

Pursue Serving, part 4 of Pursuing Happiness  
April 28, 2013

Everyone wants to be happy. People pursue all kinds of things they think will contribute to their happiness. Not all of the things people pursue bring them happiness. God knows what will bring happiness. This series is about pursuing things of God that will contribute to your happiness.

We've looked at several of these already. The first, no surprise, is to pursue a relationship with God. We were created by God and for God, and our ultimate happiness will come from having a right relationship with God.

The second thing is to pursue humility. Humility is needed when you come to God seeking a right relationship with Him. Humility is also needed in our relationships with each other.

Last week the subject was contentment. Choosing to be content with what God has provided us contributes to a happy life.

Now there is no Bible passage that says plainly that if you seek God or pursue humility or contentment that you will be happy. But a wisdom-rich man did say...

**Ecclesiastes 2:26 (NIV)**

To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness...

The happiness we all seek on earth is tied to doing what pleases God. So pursue a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Pursue humility. And pursue contentment in what God has already provided you.

This morning we'll learn another thing that will contribute to a happy life. Like the others, they are connected to our relationship with God. This is the underlying theme that extends through this series. Our happiness is a result of fulfilling the purpose for which we were created.

**What is our purpose? We were created to serve God.** We exist to serve God. When Jesus was being tempted by Satan, Jesus reminded the devil why we exist.

**Matthew 4:10 (NIV)** Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

God created us for Himself. God created us for His own purposes. God created us as a part of His plan for the universe. He did not create us to run around doing our own thing. Sin is choosing to ignore God's purpose for us. Sin is outright rebellion against the legitimate authority in the universe. It is no wonder God punishes sin.

Have you ever heard someone say, "I don't believe a loving God would send anyone to hell." That is like saying, "I don't believe a loving judge would send the Boston Marathon bomber to life in prison or the death penalty." Who believes that? We all believe he deserves nothing better than death, at best he deserves life in prison. A just and loving judge would give exactly that to him. How is it different for a human judge and the righteous, holy, just creator of the universe? It isn't. God must, and will, punish our rebellion against Him, our sin.

We were created to serve God. And as we were reminded last week by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount...

**Matthew 6:24 (NIV)** No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

One of our members, some years ago, ended up with two bosses at work. I don't know how that worked out. Maybe he was doing a project that two different departments were working on together. He couldn't tell me much because he worked at NSA. But he complained that he had two bosses. And they would countermand each other's instructions. So this guy was often in trouble with one or the other of his bosses.

You can't serve two bosses. You can't serve two masters. It leads to all kinds of problems. God is our master. And we will never be happy unless we are serving Him.

Jesus is our model for living this kind of life, as He explained during His ministry on earth.

**Matthew 20:28 (NIV)** ... the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

If Jesus had not served God, you and I wouldn't be here this morning. We would still be lost in our sins. We would be headed for hell. This is what we would face, if existed at all. We might not even exist. Who can say what direction history would have taken if not for Jesus. Civilization as we know it would certainly not exist.

But Jesus did come. Jesus did humble Himself to the cross. That has made all the difference in the world for you and me. And in that knowledge we are choosing to serve God.

**But what form does our service to God take? We serve God by serving others.**

In writing to the church, Paul often reminds them of this. For instance, in his letter to the church in the city of Galatia he writes...

**Galatians 5:13 (NIV)** ... serve one another in love.

We are commanded to serve each other. Like Jesus came to serve God by helping us, so we serve God by helping each other. This is part of Jesus' command to love each other. Fifty times in the New Testament we are instructed in how to flesh this service out. All 50 are in your outline. A few examples include

- Be devoted to one another.
- Honor one another above yourselves.
- Live in harmony with one another.
- Be patient, bearing with one another.
- Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

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John 13:34-35; 5:12, 17; Romans 12:10, 16; 13:8; 14:13; 15:7, 14;  
1 Corinthians 1:10; 11:33; 12:25; 14:12, 26; Galatians 5:13, 15, 26;  
Ephesians 4:2, 32; 5:19, 21; Colossians 3:9, 13, 16; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:9, 18; 5:11, 13, 15; 2 Thessalonians  
1:3; 1 Timothy 5:16; Hebrews 3:13; 10:24-25; 13:1; James 4:11; 5:9, 14, 16; 1 Peter 1:22; 3:8; 4:8-9; 5:5, 14;  
1 John 1:7; 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11-12; 2 John 1:5;

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Jesus commands us to serve Him by serving each other. He doesn't do it so we will be happy. Happiness is a side effect. Happiness is a side effect of serving others. Serving others makes a difference for them and that makes us happy.

Observant people discover this. Even the world is discovering this. I ran across lists online and in secular magazines that others had compiled on what makes for a happy life. The studies done confirm that service to others, giving of yourself for others, is one of the things that contributes to a sense of happiness in life.

Michael Norton shares some fascinating research on how money can, indeed buy happiness. He had always heard the statement that money can't buy happiness. So his group decided to test that. The link to watch it online is in your outline.

Norton's group asked people how happy they were. Then they gave the people some money, five dollars or 20 dollars, and told one group to spend it on themselves. The told the other group to spend it on someone else. Afterwards they asked the people how happy they were. Those who spent the money on themselves were not an more or less happy than before. Even though they received free money and spent it on themselves, they were not any happier by it. But those who spent the money on others were consistently more happy than before.

Norton started with the premise that money can't buy happiness. He ended up by showing that money can you make you happier if you spend it right. Spending money on others contributes to a sense of happiness for yourself. We get happiness from helping others, by giving to others.

[http://www.ted.com/talks/michael\\_norton\\_how\\_to\\_buy\\_happiness.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/michael_norton_how_to_buy_happiness.html)

Observant people have long made the connection between serving others and personal happiness. Take Mark Twain for instance. While not a religious man, Mark Twain was an observant man of some wisdom. He said, ***“The best way to cheer yourself is to try to cheer somebody else up.”***

So pursue serving God by serving others. Do this in several ways. Certainly serve God in His church. Serve in one or more of the ministries of the church. But also serve each other in the church in non-programmed ways. If you know someone in the church is in need, meet the need. Don't wait to be asked. Don't wait for someone else to get something organized. Just do it. Step up. Step out. If you need direction, pray and ask God for direction. You won't go wrong in helping. We often go wrong in waiting for someone else to organize something.

And when you are out there, in the world, serve others. As you go about your day, look for ways to serve people. That's what we see Jesus doing in the Bible.

Jesus was busy announcing the good news of the arrival of the Kingdom of God. That was His purpose. His purpose was not feeding and healing. He did not set out to feed everyone in

Israel who was hungry. He did not seek out all the handicapped and ill so He could heal them. But as went about announcing the good news and saw someone in need, He helped them. He met their need.

Jesus commands that we, His followers, do the same.

**Matthew 5:16 (NIV)** In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

In the course of your daily activities, if you see someone in need, help them. If you hear of someone in need of prayer, pray for them. Pray with them if you get a chance. Pray for them over the phone. If you know someone is sick, take them a meal. If know someone is depressed or sad, call them up and listen to their problems and encourage them. Help them to put their faith in God.

**Look around you today and say, "Who can I help?"**  
**Ask people you meet, "What can I do for you?"**

Serve God by serving others. This pleases God and the resulting happiness you'll experience will be a gift from God...

... Now I realize this whole series has a rather strange taste to it. I don't usually give you such a motive for serving God such as make yourself happy in doing so. This makes serving sound like an option. And it is not.

Serving is not an option. If you are a Christian serving isn't optional. Serving is what we are commanded to do. Jesus commands us to serve Him by serving others. Serving is NOT optional.

Serve God by serving others. Serve them in Jesus' name. Serve them to bring glory to Jesus. Don't serve for personal glory. Don't seek glory for Emmanuel Baptist Church. Seek glory for Jesus.

Invitation:

We were created to Worship the Lord our God, and serve him only. And there will be no deep, lasting happiness until we do.

The basis for you to serve God is to accept the truth about **you**, about **Him** and about **sin** and about **Jesus**.

You are a sinner against God.

God is holy and must punish sin.

Therefore you need a Savior from sin.

Jesus is the Savior God has sent to rescue you from the consequences of your sin.

Today believe on Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins. Receive Jesus as your Savior and turn your life over to Him as your Lord. And God will forgive all your sin, put His Spirit within you, and begin your transformation from sinner to servant.