

**YOU GET WHAT YOU GIVE**  
**Don't Worry - Be Happy!**  
**Part 5 of 8**  
**Rick Warren**

Matthew 5:7 (Ph) "Happy are the merciful, for they will have mercy shown to them!"

**1. The Meaning of Mercy**

"Mercy" is \_\_\_\_\_

"God is kind and merciful, show to get angry, and full of love." Ps. 145:8 (LB)

**2. The Marks of Mercy. If I am Merciful ...**

\* I'll \_\_\_\_\_ with those who are peculiar.

"... Encourage the timid, help the weak, and be patient with everyone." I Thess. 5:14

Rom 15:7

\* I'll \_\_\_\_\_ those who have fallen

"Be gentle and ready to forgive; never hold grudges. Remember the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others." Col. 3:13 (LB)

\* I'll \_\_\_\_\_ those who are hurting.

"Whenever you possibly can, do good to those who need it." Prov. 3:27 (GN)

"If someone who is supposed to be a Christian has enough money to live well, and sees a brother in need but won't help him -- how can God's love be in him? ... Let's stop just saying we love people ... let's show it by our actions!" I John 3:17-18 (LB)

"Be merciful to those who doubt." Judge 1:24

\* I'll \_\_\_\_\_ to my enemies.

"If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even `sinners' do that! . . . But love your enemies, do good to them ... then your reward will be great ... Be merciful, just as your Father is!" Luke 6:33, 35-36

### 3. The Motive for Mercy

\* Because \_\_\_\_\_

Matt. 18:3 (LB)

\* Because \_\_\_\_\_

"The man who makes no allowances for others will find none made for him." James 2:13  
(Ph)

\* Because \_\_\_\_\_

"Your own soul is nourished when you are kind; it is destroyed when you are cruel." Pr.  
11:17 (LB)

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We're in a series on the Beatitudes -- Jesus' Secrets of Happiness. Four of these beatitudes deal with our relationship to God and four of them deal with our relationship to each other. Today we're going to look at mercy which has to do with our relationship with each other.

Matthew 5:7 (Phillips) *"Happy are the merciful, for they will have mercy shown to them!"* Jesus is say, you get what you give. It's the law of direct return. If you criticize other people, they're going to criticize you. If you're friendly to other people, they're going to be friendly to you. If you're merciful to other people, they'll be merciful to you. If you want to be happy, treat people right.

What is the right way to treat people? Be merciful.

What is mercy? Mercy is love in action. It's more than just an attitude. More than just feeling sorry for people. It's doing something. The Bible says God is a merciful God. Notice Psalm 145:8 *"God is kind and merciful, slow to get angry and full of love."* If you want to be like God, you have to learn to be merciful.

How do I know if I'm showing mercy? There are four marks of mercy. You can evaluate yourself to see how merciful a person you are. If you give it you get it. If you don't give it, you don't get it.

**1. If I'm merciful, I will be patient with those who are peculiar.**

I believe that in every life some weirdos must fall. Maybe their elevator doesn't go all the way to the top, a good egg but a little cracked. How do you handle those kinds of obnoxious people? What does the Bible say?

I Thes. 5:14 *"...Encourage the timid, help the weak, and be patient with everyone."* Are you patient with everyone? I'm not. The Bible says if I'm merciful, I'll be patient with those who are peculiar.

How can you be patient with those who are peculiar? You learn their background. When you understand where a person comes from, you stop saying, "Look how far they've got to go, " and start saying, "Look how far they've come!" That makes you a little more patient. You look beneath the external behavior, the goofiness, and look at the internal pain. Because behind every peculiar behavior there's loneliness, hurt, depression, or a kind of anxiety that God says we need to look at. The Bible says, *"Accept each other, in the Lord, even as Christ has accepted you."* Merciful people are accepting people. They're not quick to criticize, to judge. They realize that hurtful people are hunting people.

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#### **2. If I'm a Merciful person, I'll forgive those who have fallen.**

When people make mistakes, do you rub it in? Or do you rub it out? When people let you down, do you hold it over their head for the rest of their life, never let them off the hook? That's not mercy.

I met a man many years ago whose wife did a very foolish thing in the first six months of their marriage -- a dumb decision. She repented of it and asked forgiveness but he never forgave her. He held it over her head, he kept reminding her of it, he used it to justify his own behavior, he abused her for 30 years verbally with this thing she had done. One day she just left him.

Colossians 3:13 *"Be gentle and ready to forgive, never hold grudges. Remember the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others."* It's interesting about forgiveness that when you're called to receive it, it feels so right; when you're called to give it, it feels so wrong. I don't want to forgive people, I want justice.

Like the lady who had her picture taken at a photographer's. She brought it back and said, "It doesn't do me justice!" He said, "You don't need justice, you need mercy!"

If I'm patient, I will be forgiving to the fallen. It's a lot easier to criticize than it is to sympathize. It's a lot easier to point a finger than it is to lend a helping hand.

#### **3. If I'm a Merciful person, I will help those who are hurting.**

Proverbs 3:27 *"Wherever you possibly can, do good to those who need it."* Mercy is practical assistance. There are people all around you who are hurting. When you feel sorry for those people, that's not being like Christ. When you do something about it, that's being like Christ. When you take action, when you do something about it.

I John 3:17-18 (Living Bible) *"If someone who is supposed to be a Christian has enough money to live on and sees a brother in need but won't help him, how can God's love be in him? Let's stop just saying we love people, let's show it by our actions."* That verse stabs me like a dagger. Don't just say we love people, show it! Do something real. Let's really help people.

John Wesley's motto: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can." Help to those who are hurting. He is probably one of the men who made one of the greatest impacts in the world. He started the Methodist church. He says when you see someone hurting, a merciful person does something about it.

Somebody asked Flip Wilson one time, "What's your religion?" He answered, "I'm a Jehovah's bystander." He didn't want to get involved. I know a lot of Jehovah's bystanders.

Remember the story of the Good Samaritan. The man who was mugged, thrown over to the side of the road. Two guys walked by -- "I can't get involved. Sorry about what happened, but I can't

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get involved!" The third guy came, took action, took him to the Holiday Inn, left his American Express Gold Card to take care of him and said, "I'll pay for it all." That's mercy.

Jesus is saying, Happy are those who care enough to get involved.

Jude 1:24 *"Be merciful to those who doubt."* When you're hurting that's the most likely time you're going to doubt. When you're really hurting, you say, "Where is God? He's not hearing my prayer. Maybe He doesn't care. Maybe He doesn't even exist!" If you've never had those doubts, you've never been in very much pain. If you've been in pain you know exactly what I'm talking about. Doubts come in.

What is the Christ like response to people who doubt? You don't debate them: "I'm going to prove to you that God exists!" You don't demean them, put them down, disown them -- "You're not a Christian if you're having doubts!" You don't desert them.

What do you do? You show mercy. Be understanding and supporting them. Show mercy to those who doubt when they're in pain.

#### **4. If I'm Merciful, I'll do good to my enemies.**

Luke 6:33, 35-36. *"If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you! Even sinners do that! But love your enemies, do good to them, then your reward will be great. Be merciful, just as your Father is!"*

If you want to be like God, be merciful. Do good to those who do evil to you. That's exactly the opposite of what society says. Society says, when people hurt you, hurt them back, get even! Gossip about them, destroy them, anything you can. God says, "No, that's a reactor. Be an actor not a reactor. You not only forgive that person, but be nice to the guy." That's what Jesus would do. That's so hard to do!

Tomorrow morning, you go to work. The guy who is constantly criticizing you, who is really a jerk, the Bible says you're to do good to that person. How would it be if every time he criticized you, you complimented him? You go to school and those people who are putting you down for being a Christian, every time they put you down, you build them up, say something nice to them and encourage them. That would blow their minds! That's what Jesus says to do. That's what being merciful is. You return good for evil.

Why? The best way to eliminate an enemy is to turn him into a friend. Smother them with kindness. They don't know how to handle it because the world does not respond that way. They don't know what to do with it. All of a sudden, you're in control of the situation. You're on the offense, not the defense. You're acting, not reacting.

Mercy is love in action. It's the way God treats people. God is kind, merciful, slow to anger. The rest of the verse, in the Living Bible, says *"... His compassion is entertained in everything that He does."* When I meet people who are oddballs, they just don't fit, they're heavenly

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sandpaper -- irritating -- and you don't get along with them, you're patient with those kind of people. Because you check out their background and realize that hurting people hurt people. Then you're forgiving to the fallen because we all fall. We all stumble, nobody's perfect. We don't hold a grudge. And we help those who are hurting, not just feel sorry for them (like James says, *"If you see a guy without any clothes and say be warmed and of good cheer. See you later."* and you don't do anything about it.) And then you do good to those who do bad to you.

That's mercy. And that's tough to do. It's very tough to do and that's why you need some very powerful motivators to become a merciful person.

We've talked about the Meaning of mercy, the Marks of mercy. Now I want to give you three Motivations on why you need to be merciful this week:

#### **1. Because God has shown me mercy.**

Matthew 18:3 (LB) *"Shouldn't you be merciful to other people just as I have been merciful to you?"* God expects me to do to others what He has already done to me.

When you think about those people who really tick you off, if you're having a hard time being merciful to those people, remember what a jerk you've been with God. I think of all the flack that God has taken from Rick Warren -- all the stuff I've done my own way, done my own thing, shined on God and said, "Forget it! I'm going to do this!" Yet, God still loves me. What a gracious, merciful God He is. I think of all the dumb stunts I've pulled and all the things I've done wrong and He continues to shower me with His love and mercy and grace.

Stop and remind myself, "God, if You can be merciful to me, surely I can be merciful to that person."

One day some religious hypocrites brought a lady caught in the act of adultery to Jesus where He was teaching and threw her down in front of Him. They said, "Jesus, this lady was caught in the act of adultery. And You know what the law says -- if you're caught doing adultery, you get stoned to death!" Jesus said, "You're right. That's the law. The first one of you who has never broken the law gets to throw the first stone." And they all silently started walking away.

Another time Jesus said, "You're so concerned by the problems in that other person's life, before you get the speck of sawdust out of your neighbor's eyes, why don't you get the telephone pole out of your own eye?" No contest.

God has been merciful to me so I need to be merciful to other people. We tend to judge other people by their worse faults and we tend to judge ourselves by our best intentions.

Don't find fault with the man  
Who limps or stumbles along the road,  
Unless you've worn the shoes he wears  
Or struggled beneath his load.

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There may be tacks in his shoes that hurt,  
    Though hidden away from view  
Or the burden he bears placed on your back  
    Might cause you to stumble too.

Don't sneer at the man who's down today  
    Unless you've felt the blow  
That caused his shame or felt the shame  
    That only the fallen know  
You may be strong but still the blows  
    That were his if dealt to you  
In the same self way and the same self time  
    Might cause you to stagger too.

Don't be too harsh with the man who sins  
    Or pelts you with words or stones.  
Unless you are sure, yea, doubly sure,  
    That you have not sins of your own  
For you, perhaps, that if the tempter's voice  
    Should whisper soft to you  
As it did to him when he went astray  
    It would cause you to falter too

Be merciful. Why? Because God has shown me mercy

**2. Because I'm going to need more mercy in the future.**

Not only has God been merciful to me in the past but I'm going to need it in the future. I don't expect to be perfect from now until the time that I did, so I'm going to need more mercy.

James 2:13 (Phillips) *"The man who makes no allowances for others will find none made for him."* Only those who give it, get it. Those who give mercy, get mercy. Those who don't give mercy, don't give mercy back.

You say, "But you don't know how much this person hurt me! And they continue to hurt me! I just can't forgive them." Then I hope you never sin. Forgiveness and mercy are a two-way street. When you refuse to forgive others and refuse to show mercy to others, you're burning the very grid you have to walk across to get to heaven. The Bible says, that those who show mercy receive mercy. Those who don't, do not.

I need to be merciful, because I'm going to need it again in the future. I'm going to make mistakes. Don't burn your bridges. Be very careful about demanding justice, because God just might give it to you. If we all got what we deserved, none of us would be here. God does not give us what we deserve; He gives us what we need. And that's mercy. And mercy is giving to others, not what they deserve when they've fallen, not what they deserve when they've hurt us, but giving them what they need.

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#### **3. Because it makes me happy.**

Mercy makes me happy. That's what Jesus says. "*Happy are the merciful.*" The opposite of that is true also: "Unhappy are the unmerciful." The most miserable people I know are people who are resentful, who refuse to give up a grudge, who are holding some unforgiveness over somebody else's head. They don't realize they are hurting themselves. Unmercifulness makes you miserable.

Ben Franklin said, "When you're good to other people you are best to yourself." That's what Jesus said here.

Proverbs 11:17 "*Your own soul is nourished when you are kind; it is destroyed when you are cruel.*" (Living Bible). Doing acts of mercy gets us out of ourselves, gets the focus off of me and on to other people and produces happiness. This is a tremendous way to get rid of depression is to learn to develop due acts of mercy. When you're depressed and all of a sudden begin to be patient to those who are peculiar, forgiving to those who have fallen, helping those who are hurting, doing good to your enemies, you will watch the clouds of depression lift and blow away. It gets you out of yourself and gets the focus off of you. As you give your life away, the happiness comes.

You ought to be merciful, simply because it makes you happy. It's a boomerang blessing: what you give is what you get.

How then do I become a merciful person? The starting point is you must first experience the mercy of God. You cannot offer mercy to anyone else until you have first received mercy. You can't offer forgiveness to anybody else until first you feel forgiven. One of the reasons why some of you have a hard time forgiving people is because you don't really feel forgiven. When I feel unforgiven, then I am definitely unforgiving. When I don't feel good I sure don't want anybody else to feel good. The starting point is I must receive the mercy of God, the peace of God and the forgiveness of God and then I can offer it to others.

Every sin you have ever committed, are committing right now, or will commit has already been paid for. Why? The Bible says just as you break man's laws there's a penalty, you break God's laws and there's a penalty. The Bible says, the wages of sin is death. Jesus took that penalty. It's already paid for. You can walk out of here with a clear conscious, with a clean slate. You can begin a new life. You receive the mercy of God, not because you deserve to be forgiven, you don't. But God wants to forgive you, simply because He is a forgiving God. He loves forgiving. It's His nature. He is a God of mercy.

After you've done that, once you really feel forgiven, once you have been graced, then it's easier for you to be gracious. Once you have felt the mercy of God then it's easier for you to be merciful. After you've done that, the next thing you do, in order to become a merciful person, is start looking at people with the eyes of Jesus Christ. Look at people the way the Lord would see them. By the way, if you have trouble with lust, this is the key. Instead of looking at them in lust, look at them in love, the way Jesus would see them. Instead of a body, you will see a person.

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So, instead of having a problem with lust, you start saying, "Lord, help me to see the man, woman from Your point of view. How do You see that person? What are the hurts You see in their lives? What are the needs You see in their lives?" Look at them from the eyes of Christ. The most Christlike thing you can do is to care for other people.

Matthew 25, the thing Christians are going to be judged for at the judgement is how they treated other people, *"I was hungry and you fed Me. I was naked and you clothed Me. I was thirsty and you gave Me drink. I was in prison and you visited Me."* We're going to say, "Lord, when did we do all that to You?" Jesus said, *"I will say then, in as much as you've done it to anybody else, you've done it to Me."* God's going to ask you how you treated other people. Were you merciful? Were you like Him? Jesus had a ministry of mercy. He lifted up the lonely. He accepted the rejected. He grieved with those who were sorrowing. He loved the unlovely. He helped those who are helpless and the hurting. He cared for them. And God wants you to be a little Christ at your job, at your school, at your home. Treat people the way He would.

Who is it in your life that needs mercy? that's barely hanging on? and they're about to let go? You need to show some mercy this week. Who is it in your life that you're still holding the past over their head? you won't let them off the hook. Every time they do something you don't like you bring this back up for ammunition. It's always silently there in the background. That's a great way to kill a marriage. You're unpleasable. No matter what they do for you, you remember the past. You have a little scale in your mind. No matter what they do for you, you keep on reminding them of this. You're destroying your own marriage. You're doing it yourself.

Who is it that you need to say a word of forgiveness to this week. Let him off the hook, wipe the slate clean, never mention it again. It's over, it's done with, it's forgiven. That's it! Be happy! Show mercy!

This is what we want Saddleback church to be. We want this place to be a place of mercy. We want our family here to be a place where we are patient with the peculiar, forgiving to the fallen. If you're perfect this place is not for you. This church is for people who do not have it all made. They're struggling, they admit it and they're honest enough to realize they've got a lot of growing to do. We're forgiving of the fallen. It doesn't matter so much where you've been it's where are you feet headed right now? We want Saddleback to be a place where we really help those who are hurting. We don't just say we care but the small groups help each other and the lay ministries really help people. The body ministers to itself. We want this to be a place that even when people do bad to us, we do good to them. We do not retaliate. We are actors, not reactors.

Prayer:

Have you experienced the mercy of God? That is the greatest thing you can ever experience -- the mercy and love of God. Jesus Christ cared enough for you to die for you and to forgive every sin you've ever done wrong. But you need to come, admit those sins, ask forgiveness and let him clean out your life and start over. There's no reason to go out of this room with any guilt. It's unnecessary. If you do it, it's because you choose to do it. God says I want to wipe the slate clean. It's like starting over. It's called being born again. A brand new lease on life. Some of you have had things in your past that have been hounding you for so long.

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You need to let it go and you need to let that person go that you've been holding that grudge against. You can't get ahead if you're always trying to get even.

Would you say, "Lord I want to experience Your grace and mercy. Would You please forgive all the things I've done wrong? Would you help me to feel forgiven? Would you help me to forgive myself? This week help me to offer mercy to others just as You've offered it to me. You've shown me mercy in the past and I thank You for that. Lord, I'm going to need it in the future. Help me to be patient with those who are peculiar, maybe even with things in my own family that really bug me, irritate me. But I need to be merciful to that person. Because You're merciful with me. Lord, would You help me to be forgiving to those who've fallen, not to rub it in but rub it out." If God brings someone to mind that you've never forgiven would you say, "Lord I release them. I'm not going to mention it again. I'm not going to use it as an excuse to justify my own behavior. Lord, help me to help those who are hurting. Open my eyes to see the people who hurt and help me to do good to those who do wrong to me, whether they criticize, harm, or mean something for bad. Rather than being a doormat or passive, I take the initiative to be assertive by doing something good to them. Help me to be like Jesus. For we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen."