

**THE BLESSED LIFE**  
Week 2: The Happiness Principle  
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



RECAP

In this second sermon discussing how money can lead to happiness and blessing (just not in the way we think), Josh walked through the Happiness Principle and discussed five ways that giving literally makes us happier people.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Josh started by walking out with a red wagon as an example of how giving and serving others can surprisingly lead to happiness. What's an experience you've had where you gave or you served someone and in the end you walked away with a greater blessing?
2. Matthew 6:21 says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Do you experience this truth on an everyday basis? What are some of the biggest things you spend your money on? Would you say your heart is there as well as your checkbook?
3. Josh discussed the difference between happiness (short-term, determined by outward circumstances) and being blessed (long-term, not determined by your outward circumstances). Have you seen this play out? What's been the result when you've pursued only happiness and not the blessed life?
4. Acts 20:35 says, "In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Why is that truth so hard for people (even Christians) to agree with and live by?
5. Josh shared the Happiness Principle: You're happier when you give, and 5 Ways That Giving Makes You Happier. Discuss these five reasons and how each one has had an effect on your life.
  - Giving actually makes you happier.
  - Giving loosens the grip of selfishness on your heart.
  - Giving strengthens social bonds and deepens human relationships.
  - When you give your heart gets caught up in something bigger.
  - When you give you connect with your divine identity.

NEXT STEP

What's one specific way you can increase your giving to God's kingdom this month?

For more information (training and support) on how to start and lead a small group, contact [steve.lizzio@cbcva.org](mailto:steve.lizzio@cbcva.org)



CENTREVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2018  
**WEEK 2: THE HAPPINESS PRINCIPLE**  
MATTHEW 6:21, ACTS 20:32, 35

The Happiness Principle: **You're happier when you** \_\_\_\_\_.

**5 WAYS GIVING MAKES YOU HAPPIER**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ actually makes you \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Giving loosens the grip of \_\_\_\_\_ on your heart.
3. Giving strengthens \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. When you give your heart gets caught up in \_\_\_\_\_.
5. When you give you connect with your \_\_\_\_\_.

**Bonus Content**

Sunday (This Handout) - 7 Questions Worksheet on Acts 20:35 and Small Group Questions for this week  
Monday (Blog) - The Happiness Principle: You're Happier When You Give  
Thursday (Blog) - 5 Ways That Giving Literally Makes You Happier

For bonus content and much more, visit: [joshdaffern.com](http://joshdaffern.com)



## ACTS 20:35

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*"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Acts 20:35*

### 1. WHAT DID IT MEAN TO THE ORIGINAL READERS?

*If you start with today you're twenty centuries too late.*

In Acts 20 Paul is addressing the elders of the church at Ephesus, a city that he had labored in for three years to birth and launch a movement of believers there. In this farewell address to them, Paul reminded them of the strong example he set for them, one of service and sacrifice. It was not a passive or lackadaisical faith, but one dripping with passion and intentionality. He points to his own hard work among them and the indelible impression that left as a model for what their work ethic needed to be in his absence.

Two things in particular stand out in this verse: the object and the source. The object of our hard work is to help the weak. The idea behind "weak" isn't just physical sickness but anyone lacking strength or courage in their mental, emotional, spiritual or physical capabilities. It is an incredible call towards serving others in sacrificial and tangible ways.

The source of Paul's insatiable drive towards service comes from the words of Jesus himself. The saying of Jesus repeated by Paul is not recorded by the four gospel writers but was handed down to Paul from oral tradition. The motivation behind Paul's service towards the weak wasn't obligation but a pursuit of the blessing that can only come when we live a life of generosity towards others. Paul had discovered that humans are wired to be generous, and our greatest happiness and blessing comes when we joyfully give our lives in sacrifice and service to others.

### GREEK WORD OF THE WEEK

**μακάριος** (*makarios*) is the word translated into English as "blessing." Another possible translation is "happy," most our modern understanding of happiness sells *makarios* far short. Happiness today is a temporary feeling influenced by outward circumstances, whereas blessedness is an inner sense of peace and contentment that has nothing to do with outside circumstances. People spend their lives pursuing temporary happiness when what we need is blessedness.

### 2. WHAT'S THE CONTEXT? *Scripture without context makes no sense.*

The greater context of Acts 20:35 is a farewell address given from Paul to the elders of the church in Ephesus. Recorded in Acts 19, Paul spent three years painstakingly planting a church in the strategic city of Ephesus in spite of massive hostility and resistance from both Jewish leaders and the Greek leaders in the city. Paul told the Ephesian elders that this would be the last time they would see him alive, as he was on his way to Jerusalem (where he would be imprisoned). Knowing that these would be his final words to these church leaders, Paul impressed on them the example he set and how Christians are called to live a life of service and generosity, flowing from the example and teaching of Jesus himself.

### 3. WHAT TIMELESS TRUTHS ARE THERE?

*Since the Word doesn't change it still matters today.*

- The Christian life is to be one fueled by hard work and a strong work ethic.
- The Christian life is to be one characterized by helping the weak and service to the poor.
- Christians are to be known for their radical generosity and selfless sacrifice.
- The inspiration for this counter-cultural values come from the words and life of Jesus himself.

### 5. HOW DOES IT APPLY TODAY? *Information without application becomes stagnation.*

- The more we live generously, the happier we'll be.
- Christians should be the hardest working people on the planet.
- Helping the weak is not optional extra credit for Christians, but something fundamentally intertwined with the very essence of our faith.
- Jesus and even the Apostle Paul lived out what a true life of service and sacrifice looks like.

### 4. WHERE ELSE IN SCRIPTURE DOES IT SAY THIS? *The best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture.*

"Blessed (*makarios*) are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." *Matthew 5:7*

"Now that you know these things, you will be blessed (*makarios*) if you do them." *John 13:17*

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. *John 3:16*

### 6. HOW SHOULD THIS CHANGE THE WAY I LIVE IN COMMUNITY? *The Bible comes alive in me when I live it in community.*

- Have you experienced the difference between happiness and blessing, where you pursued momentary happiness at the expense of a life of inner blessing?
- If just 100 more Christians had the work ethic of the Apostle Paul and the sacrificial heart of Jesus, what kind of difference do you think could begin to happen in our communities and world? What holds Christians back from this level of sacrifice?

### 7. HOW CAN MY LIFE GET BETTER BECAUSE OF THESE VERSES? *If I trust God and step in faith, what kind of life will God create?*

Imagine a life overflowing with inner contentment, peace, purpose, fulfillment and power, none of which had anything to do with the ups and downs of your outer circumstances. Imagine a peace that kept you anchored throughout the greatest storms of life, a purpose that propelled you to try new things and take bigger risks for God, a contentment that was so magnetic that people constantly asked you what your secret was. Imagine waking up every morning and loving your life, no strings attached. That is a life of blessing, and that is what awaits us as we begin to live lives of radical generosity. If we're brave enough to cease the pursuit of temporary happiness and lean into the high calling of giving our lives away, we will discover the blessed life that God created for us to experience.