

# *the good life*

## **Study Guide**



# the good life

## Study Guide

### Chapter 1 - *Chasing Shadows*

In the opening chapter of *The Good Life: What Jesus Teaches About Finding True Happiness*, Dr. Derwin Gray says, “trying to find happiness is like chasing your shadows; what starts as childish fun erodes into adult frustration, failure, and disappointment.” How often have you found yourself chasing for happiness in temporal things? Maybe it’s a new car or a fancy house. Maybe it’s the corner office or that significant other that you think will finally fulfill you. No matter what, the happiness we experience in those situations’ fades. As we explore the beatitudes in **Matthew 5:3-12**, we find an invitation from Jesus to discover the happiness we were created for.

The following study guides will steer you through each chapter of the book as well as the sermons that accompany the chapters.

### Chapter 2 - *Happy are the Beggars*

- We experience true happiness by becoming beggars, repenting of our pride, and receiving & living from the unending riches of Christ Jesus. Happiness is about becoming who you were meant to be.
- Read **Matthew 5:3**. The Greek word for “blessed” is *makarios*. “Poor in spirit” refers to those in Jesus’ day who recognize and bear their difficult circumstances and who long for God’s restoration through the Messiah. The Kingdom of Heaven is that restoration.
- Take some time to pray and meditate on this verse. How has your understanding of “poor in spirit” changed after reading this chapter and listening to the sermon?
- Pride is sneaky. How have you struggled with pride and humility? Can you think of a time when pride snuck up on you? How do you pursue humility in your everyday life?
- What steps can you take this week to see God’s grace more clearly? How will this change your daily interactions with others?
- What can you do this week to love the poor and marginalized in your community? Commit to be a holistic healer.

# the good life

## Study Guide

### Chapter 3 - *Happy are the Sad*

- You will become happy when what breaks God's heart breaks your heart. Read **Isaiah 61:1-2**. These are the verses Jesus reads at the start of his public ministry. It's called his "messianic mandate." (**Luke 4:18-22**) By citing this passage of Scripture, Jesus identifies Himself as the messianic servant that takes up the role of a prophet to announce the good news of salvation. The scripture also announces that He will comfort those who mourn, which echoes what Jesus says in **Matthew 5:4**.
- Though grief is a difficult experience for all, Pastor Derwin said that, "if you dismiss grief, you forfeit growth." How has the grief you've experienced in your own life helped you to grow?
- Read **Isaiah 6:1-8** aloud. In this passage Isaiah has a throne-room vision of Yahweh that transforms him. He is commissioned for ministry, just as you have now been commissioned for ministry.
- Happy are the sad because they repent of sin and embrace the atonement, individually and corporately. Happy are the sad because they join Jesus in bringing redemptive justice to the world. As you read through the verses in **Isaiah 6**, identify the parts that speak to these statements.
- What has been your experience with lamenting?
- This chapter included three stories of lament (Pastor Derwin touched on Bryan Stevenson's story in his sermon). At the center of each story is mourning over sin, evil, injustice, suffering, and tragedy. How have you mourned these things in your own life or the lives of others?
- Pain sends us into our purpose. Have you been able to find purpose in your pain? If you haven't yet, take some time to pray and ask God to reveal the purpose. How can you join Jesus in bringing redemptive justice to the world?

# the good life

## Study Guide

### Chapter 4 - *Happy are the Humble*

- Read **Luke 5:3-7**. What do you think Peter's tone was when Jesus told them to lower the fishing nets into the water? Can you relate? Have you experienced moments of weakness in your faith?
- Read **Luke 5:8** to see Peter's response when he realized the holiness of Jesus. How have you been humbled by God's sovereignty and holiness?
- Read **Luke 5:10-11**. God's grace always calls us to mission and ministry. From grace comes purpose, and that purpose is to be an agent of grace in our communities. What specific ways can you minister and live on mission in your everyday life?
- Pastor Derwin shared a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that said anyone can be great because anyone can serve. Can you recall someone in your life who may not have been great in the eyes of the world, but was a great and humble servant?
- Read **John 21:4-19**. How has Peter transformed since the beginning of his journey with Christ? How have you been transformed since the beginning of your journey with Christ? Celebrate the ways God has been conforming you more into His image.
- After reading this chapter and listening to the sermon, how has your view of humility changed? Do you view humility as a strength? How can you cultivate true humility in your life?

# the good life

## Study Guide

### Chapter 5 - *Happy are the Hungry and Thirsty*

- Read **2 Corinthians 5:21**. God joins us in our brokenness and even sent Jesus to bring justice once and for all by bearing the injustice of the world. What does it say that we receive in the process? What does that mean to you?
- Read **Luke 9:23-25**. How can we join God in His mission to bring redemption to earth? Think big picture, and then think about your own life and sphere of influence.
- In this chapter and the sermon, Pastor Derwin highlights the story of Manny Ohonme. What impacted you from his story?
- Read **Isaiah 1:17** and **James 1:27**. Recall a time someone met a need of yours. How did that impact you?
- Pastor Derwin also shared the story of Pat and Robert Vinroot and how they have ministered to those in the prison system through Transformation Church. Read **Hebrews 13:3**. Sometimes we view those in prison as undeserving of grace or care. What does this verse say? Share your thoughts on caring for those who may not “deserve” it according to society.
- Read this excerpt from the chapter, “God will take unrighteous people and make them righteous through the blood of Christ, so they can express his righteousness.” Take time to write down your thoughts about this concept.
- Read **Luke 4:18-19**. Jesus is in the synagogue reading from the scroll of Isaiah. When He finishes reading the verses He sits down and declares that He is the one who has come to fulfill what is written. How is God calling you to partner with Him in fulfilling what is written?

# the good life

## Study Guide

### Chapter 6 - *Happy are the Merciful*

- How did God show us His ultimate mercy? What impact has this act of mercy had on your life?
- To give mercy, we must first receive it. Pastor Derwin wrote, "At the heart of our lack of mercy is our inability to receive mercy. We are not merciful because we have not experienced divine mercy. If you do not possess it, you cannot give it away." Have you accepted God's mercy for your life? Is this an area in which you are struggling? If so, pray and ask God to open your heart so that you may fully accept the mercy He offers.
- Read **Matthew 5:7**. Jesus shares His mercy with us so that we may become merciful. How have you seen mercy at work in your life? Does this inspire you to extend mercy to others?
- Read **Luke 10:25-37**. How does the parable of the Good Samaritan inform who your neighbor is? Our neighbor may be someone with whom we may not get along or agree. How can you show them mercy?
- Mercy isn't afraid to cross ethnic, cultural, and religious barriers to touch human suffering. What opportunities exist around you to help hurting people?
- God sees people as loved, valuable, and redeemable. How can you transform the way you see people to align with the way God sees them?

# the good life

## Study Guide

### Chapter 7 - *Happy are the Pure*

- Grace is powerful and transforms lives. How has grace transformed your life? Give specific changes you have noticed; no change is too small!
- Because we are impure, Jesus made us pure. Read **Hebrews 1:3**. Why is Jesus able to make us pure? Growing up, what were you taught about purity? Did what you heard in the message and read in this chapter affect your thoughts on how Jesus makes us pure?
- Because we are unclean, Jesus made us clean. Because we are unrighteous, Jesus made us righteous. Read **1 John 1:9**. After reading this verse, is there anything that prevents you from seeing and believing you are clean and righteous?
- Not only does He make us clean and righteous, but also anyone who confesses Jesus as Savior. Read **Romans 3:21-24**. Do you see other believers around you as pure and holy? Are there any examples that you can think of that would prevent you from seeing other believers as pure and holy?
- Read **Hebrews 12:14-15**. How will pursuing peace make us pure in heart? How can you pursue peace with others in your life? Think of a concrete example you can act on this week.

# the good life

## Study Guide

### Chapter 8 - *Happy are the Peacemakers*

- Read **Romans 5:10**. Love learns that God in Christ made peace with us through the cross. How does knowing this truth affect your view of peace? Do you feel at peace with God?
- Read **Romans 12:18**. The message of this verse can be a challenging verse to live by. What are your thoughts when reading this verse? Are you overwhelmed? Why is it possible to achieve what this verse calls us to do?
- As a son or daughter of God, peace is now in your DNA. How can you embrace this part of your identity? Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you seek to be an agent of peace in your family and in your community.
- Love laments how we have failed to love each other as siblings. Read **Colossians 3:11-16**. Recall a time when you may have failed to show love or pursue peace. How would you handle that situation now, knowing what you know about your identity in Christ? Allow **Philippians 2:3-8** to guide your thoughts. This exercise is not meant to shame you. Rather, allow God to move you to repentance and transformation.
- Love leverages our lives as ambassadors of reconciliation (peace). Read **2 Corinthians 5:18**. Is there anything that scares you or makes you feel uncomfortable about being an ambassador of reconciliation? What hurdles do you see? Allow God to bring you comfort and strength so you can move forward as a peacemaker in our world.



# the good life

## Study Guide

### Chapter 9 - *Happy are the Persecuted*

- Have you ever experienced any kind of backlash for your faith? How did that make you feel? How can you choose to walk with Jesus through these painful experiences?
- What is the difference between persecution and persecution for righteousness? Why is it important to make this distinction?
- Read **2 Corinthians 12:8-10**. Do you find yourself taking pleasure in persecution or does this concept sound outrageous to you? How can persecution produce endurance in your life?
- As you experience persecution, be happy! You have a reward coming. Read **Matthew 5:12**. What is the reward?
- Read **Psalms 84:11-12**. How does this verse bring you comfort? Do you know someone who is currently struggling in their faith? Share this verse with them and encourage them.