



# Hillcrest's DNA

## Love Life

"The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life." —John 10:10

### What makes life rich and satisfying?

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#### Hope

When I picture Jesus talking with the crowds of people, I picture him laughing with them and having a great time. Listen to what Jesus says to the crowds of people that were following him around:

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." Matthew 11:28—30 MSG

I like that he mentions he won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on us. I think many of us worry that if we tell God yes, that we trust him enough to give him our entire selves and that he can do what he wants with us, he will make us do something that we don't want to do. But when we do the brave thing and trust him completely, we find ourselves living our very best lives. I'm not saying our lives become perfect; I'm saying that we find fulfillment and satisfaction in doing whatever it is God created us to do. He made us and knows us better than we know ourselves. He has an amazing plan for us. Jeremiah 29:11

#### Happiness

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God does not want us to live miserable lives. He wants us to live full of \_\_\_\_\_, cheerfully making the most of this life until we go home to him.

Proverbs 15:15 says, "For the despondent, every day brings trouble; for the happy heart, life is a continual feast."

I believe this Scripture is talking about \_\_\_\_\_, rather than circumstances. Everyone goes through difficult things in life. It's not the difficulty that wrecks our lives; it's what we do with it in our hearts. Do we become despondent or do we keep a happy heart? It's a \_\_\_\_\_. We all know people who have gone through tremendous suffering and tragedy and yet remain happy, hopeful people. And we probably know someone who is miserable no matter what their life circumstances are like.

When Jesus taught the crowds in his sermon that we call The Beatitudes, which means The Blessings, he was showing people that they had a lot to be happy about, no matter the circumstances. He also was giving them a bigger view, an eternal view, rather than a narrow, worldly view:

"You're blessed when you are at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.

"You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.

"You're blessed when you're content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves the proud owners of everything that can't be bought.

"You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat.

"You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being 'care-full', you find yourselves cared for.

"You're blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

"You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.

"You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom.

"Not only that—count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even! for though they don't like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble."—Matthew 5:3—12

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## Humor

When you think of Almighty God, or of Jesus when he physically walked the earth, how do you picture him? Do you picture a stern God, an unsmiling God, or do you picture God happy and joyful? God made us and He gave us a \_\_\_\_\_. God invented humor. God created us in his own \_\_\_\_\_. He gave us many qualities, none of which we can claim to be better at than God, but, think about it; do you think you have a better sense of humor than God does? Think of your favorite comedians. Are they better at humor than God? I don't think we have any gift from God that outdoes God, including our gift of humor.

God is more loving, more caring, stronger, more creative, wiser, and also wittier, more clever and downright funnier than we are.

God created the platypus. He made the giraffe. You've seen some of those animal kingdom videos that are hilarious. And they are hilarious because our creative God is hilarious.

\_\_\_\_\_ is important to help us cope with the difficult things of life. God made us so that when we laugh, our brains actually create endorphins that help us deal with \_\_\_\_\_. Endorphins \_\_\_\_\_ us and make us feel good. Proverbs 17:22 says, "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength." God made us so that laughter is good for us. He wants us to laugh. A lot!

At Hillcrest Church, we believe life is a \_\_\_\_\_ from God and he wants us to be thankful for it and \_\_\_\_\_ the gift he gave us. Because of this, we do certain things that we believe honor this amazing life God has given us, that bring us together for times of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_:

- Kids' Takeover
- Camping Trips
- Trunk or Treat
- MVP Night
- Purpose Groups

Hillcrest is about \_\_\_\_\_ rather than programs. We believe ministry at the church is to help us \_\_\_\_\_ so that we will move beyond ourselves and \_\_\_\_\_ the walls of the church, sharing our lives and the love of Jesus with the people we work with, live with, and come in contact with.

We believe the \_\_\_\_\_ for doing something is more important than the \_\_\_\_\_ we use to do it. Methods are not sacred. We change the way we do things often. We are not tied to the "how", we are tied to the "who"; Jesus. We want to \_\_\_\_\_ him and share his love with everyone.

"I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit."  
—Romans 15:13