

Questions for discussion

1. What makes you happy?

I was not happy in my first marriage, but people said I should be. I think that got to me after time. Three months after our split-up I felt a weight lift. I was so guilty that I felt better. There was no doubt I was becoming happy. I have spent countless hours reading about what makes us happy. From chemicals to people I have read it all. In the end it comes down to perception about blessings and curses. Do we seek the thrill of a blessing and avoid curses? Is it our life's goal to live the "Pursuit of happiness"?

"What makes you happy? I have become quite the philosopher myself. Life's trials have changed me. I have a perspective that was not there before. I think I look at blessings and curses differently because I have experienced them. One day I feel good about myself, and bad things happened. Another time I hurt someone's feelings but found twenty dollars. In the long run I have learned to base my day on the fact I am still alive. I look at life like the "Game of Life" by Milton Bradley. We are given money as we go. Throughout the board I have received good news and bad news. I'm happy playing the game. That's why, win or lose, I play it again and again because it's fun." Chapter 5, p, 2

2. Is your role or career a happy one?

I talked with a friend who said he was happy as a father, and in his role at work. He might be right. However, maybe there is something lingering in the background. I know he does not work within his passion field. At times I hear him strike out in frustration at social issues. Maybe if he was working more in a field he was passionate about things might lift off his back. Just because we're good at a role does not mean it's our passion in life. We need both.

"We need to be very careful when we say yes to a role. I know a guy who is looking for a career. Right now he is in a role that suits his talents, but he has so much more to offer. The problem is they only want him to express certain parts of who he is. We're not built that way. To ignore some parts of you will leave you wanting more and inspired less. Well-meaning leaders lead but that's not all that inspires them. I find they become a monster to employees and themselves because they are cast in the wrong role." Chapter 5, p, 5

3. How do you seize the day?

Every morning I am aware this is no ordinary day. I am 50 and days have come and gone. How many do I have left? I don't want a single Tuesday to go silently into history. Is an ordinary day just ordinary? If we find out, we dying then each day is never just ordinary. I plan on reading twelve books in twelve months. There are plans to go to Greece in five years. In-between all this is life day by day. What will you do in the in-between days? How will you make this day a day that you Seized the day?

“What weight or value do you place on how your day goes? On Facebook do you post a happy face when you're on holidays and a grumpy face when it's January 11 in the middle of winter? How do you embrace the day? So many successful people have quotes that make them famous. The Roman Poet Horace created this phrase in Odes and it says, “Carpe diem (Seize the day).” This might be his phrase or a Roman cultural saying, but after all these years it is one of the best inspirational sayings. How do you seize the day?” Chapter 5, p, 6

4. How do you really feel about blessings and curses?

I have had blessings go wrong. Curses began very badly but ended up a blessing. Am I a rollercoaster of emotions. Happy in this moment and brooding in another. Curses are just fleeting moments in time. We have way more good times than bad. We just don't perceive it that way. Do we dread curses so badly that we play life passively? Do we long for blessings so much that we ignore the little things. Maybe bad days are just the beginnings of good days. It's all in how we look at life's events.

“What if you were happy just because today is another day? I saw a picture the other day of Charlie Brown and Snoopy sitting together. Charlie Brown said, “Another day closer to death.” Snoopy replied, “It's another day that I didn't die.” Two perspectives embracing the same moment in time. What if we had feelings about blessings and curses but looked at them in the same way? In the last chapter I mentioned that the apostles looked at life differently in the book of Acts, chapter 5. These men saw everything as a gift from God. The apostle Paul was in jail but took the time to befriend the jailer. These Christians figured God gave everything to be used for good: “Carpe diem (Seize the day).”” Chapter 5, p, 8

5. How do you judge your day?

I think I'm fat some days. Is my day ruined if I think that? What if I got on the scales and found that I lost weight? We are strange animals. Being nice to someone is a nice thing. Why do you do it? Is it to be blessed in return? If you make someone mad is that a bad day to get a lottery ticket? A day is good if we say it is good. Yes, bad things

Blessings and Curses Chapter 5 (What makes you happy?)

happen, but good does come from disasters. It always has and always will. It's not about always being happy, but always thinking things could be worse.

“Happiness is running the race more than finishing it. That man I watched painting had a look on his face and I could tell he loved painting. I bet he loved painting more than the finished product. We love the human being and doing part. At the end of the day we tend to evaluate our performance. The interesting part is that, while were in the moment, there is little evaluation of painting, running, or working. We judge, critique, and evaluate when the work is done.” Chapter 5, p, 11

6. How do you react in harm's way?

Ja ja Binks says in Star Wars “When might you think it's time to panic” as he is faced with a huge Goober Fish baring down on them. I have been in several bad accidents, yet so far I have walked away relatively unscathed. Each time I was left with a panic moment. Once I took a job that was far away and hard on us financially. In the long run it was a great move, but first I had to be put in harms way. Being challenged and prodded is a good thing. It makes you know what your made of. What are you made of?

“There is this thought called, “Putting yourself in harm's way.” I know that sounds stupid. The best “you” encompasses everything about you. The best job might be leadership and hands on. Just doing part of that is incomplete. Challenging yourself in places of failure will grow you. There is another thought that, “Our job is our sustainer for what we were really meant to be.” The harm's way is taking a chance on completing you. Maybe working is work and exploring your talents is another. Paul made tents, but preaching was his passion, yet both things needed each other to survive.” Chapter 5, p, 13