

As Long As You're Happy Week 2

- Besides your faith in Christ, what are some of the things in your life that give you happiness? Explain how these things make you happy.

May all who are godly be happy...

Psalms 97:12 (NIV)

There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

Proverbs 14:12 (NIV)

- There are many false beliefs in our society as to how to achieve happiness. Discuss some of those beliefs that you have followed and how those beliefs affected your life and your actions.

-

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do...

1 Peter 1:15 (NIV)

- The world's ideas of how to achieve happiness are usually at odds with God's standards. Describe a time when you have put your immediate happiness above doing what you knew was right.

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

1 John 2: 15-17 (NIV)

- This passage says “Do not love the world or anything in the world.” Have you ever pursued happiness through the things of this world? If so, be open and give some specific examples.

Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who finds great delight in his commands

Psalms 112:1 (NIV)

- God wants you blessed (which can be translated as **more** than happy.) Talk about a time when you have been overwhelmed by the blessings of God. (

May all who are godly be happy in the LORD and praise his holy name!

Psalms 97:12 (NLT)

- Discuss some ways that you can begin a greater pursuit of happiness through God this week.

Final thought: With your group pray that God will help you strip away the false beliefs you have regarding true happiness in your life. Ask God to help you seek happiness through Him only. Thank Him for the blessings he has given you in your life so that you can truly appreciate the comfort and happiness that comes through His blessings.

As Long As You're Happy Week 2

For Further Study

To use this resource, simply select one or two questions from each category below that you think will help your group discussion. Alternatively, you can use these questions and Scriptures in your own personal devotions during the week.

Open

- Describe some people you know that seem truly happy in their lives. Where do you think their happiness comes from?

Explore

Read Matthew 5:1-12

- According to Jesus, what is the reward for those who are poor in spirit? (5:3)
- Why are those who mourn blessed? (5:4)
- What is the reward for those who are meek? (5:5)
- What can those who hunger and thirst for righteousness expect? (5:6)
- What does God promise to those who are merciful? (5:7)

- Why are peacemakers blessed? (5:9)
- What does the future hold for those who are persecuted because of righteousness? (5:10)
- What instruction is given to Christians who are insulted, hassled, and lied about? (5:11-12)

Reflect

- How do you think a person might behave if he or she were hungering and thirsting after righteousness?
- What are some examples of showing mercy?
- How does society's list of admirable virtues compare and contrast with these kingdom virtues?
- How (if at all) does the promise of future blessing affect us in the present?
- Which of these promises means the most to you today? Why?

Apply

- What realistic steps can you take this week to increase your hunger and thirst for righteousness?



As Long As You're Happy Week 2

Additional Resources

Quotes about the world's view of happiness

This week's message looks at the world's view of happiness versus God's view. Below are some quotes regarding happiness. Read these quotes and discuss with your group which of these reflect the world's view and those that reflect God's view. Some may incorporate both.

"Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence." - Aristotle

"Success is getting what you want, happiness is wanting what you get." - Dave Gardner

"People are just as happy as they make up their minds to be."
- Abraham Lincoln.

"Often people attempt to live their lives backwards; they try to have more things, or more money, in order to do more of what they want, so they will be happier."
- Margaret Young

"Being happy is something you have to learn. I often surprise myself by saying 'Wow, this is it. I guess I'm happy. I got a home I love. A career that I love. I'm even feeling more and more at peace with myself.' If there's something else to happiness, let me know. I'm ambitious for that, too." - Harrison Ford

"Happiness is a conscious choice, not an automatic response." - Mildred Barthel

"Joy has nothing to do with material things, or with man's outward circumstance... A man living in the lap of luxury can be wretched, and a man in the depths of poverty can overflow with joy." - William Barclay

"Success is getting what you want, happiness is wanting what you get."
- Dave Gardner

Facts about happiness

The following are some unique facts about happiness taken from various surveys to share with your group.

1. Nigeria is the happiest country in the world. The United States is ranked 16th.
2. Americans are, on average, only 69 percent happy.
3. 14 percent of the world's nations on Earth are less than 50 percent happy.
4. The world's population is, on average, less than 65 percent happy.
5. Americans earning more than \$10 million annually are only slightly happier than average Americans
6. Americans' personal income has increased more than 2 1/2 times over the last 50 years, but their happiness level has remained the same.

Here are some suggestions you may want to use for your time with God this week:

Day 1: Read 1 John 2:15-17. Be honest with God and confess those things in your life that are distracting you from truly knowing God's happiness. Seek God for satisfaction through Him rather than worldly things.

Day 2: Read Philippians 4:12-13. Pray to God for contentment in those areas of life where needed. Share with God any urgent needs you have.

Day 3: Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-26. Pray for those around you that lack true happiness in their life. Pray that will find that happiness through God.

Day 4: Read 1 Timothy 6:6-12. Pray about your financial needs. Seek God's satisfaction rather than relying on money during your prayer time today. Ask for God to meet your needs today.

Day 5: Read Psalm 112:1-10. Thank God for the blessings in your life. Praise Him for all He has done in your life and will continue to do.