



LifeNIGHT
 Whole People In A Broken World
 An Interactive Bible Study Series for Summer 2002

R	Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor. (Matthew 5:3, GN)
	Principle #1: Realize I'm not God. I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and my life is unmanageable.
E	Happy are those who mourn. (Matthew 5:4, GN)
	Principle #2: Earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He has the power to help me recover.
C	Happy are those who are humble. (Matthew 5:5, GN)
	Principle #3: Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control.
O	Happy are the pure in heart. (Matthew 5:8, GN)
	Principle #4: Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.
V	Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires. (Matthew 5:6, GN)
	Principle #5: Voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects.
E	Happy are those who are merciful to others. (Matthew 5:7, GN)
	Principle #6: Evaluate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others.
R	Happy are those who work for peace. (Matthew 5:9, GN)
	Principle #7: Reserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will.
Y	Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires. (Matthew 5:10, GN)
	Principle #8: Yield myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and my words.

Matthew 5:3-10 (TEV)

- Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!
 - Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them!
 - Happy are those who are humble; they will receive what God has promised!
 - Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires; God will satisfy them fully!
 - Happy are those who are merciful to others; God will be merciful to them!
 - Happy are the pure in heart; they will see God!
 - Happy are those who work for peace; God will call them his children!
 - Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!
- Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ preached the greatest sermon in history; we call it the Sermon on the Mount. He started out by saying "I want to give you eight steps that will bring happiness to your life." Today we call those eight principles the Beatitudes.
- When you look closely at the Beatitudes that Jesus gave, you will find that they are a summary of the steps to recovery that we have been studying over the past eight weeks.
- As we wind up this series, we'll be looking at the last step on the Road to Recovery. The "Y" in RECOVERY stands for "YIELD" – Yield myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and my words.
- God wants to use your experiences to help other people. He wants to use YOU. He wants to recycle the pain in your life for the benefit of other people. Usually we think that God only uses really gifted or talented people. But that's not true – God uses ordinary people.
- We pray that God would use our STRENGTH, but God declares that He wants to use our WEAKNESS. Do you know why? Because people are not helped by seeing your strength; they're helped when you're honest about your weaknesses. When you share your strength they say, "I'll never have that." But when you share your weaknesses they say, "I can relate to that."
- When you understand that God can use your weakness, hurt and pain for His purposes, life takes on a whole new meaning. And when you begin to practice this last step, then and only then do you truly have genuine recovery.

- **The proof of recovery is when you begin to focus outside of yourself.** You stop being so self absorbed, and you start asking, "How can I help other people?"

WHY HAS GOD ALLOWED MY PAIN?

1. TO PERMIT ME TO HAVE A FREE WILL.

- **Deuteronomy 11:26-28 (LB)** I am giving you the choice today between God's blessing or God's curse! There will be blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am giving you today, and a curse if you refuse them and worship the gods of these other nations.
- The Bible tells us in Genesis that we are made in the image of God. How are we like God? God gave each of us the power of choice; you can choose right or wrong, God or Satan, life or death. Why would God take such a risk? Because He wanted people who would love Him voluntarily!
- You can't say you love someone unless you have had the opportunity not to love them. You can't say you're good unless you've had the option to be bad.
- Our free will is not only a blessing but it's also a burden, because sometimes we make dumb choices. And those dumb choices cause all kinds of painful consequences in our lives. God would not like for you to have your pain, but many times it's just part of the package that comes with having a free will.
- Not only does God give YOU a free will, He gives EVERYONE ELSE a free will too. Sometimes THEY don't do the right thing and YOU get hurt as an innocent victim. Could God have prevented that hurt from happening to you? Yes, all He would have had to do would be to take away that person's free will to do wrong. But if He had done that, to be fair He would have to take away YOUR free will too.
- Do you see the dilemma? The problem is that by having a free will we get blessing, but we also get a burden. And God says, "I'm not going to overrule your will." God doesn't send anybody to hell; you choose to go there by rejecting everything that He does for you. If you say "NO" to Him, you can't blame anybody but yourself because you have a free will.

2. TO GET MY ATTENTION.

- **Proverbs 20:30 (TEV)** Sometimes it takes a painful experience to make us change our ways.
- **God uses pain to get our attention.** Pain is a warning light on the dashboard of life, an alarm that says it's time to act.
- Pain is not your problem; it's just a symptom of your problem. Pain just says, "Something is drastically wrong in my life." It's God's megaphone. God whispers to us in our pleasure but He shouts to us in our pain. We don't change when we see the light but when we feel the heat.
- **2 Corinthians 7:9 (LB)** Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you but because the pain turned you to God. It was a good kind of sorrow you felt, the kind of sorrow God wants his people to have, so that I need not come to you with harshness.
- **Jonah 2:7 (LB)** When I had lost all hope, I turned my thoughts once more to the Lord. And my earnest prayer went to you in your holy Temple.

3. TO TEACH ME TO DEPEND ON HIM.

- **2 Corinthians 1:8-10 (LB)** I think you ought to know, dear brothers, about the hard time we went through in Asia. We were really crushed and overwhelmed, and feared we would never live through it. We felt we were doomed to die and saw how powerless we were to help ourselves; but that was good, for then we put everything into the hands of God, who alone could save us, for he can even raise the dead. And he did help us and saved us from a terrible death; yes, and we expect him to do it again and again.
- **You don't know that God is all you need until God is all you have.** If you never had a problem, you'd never know God could solve problems!
- The truth is that there are some things we only learn through pain. It is life's greatest teacher.
- **Psalms 119:71-72 (LB)** The punishment you gave me was the best thing that could have happened to me, for it taught me to pay attention to your laws. They are more valuable to me than millions in silver and gold!

4. TO GIVE ME A MINISTRY TO OTHERS.

- **2 Corinthians 1:4 (NLT)** He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.
- One of the great reasons that God allows pain in my life is to give me a ministry to others. Pain makes me humble in spirit, and also makes me sympathetic and sensitive to the needs of others. Pain prepares you to serve.
- Everybody needs recovery of some type, and who better to help them than someone who has been through the same situation themselves! **God wants to recycle the pain in your life to help others**, but you've got to be open about it.
- God is bigger than those situations and those people that hurt you. No matter what other people have done to you, God can turn it around and use it for good.
- **Genesis 50:20 (NIV)** You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.
- **God never wastes a hurt.** But you can waste it if you don't learn from it and if you don't share it with other people.

HOW DO I USE MY PAIN TO HELP OTHERS?

- **1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)** But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,
- You need to always be prepared to give an answer to this question: **"HOW DID YOU MAKE IT?"**
- **Galatians 6:1-2 (LB)** Dear brothers, if a Christian is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help him back onto the right path, remembering that next time it might be one of you who is in the wrong. Share each other's troubles and problems, and so obey our Lord's command.
- This is a COMMAND – if you are a Christian, you are to share in the problems of other people! Help them like God has helped you!

- Three suggestions for sharing your story:
 - **BE HUMBLE.** When you witness to someone, it's like one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread. You're not saying that you have it all together, you're saying that we're all in the same boat together!
 - **BE REAL.** Be honest about your hurts and your faults. Be courageous enough to be vulnerable and real, because that's when you really can help someone else open up to God. And it's this atmosphere of acceptance that we want to cultivate in our church family.
 - **BE KIND.** Just share your story; God wants you to be a witness, not a defense attorney! You can't argue anyone into Heaven, and you can't hate anyone into truth. Just share what happened to you, and let God do the convicting.
- Here's how the Apostle Paul said it ...
- **1 Thessalonians 2:3-8 (MES)** God tested us thoroughly to make sure we were qualified to be trusted with this Message. Be assured that when we speak to you we're not after crowd approval—only God approval. Since we've been put through that battery of tests, you're guaranteed that both we and the Message are free of error, mixed motives, or hidden agendas. We never used words to butter you up. No one knows that better than you. And God knows we never used words as a smoke screen to take advantage of you. Even though we had some standing as Christ's apostles, we never threw our weight around or tried to come across as important, with you or anyone else. We weren't aloof with you. We took you just as you were. We were never patronizing, never condescending, but we cared for you the way a mother cares for her children. We loved you dearly. Not content to just pass on the Message, we wanted to give you our hearts. And we did.
- Something amazing happens when you are willing to honestly share your story – it not only gives HOPE TO THEM but it gives HEALING TO YOU. Every time you share your story with somebody, you get a little bit stronger, and you're healed a little bit more.
- **Acts 20:24 (NLT)** But my life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about God's wonderful kindness and love.
- There are only two things you cannot do in heaven. One of them is sin. The other is witness. Which of those two reasons do you think God left you on earth for? Pretty obvious, isn't it?