

St. Joseph Society



Objective: For centuries, people have pondered the purpose or meaning of their lives. Surprisingly, most serious thinkers have concluded that there is one thing that all men desire above all else: to be happy. Although these men may agree that happiness is the ultimate goal of our lives, there is vast disagreement over the object that will bring about human happiness. For Christian thinkers, happiness is something to be understood while bearing in mind that a human life has a goal. Christian thinkers (ex. Jesus, Augustine, Aquinas) have always held that this is nothing short of God himself. In this unit, we will examine the Beatitudes, Christ's guidance on achieving happiness in both this life and the life to come.

I. Episode #9: Matthew 5:6 - “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

1. A Petition and a Promise: We ask God to “Give us this day our daily bread” and Christ says “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”
2. The Pathway to Perfection
 - a. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrangé – Justice consists in rendering to God and man what he is due and “the gift of fortitude prevents us from weakening, from letting ourselves be disheartened, and it lifts up our courage in the midst of difficulties” (*The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, Vol. 1, 168).
 - b. Gift of the Holy Ghost: Adolphe Tanquerey writes that the gift of fortitude imparts “to the will an impulse and an energy which enable it to do great things joyfully and fearlessly despite all obstacles” (*The Spiritual Life*, 1330).

II. Episode #10: Matthew 5:7 – “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”

1. A Petition and a Promise
 - a. A Petition: “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.”
 - b. A Promise: St. Thomas Aquinas – “Some, again, recede from works of mercy, lest they be busied with other people's misery. Hence Our Lord promised the merciful that they should obtain mercy, and be delivered from all misery” (ST I-II, q. 69, a. 4).
2. The Pathway to Perfection
 - a. Virtue: Prudence is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it (CCC 1806).

- b. Gift of the Holy Ghost: Jordan Aumann explains that the gift of counsel “enables one to judge rightly in particular events what ought to be done in view of the supernatural ultimate end and personal sanctification” (*Spiritual Theology*, 279).
3. A Warning from St. Paul: “To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:6-8).
4. A Warning from Our Lord: “For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life?” (Matthew 16:26)

III. Episode #11: Matthew 5:8 – “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

1. A Petition and a Promise: We ask the Lord to “Lead us not into temptation,” and Christ promises that “Cleanness of the eye disposes one to see clearly: hence the clean of heart are promised that they shall see God” (ST I-II, q. 69, a. 4).
2. The Pathway to Perfection – Faith is belief based on authority. Adolphe Tanquerey explains that the corresponding gift of understanding “gives us a deep insight into revealed truths” (1344).
3. Peter Kreeft – “Our lives are a process of growing the necessary organs for our destiny. That is the reason why God is such a stickler about morality, not because he wants to control our behavior, but because he wants us to become the kind of people who can see him and thus experience infinite joy” (*Back to Virtue*, 174).

IV. Episode #12: Matthew 5:9 – “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

1. A Petition and a Promise: We ask God to “Deliver us from evil” and Christ says “Blessed are the peacemakers” (ST I-II, q. 69, a. 3) . . . As a reward, he is promised the glory of the Divine sonship, consisting in perfect union with God through consummate wisdom” (ST I-II, q. 69, a. 4).
2. The Pathway to Perfection
 - a. Virtue: “Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God” (CCC 1822).
 - b. Gift of the Holy Ghost: Adolphe Tanquerey explains that “Wisdom is a gift which perfects the virtue of charity, and which resides at once in the *intellect* and in the *will*, since it infuses *light* and *love* into the soul” (1348).
3. Matthew 11:12 – Jesus declares, “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force.”
4. Ephesians 6:10-20 – “For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”