

HAPPY ARE THOSE WHOSE GREATEST DESIRE IS TO DO WHAT GOD WANTS

Are you trying to build a discerning heart in your decisions, in the ordinary events of the day? Are you trying to discover your real motivations and priorities?

-What is my deepest hunger and thirst?

-What dies at the root of this need?

-Why do I need this to satisfy me?

Happy are those whose GREATEST DESIRE is to do what God requires. Are you as excited about God's leading in the daily decisions of your life as you ought to be? What really motivates you? In the hard nosed decisions of your professional life, where does God come in? Do you really put people above things?

HAPPY are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires; God will satisfy them fully! What God "requires" means "God's will for you". You greatly desire to do what God requires when....

-You tell the Father every day;

"Thy will be done"

-You really believe that whatever you say or do to any person, you say or do to Jesus.

-You pray for the grace to be forgiving at home.

-You are determined to help others whenever you can.

-You really want to grow closer to our Lord. You really want Him to convert you.

HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

I have eaten,

I have eaten too much.

I have eaten because others did,

Because I was invited,

Because I was in the world and the world would not have understood;

And each dish,

Each mouthful,

Each swallow was hard to get down.

I have eaten too much, Lord,

While at that moment, in my town, more than fifteen hundred persons queued up at the breadline,

While in her attic a woman ate what she had salvaged that morning from the garbage cans.

While urchins in their tenement divided some scraps from the old folks' home,

While ten, a hundred, a thousand unfortunates throughout

the world at that very moment twisted in pain and died of hunger before their despairing families.

Of the eight Beatitudes, the areas where I am strongest (mark with a plus) and the areas where I am weakest (mark with a minus) are:

___ Spiritually poor (to admit that you have needs, to be open to change, to realize that you don't have it all)

___ mourn (to feel for the hurt of others, to empathize with others because you know what it means - you have been there)

___ meek (to enable others to be themselves, to open up, to be quiet enough to hear others)

___ spiritual hunger (to have your priorities in spiritual perspective, to have spiritual goals and motivations)

___ show mercy (to have compassion without conditions, sensitive and responsive, freely, unconditionally giving yourself)

___ pure in heart (to be in touch with your inner self, unencumbered by false images, honest with yourself, God and others)

___ peacemaker (to bridge differences without destroying others uniquenesses, to harmonize, to bring togetherness)

___ endurance (to be able to accept hostility and anger without fighting back, to act rather than react in circumstances)

Phase Two

1. From what I have observed of the others in my group, I would say that the Beatitude in which each person is strongest is (jot the name of each person in your group underneath the trait he has manifested):

Spiritually poor

mourn

Meek

spiritual hunger

show mercy

pure in heart

peacemaker

endurance

2. I would like those in my group to help me in my life to (finish the sentence:)

- Have I ever been persecuted for following Jesus? Why? Why Not?
- Are there any areas in which I persecute others knowingly or unwittingly?
- What would I do if Christians began to be persecuted by government?
- What do you think would happen in general
 - lose members
 - deeper faith
 - growth
 - underground

Happy are those who suffer persecution because of God.

Are you willing to work and suffer for truth and justice? Can you take an unpopular stand? Can you take criticism from those close to you without reacting defensively?

Finally, build up your strength in union with the Lord and by means of his mighty power. Put on all the armor that God gives you, so that you will be able to stand against the devil's evil tricks

Ephesians 6 10 11

I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me.

Philippans 4:3

Perhaps our biggest shortcoming in the area of Christian sexual mores is that we have failed to realize that all love is dangerous. Love is very threatening to our existing world-view and our present ego boundaries. Yet love is better than any of the alternatives. It is a risk that we must take to be human, and according to John "anyone who fails to love can never know God" (1 John 4-8)

The risk, fear and discipline involved in loving rightly, I believe, cause people to use religion to avoid the tremendous amount of darkness and suffering that goes into the mature development of any human relationship. It is easier to simply quote the appropriate chapter and verse, or the cultural teaching than to deal with the self and the potential beloved at my doorstep.

-Fr. Richard Rohr, O.F.M.
in Sojourners

HAPPY are the pure in heart; they will see God!

To be pure in heart means that you do not want anything that goes against God's law. You want only what God wants. You are pure in heart if.....

- .You do not want to go against any of the Ten Commandments.
- .You stay away from anyone who can get you to do things that are wrong.
- .You want every person you know to be happy.
- .You love God so much that you want to help and forgive everyone - especially the members of your own family.

"HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO MOURN": Are you able to express your feelings? Do you allow others to show their emotions? Do you believe in the resurrection?

-What occasions of sorrow in my life have helped me to grow to maturity?

-What opportunity in everyday life do I have to bring comfort to those who mourn?

Recent times of mourning, sorrow or regret for me has been

Sadness, grief-prolonged sadness—a human ritual usually related to loss-mourning-part life

EIGHT MOVEMENTS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE - Taking Up Your Cross

1. Purgation-cleansing-unsettling of reality
2. Centering-stillness in heart-claim God is God
3. Orientation—we seek to locate ourselves in Holy Places
4. Construction-person takes what's going on in self and turns it over to God - release
5. Absorption - God absorbs
6. Destruction - Loss of self as God absorbs
sense of Newness - we live in God
We are the limb of the dancer
the Mask of the Great Actor
7. Re-Integration-We take in our transformation into our life experience
8. Actualization - We pass into a higher level of consciousness and life reflects it

God is always offering us opportunities for growth. So often our growth is deterred by our erroneous beliefs about ourselves. Discuss the validity of the following beliefs.

I have received so much that I have no right to have any faults.

Nobody could really love me.

Failure is failure and all failure is final.

My thoughts and feelings would really shock you.

My parents are to blame for me.

You have to give in—to compromise yourself—in order to get along with people.

Love is all sweetness and light; when a person has found love, it is the end of all struggle and suffering.

Perfect love is the only kind of real love.

Love is blind.

Life is easier if you don't stop to think about it.

We are for time, not time for us. We must keep moving and producing to justify our existence.

Prayer is for the weak.

John Powell, S.J.
fully human, fully alive
Argus Communications,
New Orleans

HAPPY ARE THE MEEK

The Kingdom of heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date. In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him \$10,000,000. He couldn't pay so the king ordered that he be sold as a slave to pay the debt, and also his wife and children and all his possessions.

But the man fell down before the king, his face in the dust and said, "Oh, sir, be patient with me and I will pay it all." Then the king was filled with pity for the man, released him, and forgave his debt.

But the man then left the king and went to another man who owed him \$2,000. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment.

The man fell down before him and begged him to give him a little time. "Be patient and I will pay it," he pleaded. But the creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and jailed until the debt could be paid in full.

Then the man's friends went to the king and told him what had happened. And the king called before him the man he had forgiven and said, "You evil wretch! Here I forgave you all that tremendous debt, just because you asked me to. Shouldn't you have mercy on others just as I had mercy on you?"

Then the angry king sent the man to the torture chamber until he had paid every last penny due. So shall my heavenly Father do to you if you refuse to truly forgive one another. (Matthew 18:21-35)

A. It is very easy for us to find faults in our family members and friends. Many times we become impatient and hurt the ones we love the most. We need to recognize how important these people are in our lives and begin to strengthen our relationships with them. We need to learn how to overcome and how to live with these differences. This attitude will, in turn, create a more positive life for all concerned.

Discuss with others the points on which you and they disagree and points on which you and they agree. Make a list.

List five characteristics which you possess that may annoy others.

B. Are there any faults that others have forgiven you for that you are unwilling to forgive in them or in other people? Can such behavior be justified?

C. How can you go about healing a broken relationship? Is it easy? Does it take courage? Is it worth it? If so, why?

D. Happy are those who show mercy to others. Are you a caring kind person? Sensitive to others needs? Giving yourself without thought of return? A "Grace Giver"- Like Christ?

E. Why do we find it so difficult to "let go" and forgive others?

F. I wish other people would forgive me for.....

G. Other people would like me to forgive them for.....

H. What does God's mercy mean to my life? How is God calling me to be more generous? More forgiving? More reconciling?

I. Happy are the merciful - Are you trying to become more caring, sensitive, forgiving of the weaknesses of others? Compassionate to the old, young, unattractive, lonely, those who oppose and oppress us?

J. My acts of forgiveness, sympathy, love have been _____

K. I have trouble feeling merciful towards _____
I am most in need of mercy when I _____

L. Letting Go
I have forgiven other people for _____
Other people have forgiven me for _____
I wish other people would forgive me for _____
Other people like me to forgive them for _____
Are there any faults I cannot forgive?

HAPPY are those who are merciful to others; God will be merciful to them!
To be merciful means to be very kind and very forgiving. You are merciful to others when.....

-You know that every person you see has feelings just as you do.

-You try never to judge another person. You do not know for sure that anyone means to sin. God knows, and God is forgiving.

-You forgive the same person over and over again - because God forgives you over and over.

-You keep from showing anger when someone bothers you.

-You are kind to people who are not kind to you.

Everything you do or say, then, should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks through him to God the Father.

Colossians 3 1-7

-What area of my life is the most difficult to yield to God?

-How can I be more gentle with Myself?

How can I be more gentle with Others?

Gentleness is often associated with children.

Why does gentleness require maturity?

-What is your favorite story of Jesus' gentleness?

-When did you ever see gentleness in someone as a great strength?

Happy are the MEEK.

Are you the kind of person that enables other persons to come forth because of your gentle spirit? Are you able to lead from weakness? To affirm others' strengths?

Are you humble?

HAPPY are the meek; they will receive what God has promised!

To be meek means to be strong in a very gentle way. You are meek if...

-You keep calm when you are treated unfairly.

-You say no in a kind way when you are invited to do something that is wrong.

-You are kind to people in your family when they irritate you.

-You say "I'm sorry" when you have hurt someone.

-You do not fight back when someone picks a fight with you.

-You do kind things for people even when you know they will not thank you.

Being meek means:

a. letting other people take advantage of you.

b. being gentle and loving in relationships with others.

c. not being smart enough to protect your own self-interests.

d. having enough self-confidence that you do not have to prove your power over and over.

The opposite of meekness would be

a. intelligence.

b. strength.

c. pride.

d. aggressiveness or hostility.

What is the motivation or goal behind my everyday life?
Will it enable me to "See God"?
How can we come to see More of God in everyday life?

Happy are the PURE IN HEART

Have you come to terms with yourself to the extent that you are able to be yourself? The same person in church that you are in the world? The same language? Are you transparent? Open? Honesy? Willing to let others know you deeply?

HAPPY ARE THE PURE IN HEART. Are you able to be your real self? Open? Honest? Seeking the Kingdom first? Seeking God in simplicity and Prayer

I think that most people

- a. have a clear sense of purpose in life.
- b. aren't really sure what they are living for.
- c. believe there is no particular purpose in life.
- d. believe that each person's destiny is predetermined.
- e. really have Christ at the center of their lives.
- f. believe their lives are whatever they make them.

I personally

- a. have a clear sense of purpose in my life.
- b. am not really sure what I am living for.
- c. believe there is no particular purpose in life.
- d. believe that my destiny has been predetermined.
- e. have Chirst firmly at the center of my life.
- f. believe my purpose in life is whatever I choose to make it.

I think the "pure in Heart" will see God because

- a. you can get closest to God when you make him the center of your life.
- b. they are too simple-minded to be bothered by the complexities of life.
- c. they don't waste time on unworthy thoughts or goals.
- d. other people let wealth, greed, jealousy and pride cloud their vision of God.