



WEEK 1

TAKE THE INITIATIVE

HAPPY START

Life is full of great sights to see and experiences to be had. However, the coolest places aren't just around the corner or in our backyard. They take a dream, a plan, and an effort to get there.

Happy people are proactive people. They recognize their responsibility to make things happen, knowing that it takes initiative and focus in order to find abundant life. Whether we know it or not, we have the ability to carefully (or carelessly) design the type of life we want based on the dreams, plans, and choices we make. While life can often leave us feeling helpless, we're more in control than we might think.

- ☺ If this is your first time meeting together or if you have new members, introduce yourselves.
- ☺ The title of this series is *Happy Place*. Do you have a happy place—a location or an activity that fills you with joy and recharges your soul? Share with the group.
- ☺ Happy groups know how each other tick. Indicate where you fall on the scales below and your preferences in how you connect with others.

If you're feeling happy, would people know it?

5 / 4 / 3 / 2 / 1 / 0 \ 1 \ 2 \ 3 \ 4 \ 5



*Probably not,
I'm really reserved.*



*I'm really expressive.
The whole world
would know.*

If I wanted to recharge and relax, I would need a place...

5 / 4 / 3 / 2 / 1 / 0 \ 1 \ 2 \ 3 \ 4 \ 5



To be alone.



Full of people.



HAPPY FACT

As of 2018, the happiest countries are...¹

#1

FINLAND

#2

NORWAY

#3

DENMARK

#4

ICELAND

#5

SWITZERLAND



#18

UNITED STATES

1. <http://worldhappiness.report/ed/2018/>



HAPPY CHAT



- ☺ Have you ever had to work really hard to get to a beautiful place? Share with the group.
- ☺ What is one thing that stood out to you from Jeff's talk?

READ JOHN 10:10 TOGETHER.

- ☺ Many people today think following God means giving up excitement and happiness. Is this something you have thought? Do you think there is a firm line between happiness and holiness?
- ☺ Do you personally think God wants you to be happy? Why or why not?
- ☺ What do you think Jesus means by abundant life? In what ways does the enemy try to kill or destroy it for us?
- ☺ Would you describe your life as full, abundant, or happy right now? Why or why not?

- ☺ Is there one particular area in your life where you feel stuck, discouraged, or distracted? Share with the group.
- ☺ When it comes to finding abundant life, what is in our control and responsibility, and what isn't in our control?
- ☺ Do you think you are more proactive or reactive in your life right now? In what ways could you be more proactive?

NOW READ PROVERBS 26:15 AND HEBREWS 6:12.

- ☺ What is one habit, discipline, or God-honoring activity you feel called to start or focus on in order to move forward in an area you feel stuck?

Take a moment to pray, asking God to give you wisdom as you make decisions and take steps in experiencing abundant life in Him. Also, encourage each other to do the Happy Step (found on the next page) and the daily devotions throughout the week.

HAPPY STEP



MAKE A SMART GOAL

It's nice to have resolutions, but it's even better to make them SMART. This acronym will help you frame your goals in such a way as to help you move forward and make them happen.

SPECIFIC: Goals are best when they are narrowly focused. State what you want to accomplish using specific language.

- Bad example: Get healthier.
- Good example: Run a 5K race.

MEASURABLE: Whenever possible, set exact dates or use precise numbers so you know if success is achieved.

- Bad example: Lose weight.
- Good example: Lose 15 pounds.

ATTAINABLE: Is the goal realistic? Goals should stretch us but not be impossible to achieve.

RELEVANT: Is the goal worth working hard to accomplish?

TIMELY: Goals must have a specific end date. It creates a sense of urgency that pushes us to work harder. When will this goal be accomplished?

- Bad example: Run an 8:00 mile this year.
- Good example: Run an 8:00 mile in time for the Thanksgiving Turkey Trot.

FOCUS AREA

What area in life (e.g., spiritual life, physical health, personal relationships, finance, and work) do you want to experience momentum in this year?

SMART GOALS WORKSHEET

Set a goal to help you get unstuck and move forward in that area in a SMART way.

SPECIFIC

What exactly do I want to do?

MEASURABLE

How will I track my progress?

ATTAINABLE

Is this realistic for me? Do I have what I need to make it possible?

RELEVANT

Why am I doing this? Does it matter to me?

TIMELY

When will I have this completed?

HAPPY DAYS



DAY 1

READ PROVERBS 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

REFLECT

Take a moment to offer your plans (and your year) to God, trusting that He will guide you where you need to go.

DAY 2

READ PSALM 37:4

Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

REFLECT

What are the desires of your heart today? Ask God to align them with His desires.

DAY 3

READ JOHN 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

REFLECT

Jesus wants you to have an abundant life full of joy and peace. In what ways would you like to have more of His joy and peace today?

DAY 4

READ PSALM 37:8

*Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;
do not fret—it leads only to evil.*

REFLECT

What are you fretting about today?
How can you give that to God?

DAY 5

READ PHILIPPIANS 1:6

*He who began a good work in you
will carry it on to completion until
the day of Christ Jesus.*

REFLECT

How have you seen God work
good in your life? What is His plan
for you?

REFLECTIONS:
