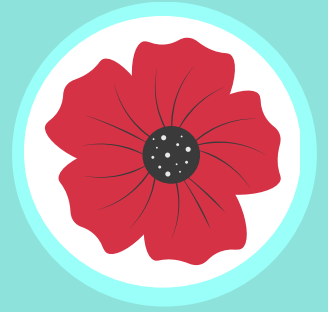




HAPPY PROJECT



Thank you for collaborating with us on this book project.

- Book: think through Jesus' ideas on happiness.
- Workbook: act on Jesus' ideas on happiness.
- Devotional: pray and transform through Jesus' ideas on happiness.

Please share your ideas on the Happy Project and all the suite of products you think may go well with this. What would make a devotional helpful and transformational? What about the workbook?

This week: chapter 5 & 6

- what really resonates? maybe take notes and bring back with you to Worship Cafe for discussion.
- What area drags or is difficult to follow? This can be helpful as we clean it up. If you had to cut something to make it shorter what would you cut?
- What questions do you have?
- What are your favorite quotes?
- reply with your comments to admin@sflighthouse.org**

REAL
HAPPY

*Jesus' surprising path
to genuine joy*

Mike Hayes with

Dr. Jeffrey Garner



REAL HAPPY [BOOK TITLE]

Jesus' surprising path to genuine joy

BY: MIKE HAYES AND DR. JEFFREY GARNER



happiness has a spectrum of emotions. each of the happy attitudes fills in that spectrum with a beautiful nuance of joy

Chapter Title: The Happy Land

Getting our demeanor right

Sutter, Sex Club, and Surrender

Jeffrey's Story (option 2):

By all measurements the pandemic wasn't really bad to us. We didn't lose anyone to death in our small church community. I had friends who lost so much more. I grieved their losses. Several got sick in our community, but recovered. We had our challenges for sure, but put in perspective they were really nothing.

Our little neighborhood church dwindled over the course of the sixty-five weeks without an in-person gathering. We went from a hundred-sixty to twelve—people moved to Texas, Idaho, Tennessee or just relocated to the Valley. I didn't blame SF government's mandate, or our beautiful parishioners. I really wasn't angry with the politics or responses from either political side; my faith conditioned me to trust God. I kept hearing over and over in prayer: Jeff, in my kingdom. Good + Bad = Great! I sensed that the bad would result in something greater than we had known.

Our beautiful gathering space in downtown SF, was a historical landmark, a beautiful synagogue built in 1910 situated on Van Ness and Sutter.

When the dust settled we realized we could not continue to maintain the mortgage. We had blown through our savings in eighteen months and made the inevitable decision to put the property on the market. The decisions wasn't easy since land in downtown SF is hard to come by and we had owned this property for almost twenty years; we had equity in the property we just didn't have cash flow.

Our little congregation took to praying, fasting and trustingly surrendering this to God. We put a "for sale" sign up on the building and went in and out of escrow four times over the course of the next nine months. Letters from the bank piled up, phone calls from mortgage officers taxed me and the board. We were doing everything we could to not lose the property.

One day after telling Pastor Edwin, an Indonesian pastor-brother, who shared our space, that we had to sell, we sat there and cried. He was all choked up and kept saying, "So many many memories here." I left the conversation and walked the entire 15,000 square feet touching walls, doors, windows, crying and thanking God for the years, the memories, the beautiful building and each time pausing to put it all in perspective. The loss of the building was nothing compared to so many others, and it was only a building, I still had God. But it still hurt a little. This posture was made easier because of all that I had been through for two decades.

As I ascended the back stairwell I looked up and there was a rainbow of colors dancing across the wall. The strangest sign. The sun was reflecting off something through the third floor window and down the back stairwell and the wind caused this mystical art show. I sat down on the stairs and cried, it felt like there was a witness to my struggle. I know it's crazy, but when you're going through it you'll take any sign of hope. I didn't know what it meant, but it was assuring, a small promise of hope in the midst of so much loss.

Several months later we got the call that an investor wanted to buy the property, cash, and with only a 30-day contingency. When the contract came over my realtor informed me that the buyer was the owner of a BDSM sex club. His disclosure shed new light on what the potential buyers had been saying as they had walked through the building the day before and talked about the rooms and their use. I felt punched to the gut.

Psalm thirty-seven. "Fret not yourself because of evil doers . . . ", came to mind. How was it that industries with a reputation for trafficking and exploitation had so much money and we, a people called to love and be a symbol of heaven in SF, had nothing?!?! I envied the buyer's capital investment power. Why did money always seem to the answer, to give someone control and freedom?

I expressed my frustration to friends and colleagues. Many well-intended friends advised me to take the money and go. Cash is cash. Selling the building would pay off our mortgage, fund our non-profit with capital to invest in a new church plant or some other righteous endeavor. Six million in cash would resolve all our financial problems in an instant and it was there for the taking, right in the palm of my hand. Though, I knew where my heart would land, I let myself think about the possibilities that six million dollars affords.

Others said I should go public and decry the bank. Bring the media into the picture and let them shame and cancel the bank for taking advantage of us in the pandemic. The idea was if we get the media and political officials to put pressure on the bank the bank would give us more time. The temptation here was to trust in influencers to strongarm and cancel the bank into buying us more time. To go public and paint a picture of the taunting and threats of the Goliath bank to our little David church.

In much meditation over Psalm thirty-seven I knew the answer for us was not money, influence, media or public pity. The answer was radical trust. With or without the building we, the people, were the true temple of God and that could never be taken away. Whatever happened to the building was not for us to fret over.

Before the weekend, we voted that we would rather let the bank take the building than a sex club. The property was a symbol of God in the neighborhood and if he wanted to release it, so be it. The sex club and the bank were both in position to seize the property. The psalm made it clear that I had control over my values and my joy, the property was up to God.

In the American west a pervasive ideology cattle drives our collective consciousness in the direction of well-being and success. It is even written into our national documents, "the pursuit of happiness." Enculturated in the heart of the American child is the healthy notion that we all have a right to life, liberty, and happiness. Saddled in one operative word, pursuit, every American child comes to learn that such inalienable rights are to be earnestly chased. We are a nation of pursuers. Both at home and in school we learn that to realize our dream of happiness, we must take the "bull by the horns." Happiness becomes about taking, getting, acquiring, laying claim to. A happiness that is received or one that ensues is hard for us to understand.

Though written into our national creed, this inner condition of ambition, this tendency toward control, dominion, and self-will is not American alone. Biblical history is replete with stories of men and women who strong-willed their way into possessions through manipulation, control and fashioning their personal destinies. Jacob seizes his brother's birthright (financial happiness), David takes Uriah's wife (relational happiness), Abraham impregnates Hagar (posterity happiness). King Ahab defrauds Naboth of his vineyard (material happiness).

Where does this drive come from? Whether we connect with it consciously or not, we are aware of our lack and the need to secure our well-being. We are born naked and the sense of our nakedness never leaves us. As humans, we operate from a place of deep need and raging insecurity, a motivation we need to stay survive the world. And so, we do not plan on waiting around for happiness, inheritance, a rescue mission or windfall, instead we plan to carpe diem.

Inevitably along the path of our pursuits we witness cheating, ambition, greed, power, and self-will as the means for winning happiness. We begin to sense our individual smallness in an ever-gathering storm of global selfishness and cut-throat reality. We resign ourselves to the fact that perhaps surviving is good enough, and happiness is not in the cards. At least we aren't going to bed hungry. Happiness is for the strong and the weak get the leftovers.

One Psalm gives voice to the kind of feelings we experience when we sit in the unfairness, injustice and ugliness of life.

Maintaining Happy Amidst an Unjust World

Psalm thirty-seven, considered one of the Wisdom Psalms, tackles head on the threat that an unhappy world, one with injustices and corruption, poses to the happy life. Human-traffickers, wealthy slumlords and oppressive land-magnets who take more than their fair share, at first glance leave us bereft of even a morsel of joy. The psalmist directs our unhappy anxieties caused by such injustices.

Do not fret (when the unjust succeed)

Do not envy (when the ambitious seem to get ahead quicker by their get-rich-quick-schemes)

Do not have anxiety (when the selfish succeed)

Do not be angry (and do something to get even)

Do not be frustrated (and resign in self-pity)

Do not get vengeful (and repay evil with evil)

Have you in the experience of these emotions, ever been able to maintain happiness? Who of us can?

The pain-point that comes through every verse of the psalmist's prayer is how much anxiety exists in a world overrun with injustices, and how natural it is to be angry and vengeful, anxious and envious, frustrated and fatalistic.

Then in a shocking and abrupt shift the Psalm announces: the meek shall inherit the earth.

The psalmist reinforces the same truth in different words five times—not the fretful, angry, envious, ambitious, or vindictive, but the meek possess the inheritance.

Jesus in his third happy oracle quotes verbatim from this wisdom text. He changes nothing. Meekness becomes Jesus' word of happiness for those us who feel someone has defrauded us of our chance for happiness.

Happy are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.

—Jesus third word on happiness.

Jesus' hillside audience was living in a land occupied by a foreign world power, taxed by an enemy, and oppressively controlled. The prevailing social sentiment was when we get our land back and have our freedom, we will be happy and blessed. The debates about how re-obtain the land divided the population up into factions—terrorist fighters, wilderness expats, futility conformists, wealthy collaborators and then the poor who were just confused and caught between all these groups.

The relevancy of Jesus happy claim jars his students back to the Psalms. In one word he says in effect, happiness is not about controlling your own land, possessing national freedom, or participating in some political faction. Happiness is about meekness.

So what is meek? Meek (praus) appears four times in New Testament. Three times are in Matthew and all in connection to Jesus. Eugene Peterson, the poetic translator behind the Message Translation of the Bible says, here we have a “huge problem of vocabulary . . . gentle and humble doesn't quite fit the stories of the coiled energy of those who possess meekness.” Meekness is not easy to define because its forges together many character qualities through

a process of refinement, the amalgam of which is one demeanor sanctified into many strong characteristics.

Hermeneutics, the science of interpretation, suggests we use the first mention principle, when defining infrequently used words or concepts found in sacred texts. The first mention of the word meek in the Hebrew Bible simply states, “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.” What this sentence doesn’t tell you is the one hundred years of anger, rage, self-doubt that proceeded this statement.

A Case Study in Meekness

Few Bible stories start with one’s birth and follow them to their death. When we find such a story, it’s likely the character’s development is fraught with contact points, hidden templates, relatable conditions, and a bastion of wisdom for our own human journeys. Moses is one such story and his cultivation of meekness is one such template. To appreciate just how far Moses came, we might suggest reading his story (Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers). In so reading, we hope you are inspired by the possibilities in your own life to realize the happiness of meekness, should you want it. We list the abbreviated and relevant backstory here.

Moses killed a man in anger and rage.

Moses is insecure because of a speech impediment.

Moses is stubborn in refusing God’s call.

Moses smashes the Sacred Stone Ten Commandments out of anger at Israel.

Moses beats a rock because he’s so angry at Israel.

The point is Moses has significant anger issues and paralyzing insecurities, and yet he’s called the meekest man on earth. So, what then is meekness?

Meekness is Selfless Confidence

The first ascription of the word meek comes sandwiched between two occasions in Moses’ story. Both events are set in the wilderness of Sinai as Moses leads the nation of Israel through a desert to the land of promise.

In the first story, God pours his spirit on seventy elders, sixty-eight of which are under Moses’ immediate oversight. The remaining two are unsupervised during the out-pouring; in response to their experience, they prophesy, bless and carry on outside of Moses’ controlled environment. Joshua, Moses’ protégé, fearing things might get out of control asks him to temper this prophetic murmur else the people may come to think they don’t need Moses to hear from God anymore.

Moses responds to Joshua, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!”

Moses' former insecurity about his speech impediment no longer exists, he isn't threatened by the voice and speech of others prophesying in the camp. He is not offended by someone else's moment in the spotlight. He is confident in who he is and doesn't need to leverage his title to prop up an insecurity. He is genuinely happy that others experience God directly. This strong confidence is selfless and generous and gives us a clue into meekness.

Meekness is Tamed Anger

The next story demonstrates meekness in the face of mutiny. Moses' sister and brother make racist comments against Moses' African wife, and then proceed to undermine Moses' leadership and oust him as the appointed leader. They rationalize, “Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?”

After leading a nation through parted seas, receiving the Ten Commandments directly from God, and a myriad of other sanctioned miracles, Moses says nothing to defend his position. There is not even an attempt to explain or disprove their claims. There is no finger pointing at their prejudice and obvious racism. Smack dab in the middle of Moses' resolute silence and surrender, the Scripture says, “Now the man Moses was very meek.”

The anger issues of previous years where he would fly off the handle and lash out have been tamed. The anxieties about his previous leadership failures have been filtered. His demeanor is sanctified and strength of character comes through in glorious meekness.

God quickly defends Moses and ousts Moses' siblings. Yet Moses true to his meek form intercedes for his siblings. He doesn't flaunt his rightness before the people. His ego is tamed and repurposed to intercede and plead with God for mercy.

Meekness is Childlike Trust

There are three basic ways of viewing the universe. We can see it as abundant, hostile or ambivalent. If we view the universe as ambivalent, we tend to ambitiously fight, manipulate, and assert our way to the top. If we see the world as hostile, we throw our hands up in futility and say, “What's the use?” If we see the universe as abundant, we open ourselves up to its many blessings and gifts. Meek people believe God is good, the universe is abundant, and that God is in control. They trust this like a child.

These three postures are represented in the story of a mother who insists with Jesus that her sons, James and John, be given the top two positions on Jesus' staff. The other ten disciples are angry. Jesus stands a child in their midst. He says, “You cannot even get into the Kingdom unless you become a child.” The mother sees the universe as ambivalent, something she must fight for. The disciples see the universe as hostile, something they get angry over. Jesus puts forth a child, forcing us to remember when we once believed the universe was vast and abundant and says, “Become like this. Tame the adult and set the child free.”

God's Kingdom (and your happiness) is not dependent on you being top of the class, Invictus of your domain, or controlling who becomes leader of the Free World. Happiness is finally letting control of the outside world go to God. And taming your inside world.

James and John eventually get it, as do the other disciples. Moses gets it too. But what happened to bring about the change? What events developed their character? For the disciples it was the defeat of the cross, the ultimate letting go to God and the serendipitous outcome of that radical faith. But what about Moses? And what about us?

Felix Culpa

Much of the human narrative is about stumbling. We stumble and fumble our way forward. Felix Culpa is the theological term for the beauty of this fall. Julian of Norwich said, "First the fall, then the recovery from the fall, both are the mercy of God." The idea is that our failures teach us more about God than our successes. We learn from them, develop through them, and somewhere in this stumbling and falling we turn it into a God dance. We see this play out in Moses. Before Moses grew meekness, he had multiple failures. He failed in his first rescue campaign and stumbles into the wilderness. His next forty years are meaningless, fruitless, and futile.

Failure is the only experience that prepares our heart for meekness. With our face planted into the ground of failure we experience the full gamut of emotions—anger, envy, bitterness, anxiety—and with these emotions, God forges our character.

Abe Lincoln is often referred to as the meekest president of the United States. His resume is marked with failure after failure. He fired from job, failed at business and then over the course of his political life was defeated six times over the course of the next twenty-two years before he is finally elected President. And then in the moment when he was most needed, he meekly led the nation through a war to free slaves, and as historians point out meekly brought the North and South together as a nation. His failures prepared him to be strong, humble, unentitled, and deferential.

The Making of Meekness

Martin Buber, the great Jewish philosopher and Nobel Peace Prize nominee, wrote about meekness in his popular work, *Ten Rungs*. Using Jacob's ladder as a metaphor for the rungs that ascend the heights of God's joy, Buber placed meekness on that final rung just before redemption. Buber reflecting on Moses' meekness asks, "How could [he be meek]?" In one word he says, it's God's presence. What happened between Moses' murderous rage and the meekly disposition is scene after scene of Moses encountering the presence of God. Naturally, our next question is, how do we get into God's presence so that we may become meek too?

Moses' story shows us three ways into God's presence.

First, *God brings his Presence into our path*. Unplanned and uninitiated, Moses finds himself standing shoeless before the Burning Bush. Out in the middle of a barren wilderness with nothing but the boring life of a shepherd Moses is caught off-guard by God. God wishes, even yearns to be with all of us, and will look for any available moment to squeeze into our world. Many stories share this theme of God showing up in our runaway, down-and-out moments, when we are finally alone, and primed to recognize "God with us," right where he has always been. For those of us who intentionally want a moment of Presence, the best we can do is make ourselves available for it, this is exactly what we see Jesus do when he retreats for respite and contemplation into wildernesses, gardens and forests.

Second, *we ask God for his Presence*. Throughout his story, it is obvious that Moses is falling in love with God. In a desire for intimate connection, he asks God, "show me your glory." God obliges and Moses is able to spy the aftermath of God's glory from the curious cleft. When God graces us with a moment of Presence, we are filled with awe and wonder, we change inside. Such a moment becomes a benchmark in our life, one to which we return to refresh our faith and remember God's vastness, and all-consuming I am-ness.

Third, *we are challenged to work alongside of God's presence*. God intentionally challenged Moses to take on tasks that were clearly beyond his capacity. The first challenge, deliver a mandate from the Hebrew God to a Pharaoh, through your stuttering lips. God's presence not Moses' silver tongue delivered Israel, Moses was simply challenged to be God's tagalong. The one consistent context we see again and again is he's tasked with something only God can accomplish. He shows up at the Red Sea or Mount Sinai or wherever to discover God's presence had gone before him, and he gets a front seat accompaniment to the impossible.

These concomitant moments undoubtedly left Moses meekly certain of his weakness and confidently resolute of God's power. Perhaps now we see why humility is an incomplete description of the word meekness. When we say yes to God-sized challenges, we exhaust our capabilities and expand our faith. What we are then left with is meekness—coiled strength, self-modesty and an experience of graciousness.

This is the only through an unjust world. In God's presence, Moses' will was tamed and emotions domesticated. His strength harnessed and his demeanor meekened. Now there are two words you rarely see in the same sentence: strong and meek. Like Moses, every one of us can stand to be strong in our meekness and enjoy what it produces in us.

The Gospel of Inheritance

"When the Church tries to embody the rule of God in the forms of earthly power it may achieve that power, but it is no longer a sign of the kingdom." — Leslie Newbigin

Inheriting the earth was code for Promise Land, since Israel inherited this land from their ancestor Abraham. The Promise Land in the post-resurrection era became a metaphor for all

the promises God has for us. Promises like the Holy Spirit, forgiveness, joy, peace, belovedness, a divine purpose, aliveness to name a few.

Jesus disciples didn't inherit the physical land of Galilee. Yes, they were meek, after all they were martyred like their rabbi, but the physical boundaries promised to their ancestors and occupied by Rome were never returned to them. Within a generation, as Jesus predicted, they were exiled by an Empire that was anything but meek. This did not deter their commitment to happy meekness, in fact, it opened to them a whole new land, the Kingdom of God, that was their inheritance. And they wouldn't want you to think they got shortchanged because they didn't own much property, they had real joy.

We are not much different from those early hillside followers. We live in a world obsessed with land, and all that it symbolizes—security, identity, wealth, posterity. Wars are waged over land. Genocide executed in the seizure of lands. Refugees in camps and boats, walking over mountains and sleeping beside roads tell the story of the extreme measures the unjust will go for a piece of land. What Jesus offers, he offers to refugees and resort owners, a promise land of happiness more beautiful than a coastal mansion and more lasting than the stars in the sky. His joy is both now, nestled in our hearts, and later crafted in the heavens.

Jesus is offering so much more than a couple years of soil and sod.

Does this mean there isn't a material and earthy component to this? We would say, inheriting the earth is also earthy. The earth created in the goodness of God groans for meek sons and daughters to inhabit her and care for her. The earth responds to the meek; it was encoded this way from the beginning. Perhaps you have experienced unmerited partiality in your work, leading to a promotion. Maybe you are granted access into industries, systems, or social circles that you never earned. You are gifted with things you could have never afforded. Your influence expands. Meekness wins through the most surprising of ways.

We would venture to conclude this inheritance is an ongoing one, not a one-time transaction, but an ever-flowing generosity channeled in the direction of the meek. The meek become part of those who redeem the earth, restore it beyond its original Edenic perfection toward the vision of God's new heaven and new earth. The meek are trustworthy stewards who by receiving the earth, are also bringing the kingdom of God into the here and now. What a noble happiness we are offered.

As a final caveat, it's worth pointing out that Jesus doesn't say, "The meek will merit the earth," that would lead to meritocracy, an entitled and ungrateful attitude that is demanding and arrogant. It's also worth pointing out Jesus doesn't say, "The meek will take the earth." That would lead to violence and war and untold unhappiness. What Jesus says is the meek will inherit something that they never merited or took and in this way they maintain meekness, gratitude, and humility.

As with all Jesus happy oracles, there is application for the individual follower and the community of followers. This idea of inheritance is also a collective one.

We often assume when Jesus gave his church power, he was taking the control from the Caesars, or privilege from the wealthy, or influence from the religious elite. Like his ancient audience, we too like the idea of Jesus stripping power, influence and wealth from the world and passing this as an inheritance to his church. The next logical progression then goes that people would now be attracted to the church since its culturally vogue, socially affluent, and politically powerful. This thinking, however, is fundamentally flawed. If people come into Christ's church to gain political control, material privilege, or social status so that they can get happiness, then fundamentally nothing has changed, and happiness is still a distance mirage. They are not finding the inner joy that Jesus is; but using Jesus to get the stuff that they have always thought would make them happy. At the heart, they still are worshipping power, privilege, and prestige.

Jesus empowered his happy city not by stealing the world's power but by subverting it. He exposed Rome's ironclad military not by marching out a bigger Angelic army, but by meekly submitting to the Father through death on a Roman cross. This single act exposed not just Rome but every tyrant and world empire who controls people through fear of death. Jesus exposed the limits of King Herod's wealth, not by flaunting the wealth of heaven in Herod's face, but by meekly submitting to birth in an animal barn, a childhood in the obscure backwoods of Nazareth, and a preaching career that relied on the charity of others. He exposed the religious charades not by humiliating the system publicly, but by offering mercy and forgiveness from his cross of death. He subverted all human elitism for all of time through silent trust, tamed anger, and empowering others.

Jesus built the happy city not by mere surrender (which implies forfeiture), but by submission (which implies a stewarding of power for the greater purpose and will of God). He changed the fundamental way that his citizens would relate to one another by "taking the form of a servant... and he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Philippians 2:7-8). He showed us that real power is power submitted to God. This was his happy way. This was meekness. This was not weakness, but courageous restraint.

Those followers of the merry way didn't need political clout, artistic prominence, intellectual notoriety, or financial empires to inherit the earth. They inherited the earth as they sang songs in Roman coliseums while being martyred. They inherited the earth by opening their homes up for the orphans and widows. They inherited the earth by turning their living rooms into makeshift hospitals for the unwanted sick. They inherited the earth by toiling away for the kingdom in relative obscurity. They inherited the earth by resisting the urge to retaliate and instead sought peace with all men.

The fourth happy oracle turns on this word, "inherit." Meek people are powerful people because they aren't entitled, anxious, or conniving. They realize the earth is something to be inherited, not something to be taken, demanded, or owed. The meek are children of their Father, and he is passing on an inheritance to them.

Jesus called his new happy city salt, light, and leaven. Salt, light and leaven are properties that have great effect in bringing change and effecting a difference in their context. Salt makes food come alive, light makes colors come alive, and leaven makes bread come alive. These metaphors have in common the fact that they do not draw attention to themselves. Meekness is the satisfaction of effecting change while being hidden away.

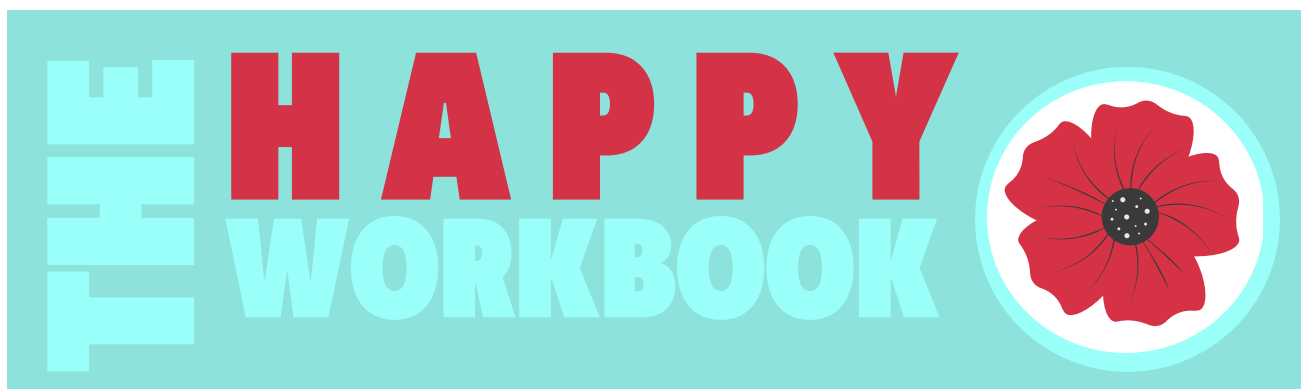
Extraordinary happiness is hidden in plain sight of the ordinary. For this reason it's easily dismissed by its commonness or lost on account of its blandness. The world brushes over the link of happiness with meekness in search of something sexier or more profound. Jesus plants happiness in the trendless and unpopular soil of the ordinary.

Magnanimity: Strongly Meek, Happily Gracious

As we do the things that co-authors do—talk, share, mull over, and banter on the Beatitudes, we are coming to realize that each happiness Jesus offers, feels nuanced in its particular joy. And though, we are out of time to go back and add these into the beginning chapters, we would like to start commenting on this notion here. What happy nuance then is given to those who finally come into possession of meekness? Magnanimity. Those with meekness emote a magnanimous joy. They seem to live with a sense of abiding poise, calm nerve, and patient bravery. Magnanimity like a divine generosity, spills over into every area of their life and all their interactions with others. The world becomes recipients of their graceful demeanor, while the meek enjoys a happiness nuanced as graciousness. Their happiness is no longer taken hostage by fits of rage, bouts of anxiety, and envious inferiority complexes, all of which bully out the happy child.

Jeff's Closing Story:

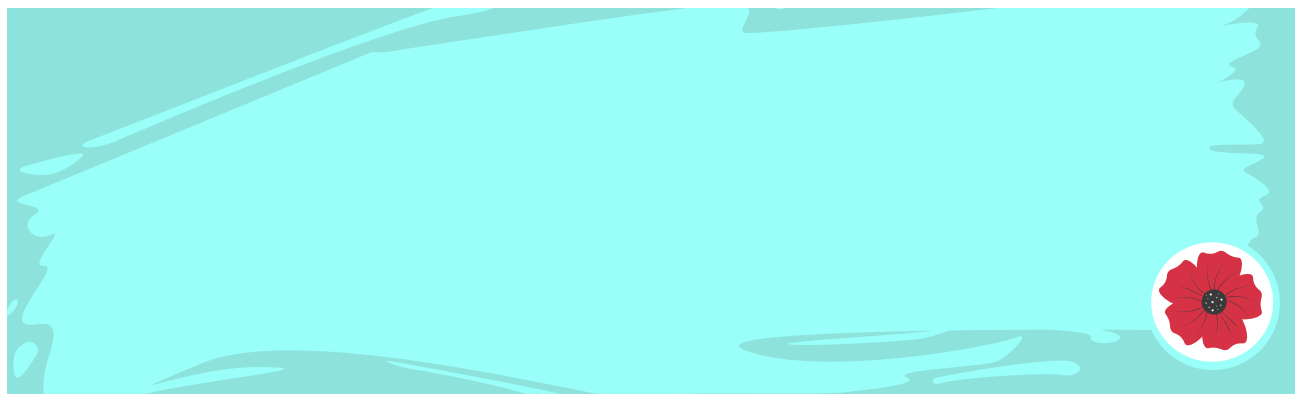
Within four weeks of our decision to take the property off the market Wesleyan Investment Foundation stepped up and offered us a loan. Nine-months of interest only payments. They made an exception for our flagging finances. pandemic depleted resources because they felt strongly about not losing a kingdom footprint in San Francisco. Yes, in a very literal sense meekness won the day and inherited the earth.



Workbook 5 Getting Our Demeanor Right

My Happy Quote

Write in the quote from the Chapter that most resonated with you.



Happy Paradoxes

Meekness (aka magnanimity) is a tamed and surrendered will, a yielded ego. Meekness is a beautiful strength.

Meekness is a lost virtue worthy of desire

In the same way that we become like children to receive the kingdom of God, the the meek inherit the earth, not out of deservedness, but as their un-earned inheritance.

Like Moses, those who are meek see power and position as divinely bestowed for God's purposes. The meek find no personal identity or worth in power. Instead of hoarding it, they share it and empower others.

The meek win by losing. Because they do no seek to avenge or defend themselves, they default to trusting God as their defender

As we relinquish power and control to God, we are malleable before God and He can forge the might of meekness in us.

My Happiness Inventory

Read and answer

1. What are your initial thoughts and reactions to the word “meekness?” What does it mean to you?
2. How might Christ challenge your definition?
3. When was the most recent time you were angry? What did you do with that anger?
4. Describe a recent moment where you held power, influence, or control over someone and how you stewarded that moment.
5. When it comes to possessing the earth, life, and happiness:
 - a. I help myself. I work to earn and merit my own way. I don’t want to owe anyone anything.
 - b. I look for handouts, charity, help from others who have more than me.
 - c. It’s all about the win-win. I’ll scratch your back, if you scratch mine.”
 - d. I wait in active trust, focusing on my inner life and what I can control, and leave the outer world to God.

Imagine as a Spiritual Practice

Choose one Imagination to work with today. Visualize it using all your senses. Afterwards, journal your experience.

1. Imagine having lunch with someone who through a couple decisions could change your earthly circumstance. Perhaps an influential city leader or leading voice in your industry. Imagine this person keenly interested in the Presence of God in your life, the joyful centeredness in your countenance. What questions are they asking you? What does it look like for someone with great earthly power desiring the peace of God that dwells in you?
2. Imagine that you have been empowered to humiliate someone who has wronged you, that you have information that could bring down someone who did something bad to you or someone you love. See yourself submitting that power to Jesus’s ethic and life. Imagine Jesus’s spirit of meekness resting in you and filling you with a joy that doesn’t need vengeance to satisfy itself.
3. Imagine taming the adult and setting the child free in you. What would that look like to set the child of God free?

4. Close your eyes and imagine you are praying tomorrow morning. You are looking at a gratitude list. You have written down three realities that Christ has tamed in you? What are those realities?

Walk in The Way

Look at these words one more time,

Happy are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Jesus eyes meet yours and he whispers,

“Follow me.”

Jesus shows you how to be meek as he blesses children, receives the affirmation of Jerusalem’s crowd, and suffers rejection by his critics and crucifixion by his colleagues. You accept that it’s ok to embrace meekness.

You take a step in following him.

You trust him. Your heart swells with magnanimous happiness.

Affirm Aloud:

I am blessed when I submit to the Father. I will inherit, not merit, the earth. He desires to pass an inheritance on to me. My meekness blesses the world.

Smile Wide:

Give yourself permission to submit your power to God. Smile to yourself because you don’t have to control others to be happy or be in control of your circumstances to be happy. As you lay your head down on the pillow tonight, exhale fully and rest. You are in the company of a City that has tamed the adult in them and set the child free.

Community Questions:

If you were putting together a study group what questions would you ask?

About Us

Jeffrey Garner has his Master's in Exegetical Theology from Western Seminary. He earned his doctorate from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. His thesis and dissertation were on the Fourth Gospel and the Beloved Disciple.

Mike Hayes is a reconciler. His life and ministry is characterized by connecting people in life-giving relationship with God and each other. He is a uniter – catalyzing racial reconciliation and healing for more than 40 years. As the Founding Pastor of Covenant Church, he pioneered a ministry that exemplifies covenant relationships. Flourishing in diversity, with more than 100 nations represented, Covenant Church has become a leading voice for unity and a model for transcultural, multigenerational, and multiethnic ministry.

Mike Hayes currently serves as President of Churches In Covenant, a global network of churches and ministries united to bless the nations.

WWW.SFLIGHTHOUSE.ORG/WEEKLYNOTES

