Questions I’ve Always Wanted To Ask God
“Why Am I So Unhappy?”
(Part 5)

Intro: Get Off The Path Of Unhappiness

Here are 6 ways to make your life miserable. The unhappiness path.

A. Live for yourself

Philip. 2:3-4 “Don’t be selfish...Don’t think only about your own affairs...” (NLT)
WHY? Because it makes you miserable.
1. I believe one of the most primary reasons for people’s unhappiness is selfishness. What is the basic motivation of your heart? Do you live to give or do you live to get?
2. Statistically, the more generous and giving you are the healthier you are emotionally. The more selfish and self-centered you are, the more unhealthy and unhappy you are emotionally. (It’s that simple!)
3. Lorrie F. and I teach a class called Foundations. Several months ago someone from our class showed up after witnessing an accident on the freeway. (Explain)
4. This is an extreme case, but how often is our own selfishness the basic motivation for much of what we do or don’t do? (I’m too busy / It’s not my problem / I don’t have time / I can’t be inconvenienced / I really don’t care /
• If you want to be miserable, all you have to do is be selfish.

B. Make comparisons

Ecc. 3:4 “Then I observed that most people are motivated to success by the envy of their neighbors. But this too, is meaningless...” (NLT)
1. The root cause of comparing is simply the envy of others. If you want to rob yourself of joy, just start comparing yourself to other people. Start comparing possessions / money / looks / families / kids / skills and abilities / homes /
2. The moment we start down the path of making comparisons, we immediately lose our joy! (Years ago I was steelhead fishing on the upper Molalla (caught
one fish – having a great time) when I saw my brother’s truck – Explain – He’d just release his 5th fish!

3. There are two motivations that cause us to make comparisons.
   - The first is simply the envy of others. I want what others have.
   - Secondly is an attitude of entitlement. I deserve what others have. I’m getting the short end of the stick / I’m being treated unfairly / Once you start down this path, you lose all joy!

C. Stay in isolation

Ps. 25:16 “I am alone and in deep distress.” (NLT)

1. I think this describes a lot of people today. People today are in deep distress because they are alone! In our culture, people tend to be emotionally isolated. What this means is that no one really knows who you are. (the pace of life / busyness / commute / technology – all adds to the isolation.)

2. We are created to connect deeply with other people. The longer I live the more I am understanding that the greatest joys in my life are not great accomplishments, but great relationships.

3. Our culture adds to the isolation, but we add to it as well. We fear rejection from others if they really knew me / Comparing makes us isolate – they wouldn’t want to get to know me / My pride makes me isolate – I can handle this myself!

4. If you want to be unhappy, all you have to do is stay in isolation – keep people at arms length – never let anyone really know who you are.

D. Embrace busyness

Ps. 127:2 “It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning to late at night...” (NLT) We don’t believe this!

1. What an anti-American verse! Aren’t we suppose to live like this? Not according to our Creator!

2. Our problem is that in our culture, we have equated busyness with success and success with happiness. And it’s simply not true. Truth – busyness leads to stress / high blood pressure / anxiety / poor relationships / and a general dissatisfaction with life!

3. The majority of people I have ever talked to about time, when asked if they are too busy say “yes”. If you are too busy, your are probably also…unhappy!

4. God was right all along. It’s a useless way to live! We talked about this last week. So, get the tape / CD / In order to be unhappy, all you have to do is embrace busyness.
E. Neglect your spiritual life

Deut. 32:14 “You neglected the Rock who fathered you; you forgot the God who had given you birth.” (NLT)

Jer. 2:5 “...they went far from Me and walked after emptiness and became empty.” (NASB)

1. When we neglect our relationship with God we are living contrary to the way we are designed. And if we don’t fill our lives with Him, we fill it with substitutes. We will fill it with something.

2. The problem with all substitutes, is that they’re empty. The end result of all other pursuits is that we will taste the emptiness of those things. They cannot satisfy. If we walk after empty things we become empty people!

3. This is why in themselves money / possessions / accomplishments / success / power / prosperity / pleasure can never satisfy. There are plenty of miserable people in this world with all these things.

F. Live without purpose

Jer. 50:6 “My people have become lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray...They have lost their way and cannot remember how to get back to the fold.” (NLT)

1. From God’s perspective, people are lost and then they listen to other lost people that just add to the problem. Many have no clear direction or they are blindly following the wrong ones.

2. It’s pretty tough being happy when you feel like you’re lost. Even worse, is pursuing a direction for years only to later discover it was the wrong way. It wasn’t what you thought it was going to be. (mid-life crisis)

3. We need to know that our lives matter. That our existence has purpose, meaning, and significance. How can we live this life with passion / with hope / when we have no clear sense of purpose? Just existing / just going through the motions of life does not make one happy!

* Score yourself on a scale of 1-10. How are you doing?

* Thankfully we don’t have to stay on this path, we can choose God’s path.

II. Get On God’s Path Of Fulfillment

* Here are 6 Biblical ways that produce fulfillment in your life.

A. Meet the needs of others (in place of selfishness)

Gal. 5:13 “...through love serve one another.” (NASB)

Gal 6:9-10 “Don’t get tired of doing what is good. Don’t get discouraged and give up, for we will reap a harvest of blessing ...Whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone...” (NLT)
1. God promises us blessing if we choose to live this way! One of the best ways to cure our selfishness is to simply meet the needs of others. To choose to serve in some capacity.

2. If you are not actively serving somewhere / actively meeting people’s needs in some way, you are out of God’s will for your life! You are off God’s path for happiness and fulfillment. You are living contrary to how He made you.

3. This is why it’s great to be part of a church like Foothills. Because we believe in meeting people’s needs, we provide many opportunities for you to do so! Places to serve abound! (Get bulletin – highlight areas!)

B. Practice being thankful (In place of comparing.)

* I Thess. 5:18 “In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (NASB)

1. The reason we compare is that we are not satisfied with what we have. Happiness is NOT getting what we want, it is wanting what we have. Being thankful is a great cure.

2. Being thankful is a choice not a feeling. You can choose to focus on what you don’t have or what you do / all that is wrong or all that is right / what you long for, or what you’re blessed with. It’s your choice!

3. Most people have developed a bad habit of being negative / focusing on what’s wrong / focusing on what others have and what they don’t have. NOW, I want to ask you to develop a new habit…of being thankful.

4. HOW? Everyday, start by telling God what you are thankful for / Make a list if you have to / When you feel yourself slipping back into comparison thinking, start thanking God again! Our emotions follow our thinking.

C. Develop meaningful relationships (instead of isolation)

* Prov. 27:17 “As iron sharpens iron, a friend sharpens a friend.” (NLT)
* John 13:35 “Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are My disciples.” (NLT)

1. I need relationships that impact my life. Relationships that make me a better person. Relationships that challenge me to grow and hold me accountable. People who really know who I am. (Warts and all!)

2. God calls us to relationships that are so radical they are observable to the unchurched world. People can’t help but notice them because they are so different.

3. How do we find friendships like this? I believe you can find them right here. Here’s why. I want to explain to you the environment of Foothills. Explain a grace environment Vs a legalistic one.
4. Many churches have legalistic environments. This always makes you hide your faults – Fear causes you to hide and protect yourself – The real issues never are dealt with and your life never changes. Foothills has a grace environment – We will love you regardless! We expect faults!

D. Balance your schedule (in place of busyness)

Ps. 127:2 “It is vain for you to rise up early, to retire late, to eat the bread of painful labors; For He gives to His beloved even in his sleep.” (NASB)

1. There are 2 key reasons why we will not bring balance to our schedules
   - First, we’re too prideful. Our self-sufficient attitudes just get in the way. If it’s going to be, it’s up to me! (Howard Hendricks – “if you want to know how indispensable you are – bucket of water.)
   - Secondly, We don’t trust God. We don’t believe He’ll bless us if we work less. We don’t believe in His provision. He gives to us even when we sleep? C’mon! Yes, God loves you that much!

E. Connect deeply with God (instead of spiritual isolation)

Ps. 105:3-4 “...Let the heart of those who seek the Lord be glad. Seek the Lord and His strength; Seek His face continually.” (NASB)

(Greatest command is to love God)

1. It doesn’t say seek the Lord and be miserable! The greatest joy producing choice you can ever make is to decide to connect heart to heart with God! The Bible says, “In Your presence is fullness of joy!”

2. People who only have religious rituals don’t have this joy. It doesn’t come through religion. It’s a byproduct of intimacy with God. It’s a byproduct of relationship.

3. Notice this verse says 3 Xs to “seek”. We have a responsibility to pursue God. To seek after Him. What direction are you moving in?

4. When we connect with Him, He actually pours into us life. He pours into us His joy / His peace / His contentment / His love. It’s not something we do, it’s something He does. (Pitcher and an empty glass)

F. Live for God’s purposes (instead of being lost)

Acts 13:36 “For David, after he served the purposes of God in his own generation, fell asleep...’ (NASB) (I love his epitaph!)

Ps. 17:15 “But because I have done what is right, I will see you. When I awake, I will be fully satisfied.” (NLT) God’s purposes satisfy!

1. Serving God’s purposes will bring more satisfaction to your life then any purpose you can create yourself. When you wake up in the morning you can
wake up with the satisfaction that your life matters / that it is meaningful / that you are part of the purposes of God here on earth!

2. So, how do I begin living for God’s purposes? Be willing to make 2 foundational choices:
   • First, allow God to use your life however He wants!
   • Secondly, commit your life to advancing His Kingdom on earth. Become a Kingdom builder / become Kingdom minded.

If we make these foundational decisions, God will fill in the details. Too often we want God to give us specifics without the commitment.

So, what path have you been on? God gives us a choice. He really does want us to enjoy the gift of life we have. So what changes is God speaking to you about today? Maybe today, you need some directional changes. Why not let God help you make a turn?