

Small Group Questions

January 6, 2019

Series: Be Happy

Message: "Starting Point"

This series kicks off 2019 with a look at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5. Each week we will examine two of the eight beatitudes, as they are often called. Beatitude means a "declaration of blessing." What Jesus shares with us are pursuits we can live out over the course of our lives, day by day. This is not an eight step quick fix to feeling happy but, rather, living in ways that produce a deeper, lasting sense of joy, even when the circumstances of our lives are not what we would ask for. They sound so counter-intuitive but in a world where happiness is a rare commodity, they offer us a new way to accomplish the pursuit of happiness.

The hope of this series is for us to become more of what Jesus describes in these verses. It's easy to become familiar with the words found here but it's much more challenging to live what Jesus shares. Our focus will be on living these truths out in real life. There will not be a check list because these pursuits are limited or one-time actions but more of a lifestyle for the long haul. Any steps taken in the directions Jesus gives us can be cause for celebration in our groups.

As always, thank you for your ongoing commitment to shepherd precious lives for Jesus' sake!

(Questions to get everyone to participate)

1. If there were all-star teams for certain character traits (All-Humble, All-Thoughtful, etc.), for which team would you want to be nominated?
2. When you were in high school, what did it take to be with the "in" crowd? What was a guaranteed way to be "out?"

(Questions based on the primary texts)

Read Matthew 5:1-4 and Luke 18:9-14.

3. In Jesus' statements in Matthew 5, is He describing who His followers *are* or what they are called to *do*? Why do you think so?
4. How would you compare Jesus words in Matthew 5:3-4 to what most people prize in this world especially as it relates to being "blessed" or "happy?"
5. Based on Luke 18:9-14, if Jesus told this story today, what group of people would be the "Pharisee"? The tax collector? What might be the modern-day Pharisees prayer sound like today?
6. What does Jesus' parable teach us about faith? About God?
7. In which direction are you more likely to lean: self-reliance or self-condemnation? What is the down side of both extremes?
8. What is a greater need in your life right now: A) Humbly rely on God and not myself; or, B) "Own" my sin/junk? What benefit would that bring to your life right now?