



**Reaching,
Restoring,
Raising Up**

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L.I.F.E. Group Questions—(Phil 3:12-21)

Our L.I.F.E. Groups that meet in homes use the following questions from the sermon for discussion and application. To find a group pick up a L.I.F.E. Group brochure in the Welcome Center.

1. How would you define "peace"? Would you say your level of peace right now is great, good, or "I need help"? What is that related to, whether good or bad?
2. Talk about how you can make rejoicing a full-time mindset. Why is it important to remember to rejoice "in the Lord"?
3. When is it most difficult for you to be patient, or "reasonable"? Practically, what are some ways to remind ourselves to be reasonable when we are getting frustrated?
4. Typically, in what situations are you most susceptible to worry? Is it easy or hard for you to pray in those situations? Based on the serenity prayer, how does prayer overcome worry?
5. Think of some ways as a group that you can direct your minds to think about positive things on a regular basis.
6. Talk about anything else that impressed you from the message if you have time.

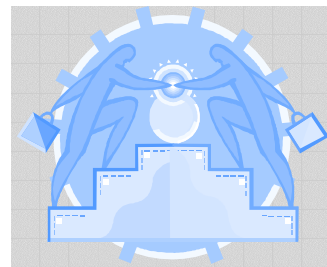
**You Can Join an ABF Anytime — Find
Yours Below and Join Us!**

Adult Bible Fellowships

Locations, Times, Descriptions

9:00

10:45



ADULT BIBLE FELLOWSHIPS
- CONNECTING AROUND THE WORD -

Rm104	30s-50s—Waller-Crary	Rm 104	Open—Hixson-Sturgill-Bower
Rm 112		Rm 112	Women—Byrum
Rm 201	30s-40s—Sims-Fendley	Rm 201	20s—Alexy/Jones
Rm 202	Master Your Money (Ends June 6)—Lux	Rm 202	30s—Miller-Tripp
Rm 203	Young Singles—Franklin	Rm 203	Singles—Bentzel
Rm 204	Making Peace with Your Past	Rm 204	Blessings in Disguise
Rm 205	40s&Up—Christensen-Hasler	Rm 205	30s—Heritier-Sharp
Rm 206		Rm 206	
Rm 207	40s-50s—McBrayer-Wicks	Rm 207	Engaged/Newly Married
Rm 208	Women—Knox-Anderson	Rm 208	Open—Regis-Hubbard-Anderson- Robertson
		Gym-3rd fl	College Ayres-Getchell-Hopkins

May 2, 2004

Enjoy the Rest of Your Life

Discover principles for happy living from the book of Philippians

Celebration Fellowship

Serenity Now!

A preview of Philippians 4:10-13

There are some things that you just can't "make" happen. In one of the many "Seinfeld" episodes, George's dad, played by Jerry Stiller, decided he wanted serenity any time something happened that upset him, and he wanted it now! Unfortunately, just like patience, you don't get serenity by demanding it; it happens because you learn the "secret" of it. Paul made a similar declaration about gaining contentment, a state of mind about as elusive as patience or serenity. He revealed that he had "learned the secret" of con-

tentment, and, at the end of this short letter to the Philippians, by the Spirit he shared that secret. From God's perspective contentment has nothing to do with the particular situation we are in. Paul let the Philippians know that he was elated that they had resumed their financial support of him; but he hastened to add that it wasn't because he felt he "needed" it. Rather, he had learned to be content whether he had a lot, or had a little. In all things he knew the secret of being filled and being hungry, so that the outward circum-

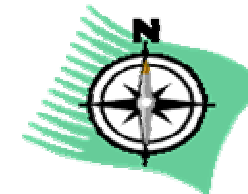


**The secret of happiness
is found in Christ!**

stance was irrelevant. Finally, he revealed this secret: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me". We don't need to demand contentment "now", for through Christ we have it in every situation, no matter what the circumstance may be.

(Phil 4:1-9)

leading ladies in the church, Euodia and Syntyche, to resolve their differences and live in harmony. It is vital to our spiritual progress to live in unity with other believers, and when there is unresolved conflict the growth of the parties involved will be stifled. So Paul tells them to live in harmony, and he tells his representative at the church, his "yoke-fellow", to get involved in it as well. This is a challenge to all of us to not let conflict simmer, but to do all we can to restore unity in the body. Paul concludes by reminding them that all of their names are written in the book of life, a note of encouragement that an eternal bond exists between all of them, including the ones involved in the conflict. It only makes sense to resolve the conflict now. Paul, by the Holy Spirit, then commands them to rejoice (twice for emphasis). This relates to our ability to overcome difficulty, because rejoicing is a choice
(Continued on page 2)



Volume 2, Issue 39

May 2, 2004

Inside this issue:

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Study Guide	2-3
Life Group Questions	4

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- **Worship**—You were planned for God's pleasure
- **Fellowship**—You were formed for God's family
- **Discipleship**—You were created to become like Christ
- **Ministry**—You were shaped for serving God
- **Evangelism**—You were made for a mission

Attitude = Altitude

There is an accepted leadership maxim that says "attitude determines altitude". In other words we enable ourselves to attain great heights if we can just think about the right things, if we can stay positive. In Philippians 4:1-9 the Spirit, through Paul, challenges us to do this very thing. Life, as we all know, can be very difficult, and it was for the Philippians as well. But, the way to deal with these difficulties is to put them in God's hands, and focus on the positive things that He is doing for us and that He wants us to do for Him. Then, no matter how bad things are, we can continue to maintain our joy and a firm foundation for life. Paul begins chapter 4 by encouraging the Philippians to stand firm in the Lord, an acknowledgment of how difficult it is to do this. He prefaces this with "therefore", looking back to the fact that our citizenship is in heaven, and that the purpose of our lives should be consumed with know-

ing Christ. Life is not just about what we see here on earth, but about that which lasts for eternity—our life with Christ here, and hereafter. So, we should stand firm now to be able to experience that relationship forever. Paul exhorted the Philippians to do this very thing because he loved them so much—not only did he refer to them as his beloved, but they were also his joy, and his crown (a reference to the victor's wreath that the winning athletes received at the conclusion of the event). When they did well he rejoiced, and he found his reward in their accomplishment. Because of his love for them, he did all he could to help them maintain their stability in the Lord. Likewise, when we truly love others, and understand that our reward is related to their spiritual progress, we will do all we can to help them grow strong in their relationship with the Lord. It is in this light that Paul directs two of the

Philippians 4:1-9 (continued from pg 1)

we make regardless of how things are going. For this reason Paul tells them to rejoice always, and to rejoice "in the Lord". Both of these qualifiers show us that rejoicing is not related to the circumstances, but our response to the circumstances. If we view everything "in the Lord", we can know that good will come out of it, and that we can get through it since we are "in Him". Along with this we are to have a "forbearing", or "very reasonable" spirit as we go through life. If we are able to "let it slide", because of our trust in the Lord then the difficulties that we encounter will be easier to process. In fact since it is more about our response to the problems than the problems themselves, then our "reasonableness" is what enables us to rejoice in all circumstances, and it should be obvious to all who know us. It is important to remember, as Paul reminds the Philippians, that the Lord is near—He is personally near, and His return is not far off. Knowing this will better enable us to process things in a reasonable way. Along these lines Paul then tells the Philippians to not be anxious. If we realize the Lord is near, then there is no reason to be anxious. The word in the Greek means to have a divided mind, and when we worry, or are

excessively "stressed" over something, our focus is divided between the Lord and the problem. Instead, we should pray about everything, asking the Lord to take care of the problem, and we should do it with thankful hearts. While the problem may not be pleasant, we know that God will bring good out of it because He loves us. So, when we can say "thank you" to God for everything because we trust that He will bring about good out of it, our anxiety will vanish. In addition, His peace will guard our hearts and minds, keeping negative thoughts from creeping back in to cause anxiety. This only works because our hearts and minds are in Christ Jesus. His presence is the guarantee that the peace of God will guard us. Finally, Paul,



"His presence is the guarantee that the peace of God will guard us."

by the Spirit, wraps up this section by reminding us to think on positive things. Our minds tend to move towards our most dominant thoughts; so we should dwell on these things: the truth, on what is revered by all, on what is fair, on what is pure, on what brings about favor from all, on those things that form a good reputation, on things that are virtuous, and on things that are praiseworthy. Our minds should take notice of these things and meditate on them, evaluate how well we are living up to these standards, then put patterns into practice that enable us to become people that are characterized by them. If we will think about these things, then the God of peace will be with us, meaning that we will experience the peace that comes from living God's way. This is the way that Paul lived, and so he told the Philippians to live according to the things they had seen in him, heard from him, received from him, and had learned from him. In short they were to follow his example. In summary, we can live at a high level when we resolve conflict, rejoice always, have a reasonable attitude about things, refuse to be anxious, pray about everything with thanksgiving instead, and dwell on positive things.

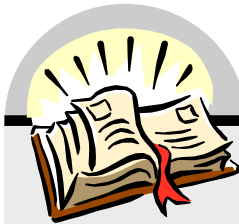
Study Questions for Philippians 4:10-13

Paul, by the Spirit, reveals the secret of contentment.

1. Read Philippians 4:10. What attitude did Paul have, and why? What does it mean that Paul rejoiced "in the Lord"? What does this reveal about the impact our expressions of love have on others and on God?

2. Trace the Philippians' support of Paul from these verses: Phil 4:10, 15-16; Acts 17:31-34, 40; 17:14-15; 18:5, 18. How did Paul respond to the gap in their support (v10)? Is this how you would respond, and what can we learn from this?

3. Why had the Philippians stopped their support of Paul (v10)? What does the fact that they resumed their support after about a 10 year period say about the genuineness of their love for Paul? How can we apply this?



"If we realize the Lord is near there is no reason to be anxious."

4. From 4:11 what does Paul say that he was not motivated by, and how does this compare with Psalm 23:1? What is the difference between "wants" and "needs", and should we be stressed about either one?

5. What had Paul "learned" according to v11? The word "contentment" means to be "sufficient within oneself". In what sense do you think a Christian should be this way, and shouldn't be this way?

6. Look at 2 Corinthians 11:23-33. What do you think Paul's experiences had taught him about contentment? What have you learned about contentment through your difficult experiences?

7. From Phil 4:12 what are the 2 types of circumstances in which we struggle with contentment? Why?

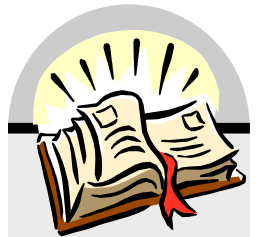
8. What 2 things does Paul say that we should be able to do in any and every circumstance? How would you do each of these in good and bad circumstances?

9. In which situation is it more difficult for you to remain content, in abundance, or in need?

10. Look the following verses: Luke 3:14; 1 Timothy 6:8; Hebrews 13:5. With what should we be content, and how important is this issue of contentment?

11. According to Philippians 4:13 what does "all things" refer to in this context? What is the "secret" of contentment for our lives found in this verse?

12. From Philippians 4:10-13 list specific ways that we can experience the contentment that Paul had.



Memory Verse

**"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."
Philippians 4:13**