



## Message Series Guide

### The Pursuit of Happiness

#### Part I – Perfectionism

#### Ecclesiastes 11:1-4 + Luke 10:38-42

We all want a happy life. To find that happy life many people pursue things like a new job, a new home, a bigger vacation, or a bigger bank account. However, a job can be lost, a car can stop running, vacations are only temporary, and money can disappear. What happens to our happiness when the things we pursued passionately are gone? Perfectionism is one of the things we often pursue to secure happiness or peace, only to discover that it is a trap that distracts and discourages us from the very One who truly satisfies our soul – Jesus Christ. Perfectionism causes us to reject any standard or outcome unless it meets our definition of perfection.

### READ:

**Ecclesiastes 11:1-4 (NLT) • Luke 10:38-42 • Matthew 6:33 • Romans 5:1 •**

- The theme of Ecclesiastes is that life is meaningless apart from God? Why do you agree or disagree with that theme? According to Ecclesiastes 11:4, what happens to the farmer who waits for perfect weather and/or watches every cloud? How can pursuing perfectionism distract and discourage us?
- Is there a difference between pursuing excellence and pursuing perfection? What is the difference? As followers of Jesus which of these should we pursue? Explain.
- Why was Martha so upset and frustrated? How can pursuing and expecting perfection in all circumstances actually hurt our relationship with the Lord? How does Satan use perfectionism to trap a believer?
- Compare and contrast the response of Jesus to both Mary and Martha. Martha was a spiritual woman. How was she seeking to honor Jesus? Mary was a spiritual woman. How was she seeking to honor Jesus?
- Who do you identify with more, Mary or Martha? What are the strengths of being a “Martha” in life and ministry? What are the weaknesses? What was it Mary chose that was “the better portion”?
- How does seeking God’s Kingdom first help us find a deeper and more eternal satisfaction?

### DISCUSS:

- The pursuit of perfectionism rarely adds to our happiness. Do you ever find yourself busy, anxious, or troubled like Martha? How does it impact your happiness and peace of mind?
- Have you ever experienced “others-oriented perfectionism,” where someone placed unrealistic expectations on you? How did this affect you? How do you resist perfectionism?
- Why is it sometimes easier for Christians to “do things” for Christ rather than to spend time being with Christ? Are there some good things in your life that are keeping you from the “best things”?
- What patterns and practices can you institute in your daily life that will help you choose the “best things” like time in prayer and studying the Scriptures?
- How does the truth that we have been made perfect in Christ affect our perspective on perfectionism? (Romans 5:1, Hebrews 10:14, Ephesians 2:8-9)

### PRAY:

Pray that you are pursuing things that lead you to a deep and eternal satisfaction for your soul.

### RESPOND:

Identify the moments in your daily walk when you need to not just sit there but do something. Identify the moments in your daily walk when you don’t need to do something, but just sit there (at the feet of Jesus).



**Sermon Notes**  
**The Pursuit of Happiness**  
**Part I – Perfectionism**  
**Ecclesiastes 11:1-4 + Luke 10:38-42**

**Quote:**

*“My whole life has been a succession of disappointments. I can scarcely recollect a single instance of success in anything that I ever undertook.” - John Quincy Adams*

*“Between 1989 and 2018, perfectionism in young adults increased by 33%.”*

*- Curran and Hill, 2017 Survey – “Perfection Across Generations”*

A perfectionist is a person who refuses to accept any standard or outcome other than perfection.

Martha was Driven by Creating the Perfect Environment

Being driven by perfection can rob us of our joy and even cause us to doubt God’s affection and love.

Mary was Driven by Communion with a Perfect Savior.

The “good things” we think we need to do are often a distraction from the “best thing.”