



weekly discussion guide

Week 1: God Wants Me to be Happy

By Teaching Pastor Jason Strand

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INTRO

We are entering a new six-week series entitled, *Christian Clichés That Drive You Crazy*. A cliché is a phrase or expression that has been overused to the point that it has lost all of its force. We will be examining six common Christian clichés to see if they hold up to the light of Scripture. This weekend, Jason Strand started the series by looking at whether or not it's true that God just wants us to be happy. The verses and questions below will guide you as you evaluate this cliché.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever bought into the idea that above all God wants you to be happy? What are some of the consequences of holding this view of God, and of God's desire for our lives?
2. Jason listed three times when God doesn't want you happy. The first is when happiness causes you to sin. The book of 1 Peter has a lot to say about this. Read 1 Peter 1:13-16 and 1 Peter 3:17. What do these verses have to say about God's desire for us? If God's goal isn't for us to be happy, what is it?
3. Another instance where God doesn't want you happy is when it's driven by circumstances. Read James 1:2-3, 12. What is the difference between happiness and joy? How do we experience joy even during times of trial?
4. Read Philippians 4:11-13. According to Paul, where do we find our source of joy in all circumstances? Think of a difficult situation that you are currently facing or have faced recently. What would it look like to face that situation from the perspective of this passage in Philippians?
5. Finally, God doesn't want you happy as much as He wants you blessed. What does a "blessed" life look like? From a biblical perspective, how does a blessed life look different than the American dream? Which kind of life do you find yourself striving after, and why?

THINK ABOUT IT

Jason left us with several key questions to ponder. Over the course of the next week, spend a few minutes at the end of each day reflecting on the following questions:

1. Did I love God today?
2. Did I love others today?
3. Did my spouse and kids feel cherished and spiritually encouraged today?
4. What was God trying to teach me today?
5. Did I acknowledge God in the mundane things in life?
6. Was I obedient today—did I become more like Jesus in my character?

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This week, commit to memory **James 1:2-3**: *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance."*