happiness in externals or a *blessed* life through your relationship with Christ?
3. How do people attempt to use God for their own gain or profit? (Example: "If I do ___ for God, He will give me what I want.") What is wrong with basing your contentment or happiness on externals?
4. What does it mean to be "holy"? To be "blessed"? How does being holy lead to a *blessed* life?
5. How has the pursuit of happiness caused you to miss God? How did it lead to sin? In what ways are we blessed when we pursue God?
6. *Read Psalm 16:11 and John 15:11.* Why should the awareness of Christ's presence *in* us and His promises *to* us bring us inner joy? What has Jesus spoken to you that gave you great joy?
7. **Describe a time when your circumstances did not make you happy, but you still experienced God's blessings.** How did God bless you, in spite of your less than optimum situation? The apostle Paul experienced many hardships as he followed Christ. What was the goal or focus of his life (see Phil. 3:8-10, 14)? How would pursuing this goal lead to experiencing a blessed life?
8. *Read 1 Timothy 6:6-11 and Philippians 4:11-13.* What brings us great gain? What does it mean to be content? With what are we to be content? Why do some think that godliness is a means to financial gain?
9. In what types of situations had Paul learned to be content? Why was Paul able to handle any kind of circumstance? What is the relationship between contentment and a blessed life?
10. What about your life is making it difficult for you to be content? What would it take for you to be content in your circumstances?
11. *Read Matthew 5:3-10.* Who did Jesus say would experience a blessed (*more than happy*) life? What does it mean to be poor in spirit? How are those who mourn blessed?
12. What will those who hunger and thirst for God's righteousness receive? What does it mean to be filled? How are we blessed by having a pure heart? Why would seeing God result in blessing and joy?
13. What is the reward for those who are merciful and peacemakers? Which of these kingdom attitudes needs to be developed more fully in your life? What will that look like?

VERSES FOR FURTHER STUDY

2 Tim. 4:3-4; 1 Peter 1:15; 3:8-12; Prov. 16:25; Eccl. 5:18-20; 2 Cor. 7:9-14; Psalm 16:5-11; 37:4-7; 112:1; Matt. 6:33; John 10:10, 15:9-11; Rom. 14:17, 15:13; Eph. 1:3-4; 1 Thess. 5:16-18

THINK ABOUT IT

Is there anything you are currently pursuing more than God? Is there anything you are doing today, against God's will, in the pursuit of happiness? If so, what attitudes or goals do you need to change in order to pursue God and experience a blessed life? What worldly ideas do you need to reject? What promises do you need to believe to experience the blessings that yours in Christ? How will you find your joy in God this week? (see Psalm 16:8-11, 37:4; Phil. 4:4)

CHANGING YOUR MIND

If you are thirsty, come and drink water! If you don't have any money, come, eat what you want! Drink wine and milk without paying a cent. Why waste your money on what really isn't food? Why work hard for something that doesn't satisfy? Isaiah 55:1-2