

7. Are you groaning or moaning? Is it okay to groan about your circumstances? Does contentment in Christ mean you don't struggle with your circumstances? Does it mean that you should rejoice in your circumstances? What was Paul rejoicing in? Read Phil. 4:10...Paul was rejoicing in the Lord!!

8. During your time in small group, take time to REJOICE IN THE LORD. Remember, this does not mean you are rejoicing in your circumstances but IN THE LORD. In addition, remember that you have all the resources necessary to do all things because of our sufficiency in Christ!! The Lord bless you as you continue to seek Him. (Matt. 6:33)

LIVING BEYOND YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES

- I. Living with an affection for Christ. (*Philippians 3:10-11*)
 - a. Relationships demand time.
 - b. Relationships demand commitment.
 - c. Relationships demand sacrifice.

- II. Living with your eyes on the prize. (*Phil. 3:12-14; 20-21*)
 - a. Put it in drive not in reverse. (*Phil. 3:13*)
 - b. Learn from your mistakes—do not live in them.
 - c. Tune-ups.

- III. Living with the expectancy of change.
 - a. Pain is a gift from God.
 - b. Groaning—not moaning.
 - c. Transformation—not gratification.

- IV. Living with the contentment of Christ.
 - a. Ask the Lord to change your heart and not the circumstance.
 - b. Thank the Lord for what you have and not what you don't have.
 - c. Pray with an expectant heart not a defeated one.

Join us this week as we pray for
the country of Costa Rica.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

For the week of August 16, 2009

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

1. As we know the context, Paul was in prison rejoicing in the Lord. Do you think he was concerned about the what, why, where, how and when would God deliver him from prison? Do you think he was consumed with his circumstances? How about you? Do you get consumed with the what, why, where, how and when will God deliver you from your difficult circumstances? Explain.

2. In Phil. 3:10, Paul stated, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death." What caused Paul to desire Christ in the midst of his difficult and unbearable circumstances? Why did Paul want to go into a deeper relationship with Christ? Was God using the unbearable circumstance to draw him closer to Christ? Discuss.

3. Do you follow what I call, "the rearview mirror" theology (looking to your past experiences to determine your future identity in Christ)? Read Phil. 3:12-14 and discuss.

4. What causes a person to enter into depression? What becomes the common denominator with depression? Does the Word of God offer a solution to the problem of depression?

5. Are you a perfectionist? Do you feel like your life needs to be in order before you can turn to the Lord with your insufferable circumstances? Do you have a difficult time living in your past mistakes instead of learning from them? Explain.

6. Do you believe there is hope in the midst of your difficult circumstances? What is the prize that Paul offers to us? Read I Peter 1:3; John 3:1-3; Romans 5:1-5 and Phil. 3:20-21. Discuss where believers need to put their hope.