



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Week 5

March 27th & 28th, 2010

Small Group Warm-Up

On a scale of 1-10, with one being lowest, how would you rate your current level of happiness? What kinds of things are currently contributing to your happiness, or getting in the way of it?

Opening Prayer

Father God, thank you for loving us enough to teach us, train us, guide us and discipline us so that we grow in character and learn to value what really matters: our relationship with you and others you have placed in our lives.

Discussion Questions

1. Read Genesis 1:31a, Revelation 4:11 (In the New Living Translation, if possible) and Psalm 149:4

We often get mixed up between the true(ish) statement that life is all about the pursuit of happiness, and the truth that God created us for his pleasure and we experience real happiness when we are walking in a relationship with him.

- Think back on your life and share one of your happiest memories.
- Are there any common themes regarding what contributes to human happiness among your group?
- Is it hard for you to believe that God takes pleasure in you? Why or why not?

2. Read Daniel 4:24-27 and Daniel 4:34-37

This weekend, Pastor James talked about King Nebuchadnezzar, a king who refused to give glory to God and suffered under God's judgment by spending 7 years living like a wild animal.

- What was the reason for God's judgment on King Nebuchadnezzar?
- What was the end result of this period of judgment?
- Have you ever seen a prideful person suffer a downfall? Did that person experience a change of heart?

3. Read Romans 8:12-18

This weekend, Pastor James reminded us that God cares more about our holiness than our happiness; more about our character than our comfort; and he cares about eternal things than temporary things.

This passage is not about trying harder, but about being led by God's Spirit. When we follow Jesus, he provides us with his presence and his power, which makes it possible for us to make choices for holiness that build our character.

- Is there something from your sinful nature that you need to "die to" or let go of in order to follow Jesus?

4. Read Matthew 6:25-34

Worry is one of the greatest joy-robbers in our lives. The only thing accomplished through worry is stress.

The antidote to worry is trust. When we place our worries in God's capable hands, he will guide us to our next right step, which will always involve faith and trust.

- Take a moment to write down anything that has been creating stress and worry in your life recently.
- In a moment, we'll give you a chance to pray about these things with your group today.
- When you get home, transfer these to a journal, and continue to pray about them over the next few weeks.
- Watch what God will do. Share the results with your group.

5. Read Philippians 4:6-7

If you are struggling with worry, consider memorizing these verses over the next few weeks.

Closing Prayer

Divide up into groups of approximately four people. If you are comfortable, share the worries or concerns you wrote down. This is not a time for giving advice, but a time for loving, non-judgmental listening. After those who want to have shared, have someone say a closing prayer committing all these worries to God.