



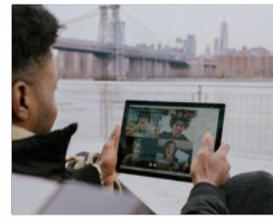
DID GOD

REALLY

SAY THAT?

**4. "GOD JUST WANTS ME TO
BE HAPPY"**

ICEBREAKER



If this is a new group or there are new people, please take a moment to **introduce yourselves.**

To start off your small group, briefly share your response to the following question:

**Describe your perfect day. Where would you go?
What would you eat? Who would you spend it with?**

Share with your group.



BE HAPPY



WHAT TO EXPECT

Let's get a big picture of what we'll be learning today...

The most popular misbelief about God in our Western version of Christianity is this, "God just wants me to be happy." A theology of happiness would read something like this: "What makes me happy must be RIGHT. What makes me unhappy must be WRONG." But that doesn't line up with what God really says. Sure, He wants to bring joy to all of our lives. But if we start to believe that any discomfort, unease, suffering, or inconvenience is not in God's will, then we might actually be worshiping a false god. We may even start to believe that God only exists to serve us. But the truth is actually the other way around.

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Tip: SILENCE CELL PHONES. As a courtesy to those who are sharing in your group, please try to stay off your phones unless for emergencies. It is okay with the exception of the use of your smartphone device for online meetings (Zoom).

Tip: IN PERSON GATHERING. Per State current requirements, please observe the following if your group decides to meet in person: No more than 10 people at this time. This may change based on what Tier we are currently at in the State of Hawaii; wear a mask; and maintain 6 feet social distance.

ONLINE Tip: ZOOM (ONLINE) GATHERING. If you're meeting together on Zoom, familiarize yourself with the Zoom features on your electronic device. It is helpful for everyone to know where the mute button is located. Ask the attendees to self-mute to avoid environmental noise when someone else is talking & sharing. Doing this will help with the flow of your SG discussion time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1.) "God just wants me to be happy." That's a nice thought, but is it true? Did God really say that? Of course God wants the best for you. You are His child, and He has given you many good gifts. But what about those times we are *not* happy? What does that mean about us or about God? Consider this verse from the wisdom of the Old Testament.

When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider this: God has made the one as well as the other. Ecclesiastes 7:14 (NIV)

"Happy" is when we feel good about what is happening to us. Those two words - happy and happen - have the same root. But joy - true joy - is a gift from God no matter the circumstances in our lives.

How do you find joy when bad things happen to you? Give an example from your life when you were content or joyful even though things were going wrong.

2.) God does want you to be happy. But there are times when those things that make us happy aren't best for us. In those times, He would rather us *not* be happy. Today, let's look at three of those. The first is, God doesn't want you to be happy when it makes you unwise. Read the following verse together:

So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise.

Ephesians 5:15 (NLT)

Have you ever seen a happy fool? Of course you have! Ignorance is bliss, after all. But God wants us to live wisely, make wise decisions, and reap the benefits of wise behavior. Jesus said that wise people are like those who build their house on the rock, safe when the waters rise. They put God's word into action in their lives no matter what.

Think of a time when something you did made you happy...but wasn't wise. Now think of a more recent time when you made the wise decision even if it didn't make you happy. Share with your group.

3.) Another reason God might not want you to be happy is when it causes you to sin. We can all think of something that would make us very happy, but we know it would be a sin to do it. What should we do? Read the following verse.

But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy.
1 Peter 1:15 (NLT)

There is an idea that you can't be happy and holy at the same time. The truth is, God wants both for you. Holiness without happiness is dull. But happiness without holiness is dangerous. If we only choose what makes us happy over what is holy, then we are headed for disaster. But every choice for holiness will lead to happiness in the long term.

Sin can be fun for a season, but holiness will reap a better type of happiness as well as eternal rewards. Can you think of an example where choosing to be holy now will make you happy later?

4.) Finally, God does not want you to be happy when it means loving the world more than Him. We all know that God loves the world (John 3:16). And we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves, and even love our enemies. In a way, we do need to love the world.

But there is a different love of the world that can make us happy but is not what God wants. Read these great words from John.

Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

1 John 2:15-17 (NLT)

Loving the world means we only want the pleasures we can feel, see, or get. But it will only leave us empty inside. Why? Because they never last. What God has for us is so much better! This is what He wants for all of us:

But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful.
Psalm 68:3 (NIV)

There is a difference between being happy in the world and happy in the Lord. What are some practical ways you find your happiness in God? (Example, serving others, helping someone in need, extending forgiveness, being kind, etc.)

Finally, take some time to discuss right now if all of you will be continuing to meet in your small group. Or, discuss with your group if you plan to have a fun get together as you complete this small group study.

Note: No pressure at all to attend.



WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This week, instead of choosing short-term happiness, consider:

- What Makes You Wise,
- What Keeps You Holy, or
- What Pleases the Lord

Will you commit to doing the right thing at the right time so you can be happy in the Lord?

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):

- Do at least one (1) SOAP Devotions this week
- Share with your group one of your SOAP Devotions from this past week

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Take a few minutes to close your time together with prayer and to pray for each other's prayer requests. Below is a sample prayer to read if you choose to. You can also choose to write down each other's prayer requests to remember throughout the week.



Sample Prayer:

"Father, thank You for every good gift that comes to us from You above. We know these are the only ways to make us truly happy. Give us wisdom, holiness, and contentment to find our place in You every day. We desire to enjoy this life that You have given us to the fullest. Help us to keep ourselves from speaking evil and to always do our very best to speak the truth. When we are tempted to do what is wrong, convict us. We give You permission to examine our hearts and our motives. Help us pursue peace with people especially with those closest to us. Gently remind us that Your eyes are always watching over those who do what honors You. Thank You that You are attentive to us when we cry out to You and pray. In Jesus' name we pray, amen."

Group Prayer Requests:

Name

Request

DAILY DEVOTIONS: DAY 1

SCRIPTURE...

Wisdom is a tree of life to those who embrace her; happy are those who hold her tightly.

Proverbs 3:18 (NLT)

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...

DAILY DEVOTIONS: DAY 2

SCRIPTURE...

Give me happiness, O Lord, for I give myself to You. O Lord, You are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask for Your help.

Psalms 86:4-5 (NLT)

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...

SCRIPTURE...

*If you obey the Lord, you will be happy, but there is no future for the wicked.
Proverbs 10:28 (CEV)*

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...

SCRIPTURE...

*Jesus said, "In the same way God's angels are happy when even one person turns to Him."
Luke 15:10 (CEV)*

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...

SCRIPTURE...

For the Scriptures say, "If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and His ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns His face against those who do evil. 1 Peter 3:10-12 (NLT)

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...



**NEW HOPE
WINDWARD**

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