

The secret of Paul's contentment was in knowing that God's strength would get him through any situation. We live by His power and it is His strength that enables us to get through this crazy time we find ourselves in.

In what area of your life do you feel the need for God's strength to find contentment? Is it financial, health, relationships, faith?

If you feel that God is distant right now, rest assured you can return to His presence. Maybe you tried to handle things on your own, but you feel you have lost control. Invite God back into the situation and surrender control to Him. God's love for you has not changed.

Romans 8:39 NLT - 39 No power in the sky above or in the earth below--indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let your life's response be one of praise and glory to God.

Take a moment to express your praise to the God who loves you and strengthens you and will see you through every day of your life.

WRAP-UP

Sometimes bad things happen, and we find ourselves navigating an unscripted life. But rather than focusing on the threat, focus on the opportunities we have to deepen our faith and reignite hope in the midst of our trials. Rather than filling yourself with anxiety and depression, invite Jesus to fill you with His joy and peace. And rest in the assurance that God loves you, and He will strengthen you for whatever lies ahead.

Memory Verse

*For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.
- Philippians 4:13 NLT*

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs: _____

Challenge- Turn up the worship music lift your hands and sing praises to God in full voice this week.

"When Bad Things Happen" **"Unscripted" #2**

INTRODUCTION

Throughout most of our lives we rely on routines; patterns of living that keep us moving toward our life's goals. As we operate in these predictable routines, we feel safe. But sometimes life throws us a curve, bad things happen, and we find ourselves navigating an unscripted life. It can feel overwhelming, but we have choices in how we respond to those unforeseen circumstances because we are children of God, and we are in His hands.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

When you were a child, did you have something to help you overcome being afraid of the dark?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

1. Threat or Opportunity

2 Corinthians 4:8-10 NLT - 8 We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. 9 We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. 10 Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies.

In this letter to the Corinthian church, Paul acknowledges that there are some pretty bad things that are happening in his life and in theirs. Paul had been persecuted, beaten and stoned. But still he encouraged other believers that despite all the bad they had endured they had a cause for hope. He even recognized that this gave them a unique opportunity; that the life of Jesus would be seen in his body.

If you were to look at your present circumstance, what would you say were the unique opportunities that it presents? What can you do now that you weren't able to do previously? How might this become a witness to others?

1 Peter 1:21 NLT - 21 Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory.

Pastor Gina quoted Christian author Bennan Manning as saying Faith + Hope = Trust. What does Peter identify as the reason for our faith and hope in God? Why does this increase our faith and hope?

The same Holy Spirit that raised Christ from the dead lives in you. Even in our greatest perplexities, we know that God, through His Holy Spirit, is able to support us, and to deliver us, and in Him we can always place our trust and hope. If we resist being discouraged during this period of testing, we can emerge from it with deepened faith and reignited hope.

2. What Are You Filling Yourself With

At this point it is difficult to escape the weighty, stress-inducing news surrounding the Corona virus. If we spend too much of our time listening to all the negative things associated with this disaster, we can find ourselves filled with fear and anxiety.

There are other things that you can be filled with to counter the discouraging effect of the pandemic news. Here are three:

Fill yourself with God's Word. The bible speaks of hope that is not just wishing for something. It is a confident expectation of what is to come. But when facing enormous problems and challenges like those the world is currently struggling with it can be difficult to maintain that confidence. Reflect on what God's Word says about His power to care for you.

Jeremiah 32:17 NLT - 17 "O Sovereign LORD! You made the heavens and earth by your strong hand and powerful arm. Nothing is too hard for you!

Isaiah 41:10 NLT - 10 Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

Hebrews 4:16 NLT - 16 So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

Hebrews 13:6 NLT - 6 So we can say with confidence, "The LORD is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?"

Are there any verses you have found to be especially encouraging right now?

Fill your life with Worship

Colossians 3:16 NLT - 16 Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.

One way we can take advantage of our time at home is to express our worship of God through song. If there are others in your house, invite them to join you.

What worship songs have you been singing lately?

Fill your heart with Gratitude

Colossians 2:7 NLT - 7 Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

What are some of the things you can say you are grateful to God for today?

3. Secret of Contentment

Philippians 4:11-13 NLT - 11 Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. 12 I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. 13 For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.