Happiness: is moral virtue truly necessary? Is it necessary to reach a conclusionwhether the subjective or objective definition of happiness should be used?

These three articles have a complicated relationship with each other from my perspective and the following post would base all the core discussion on Plato, approve the defense of Belliotti which I think clarifies my question after reading Plato and raise my different views and confuse against the third article by Paul Bloomfield. And my core thesis is split into two part: **whether carrying such a heavy burden of pursuing “inside harmony” and pursuing knowledge and truth instead of giving up pursuing and enjoying those simple joy which does nothing with those serious life meaning.** The second part, which is short but indispensable, is **whether it’s meaningful to treat happiness as a objective status, which requires all the moral standard which leads to happiness should have an objective border.**

1. Summary of Plato

First, a friend of Plato said, why should we value justice, he thought that injustice is more profitable, because

* 1. justice itself is the result of people’s fear of suffering injustice, because they are afraid that everyone will have the power to hurt others without being punished and the fear of suffering justice outweighs the joy of conducing injustice. That is to say, justice is a compromise instead of the primary intent of people.
  2. Unjust person, he practices justice, in order to obtain the result of justice instead of for the sake of justice itself. In other words, he uses the reputation of justice to compete for his own interest, which is much easier than letting others know his injustice. In other words, people are more willing to pursue The appearance of justice instead of justice itself.

Plato’s defense is that human being’s mind is split into three parts, spiritual principle reason and desires. Desire is like a beast in your heart, while reason is the faculty that controls your desires. When one conducts injustice, it is equivalent to enslaving the best part of one's personality to desire, to sunk himself into evilness and disharmony of soul. And even if he is able to obtain a position of authority, his rational personality and spiritual principle has lost control of his soul, this person is very sad. In other words, if a person, after he commits evil, is punished, as long as this punishment allows his rational part to regain control of his desire, then the soul of this person is balanced and harmonious, thus “redeemed”, this, according to Plato, is the true meaning of law.

1. Whether high moral standard should be sacrificed to some extent to make happiness more easily accessible?(after consulting my friends)

Actually, after reading Belliotti's reading, I think he has clarified my confuse after reading Plato's defense. That is, most of us are neither moral paragons nor tyrants, why can we not fetch happiness by more secular but easier way, such as making a lot of money or reaching an ideal shape of body? Just as Belliotti has argued, if Plato insists that happiness is an objective status instead of subjective feeling, then why should we not promote moral and justice straightforward instead of emphasizing happiness? If it is insisted that even if one has felt a status of joy, just because he's not pursuing knowledge and truth, then what he felt is just the appearance of happiness, most of the people in the world cannot feel happy forever, which sounds too miserable.

While considering the question, I've consulted my friend, asking them whether they agree the point of view, which is by not insisting on those high moral standard, people can attain happiness more. I used to think they would offer me a consistent answer which is "yes" because I used to think everyone is glad to claim they are happy and consent, just as their Facebook and Wechat homepage always post their happy moment, indicating people's thirst for happiness, or, hoping others to believe they are happy. To my surprise, they all disagree with this thesis, one of them insisting that the view is a sophistry, inducing people to lower moral standard, another peer told me that happiness, from his perspective should build on a harmonious society because ignoring the environment around us is a cowardice behavior and he also admitted that he has never felt "happiness" while using his definition. The last friend I consulted said that what she pursued is a status of long-lasting and harmonious state of happiness from the deepness of her soul, which is most close to what Plato has said in his defense. She thought lowering the moral standard is against her pursuit of the highest level of happiness, which is based on wide awakening of herself and an unshakable insistence on her moral standard. To tell the truth, I felt more confused after consulting them, I don't think my friend would deceive me by refusing to admit their true opinion of approving the point of view. But the fact that they would rather admit that "they are not happy" than lowering the standard of "happiness" surprises me. So the phenomenon actually exists that some of us don’t treat happiness as the ultimate life meaning, which dwarfs all the other elements during the life journey. And this rings a bell on me：Does it mean that the pursuit of knowledge and truth, the inside peace of oneself and the overall harmony of the whole society is worth pursuing as a lifelong goal(which is generally agreed), and the process of pursuing it can be seen as "happiness"? So we don't have to rush to regard happiness as the meaning of life, but as something we are deemed to obtain during the journey to justice and harmonious personality.

1. Whether it’s meaningful to define happiness as an objective status?

As for the third passage, Paul has illustrated the relationship between moral, self-respect and happiness. And I think the author treat happiness as a subjective feeling because he claims that self-respect as a base for happiness and he treats the self-respect as a objective term because he thinks Niccolo’s self-respect is a self-flattering self-respect even if he thinks he has self-respect by being the king on his own chessboard. But I think if we consider self-respect as a subjective feeling then even if Niccolo’s behavior seems ridiculous from the third party, he can also gain happiness as long as he insists the game authenticity himself, so I think the author’s logic is not so persuasive. But this raises a question to me: If we defines happiness as an objective status that is to say each virtue that paths their way to happiness should have an objective definition instead of just coming from the subjective feeling, so does it mean we should define the objective meaning of honesty, justice, kindness and all these virtues? Or should we treat all the concept as subjective and this would lead to the defender of Plato to criticism, claiming my pursuit of happiness is only the “appearance of happiness”?

It seems that I’ve reached an obvious conclusion after such a long paragraph of analysis, maybe because my major is accounting and I’ve been immersed in materialism for too long, I myself know the importance of pursuing the “great good” of life, but I have always been lost in figuring out the true meaning of pursuing that “great good” just because it seems like a tiring and not profitable torture. So I’m looking forward, just like Glaucon, to being persuaded that the inside harmony and the long-lasting motivation to pursue knowledge and truth is a burden worth carrying at class.