

Happiness #4 - Undermining Our Happiness

Icebreaker

Use the "Snapshots" Activity on the handout to initiate some sharing about significant times in each other's lives. Highlight the frame titled "A time I was really happy".

Sermon Discussion

Josh began with a pretty innocuous/silly story about regret (eating too many snacks before anticipated Christmas dinner). Can you share an example of a time when you "settled for something that was immediately in front of you, rather than waiting to experience the something better you actually wanted"?

Read John 10:1-11. From the context of the passage who might the 'thief' be? What experiences of "theft" have you had in your life?

Do you agree with Pastor Josh's statement that "we have done more to undermine our happiness than anyone else"? Is it generally true? Can you think of people or circumstances where it isn't true?

Josh says that we undermine our happiness by confusing it with pleasure, but are there other ways that our happiness can be undermined?

Discuss the statement "as much as we may like to blame other people for our unhappiness, the truth is that we are so often our own worst enemy."

What evidences can you give from your life experiences that would show that 'abundant life' that Jesus seems to promise in this passage?

Pastor Josh talked about this abundant life showing up as people recognizing that there's something different about a person and how they respond to life. Who have you come across that would be an example of this?

Discuss this part of Josh's message:

Sin always separates. To use Jesus' terminology, sin comes to steal, kill and destroy. And while the authors of the New Testament sometimes talk about sin as a power or an entity, we need to understand that it is something that can easily become a part of who we are and if we are not careful, and if something doesn't change in us, it will be a part of how we undermine our own happiness.

How would you describe the differences between pleasure and happiness? Why does it seem that pleasure can have a more negative connotation? (because they can lead to addiction/enslavement?)

Josh said that "not all pleasure is sin, but when we say "yes" over and over and over again, we are giving up our freedom." What would be some pretty common addictions? What can be the cost of giving up freedom?

How has following Jesus led to clearer priorities, and peace, for you?

Have you seen the pattern, in yourself or others, where when someone experiences unhappiness they try to fill it with something that gives them pleasure? Examples?

Josh asked us to consider (privately) if there is a pleasure that is undermining our happiness.