

# small things BIG DIFFERENCE

## Week 3

### Life Group Notes

#### Process (what has been taught) - 10 minutes

In Colossians 4:2 Paul exhorts the believers to “Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”

- Prayer takes effort! Look again at the sentence structure Paul uses:
  - “Continue steadfastly in prayer” - this is a PRESENT ACTIVE IMPERATIVE (a command to prayer now, whenever “now” is i.e. always)
    - Prayer is not optional. Prayer is crucial for effective Christian living and ministry (cf. Eph. 6:18–19; Rom. 12:2; Phil. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:17).
- “being watchful in it with thanksgiving” - This is a PRESENT ACTIVE PARTICIPLE (functioning as an IMPERATIVE).
  - Prayer takes planning, persistence, and vigilance.
    - It needs to become a lifestyle, not an event.

#### Prepare (for godliness) - 5 minutes

Remind the group about A.C.T.S.:

- A - Adoration - this should come primarily from the Bible.
- C - Confession - this should not be about specific sin necessarily but an acknowledgment that we are not like how we have just described God.
- T - Thanksgiving - this should be gratitude for “A”
- S - Supplication - given what we know about God, and ourselves, these are our requests

#### Practice (of godliness) - 45 minutes

This is a follow on exercise from last week. Look at the triangulation model that we used last week. Using their most memorable Bible passage, ask group members to write in their journals:

A - ask group members to copy what they wrote about God in the top left of the triangle. Now ask members to choose one other word that expands what they’ve written (see the example below).

#### Praying 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 using ACTS

A - God is merciful, God is the source of all comfort, God comforts me. Forgives. compassionate. Knows what I’m going through. Helps me in my weakness. Condescends.

C - ask group members to write sentences that begin with "I can be ....." or "I am sometimes ..." and write the antonym of what they wrote about God (see the example below).

**Praying 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 using ACTS**

**A** - God is merciful, God is the source of all comfort, God comforts me. Forgives. compassionate. Knows what I'm going through. Helps me in my weakness. Condescends.

**C** - I can be selfish and miserable. I am sometimes too preoccupied with my own troubles that I forget to help others. I can be guilty of bearing a grudge and often allow my troubles to keep me in bondage. I can think of myself as strong and not needing the help that God offers.

T - ask group members to rewrite the "A" sentences but this time using prefix "thank you" (see the example below).

**Praying 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 using ACTS**

**A** - God is merciful, God is the source of all comfort, God comforts me. Forgives. compassionate. Knows what I'm going through. Helps me in my weakness. Condescends.

**C** - I can be selfish and miserable. I am sometimes too preoccupied with my own troubles that I forget to help others. I can be guilty of bearing a grudge and often allow my troubles to keep me in bondage. I can think of myself as strong and not needing the help that God offers.

**T** - Thank you for your mercy to me  
Thank you that I know that if there is any comfort in anything, it comes from you.  
Thank you that you forgive me and have compassion on me  
Thank you that I'm not alone and that you know what I'm going through.  
Thank you for the strength you provide  
Thank you that you come to me rather than ask me, in my strength, to reach up to You.

S - ask group members to write three requests in response to the other sentences that they have written (see the example below).

### **Praying 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 using ACTS**

**A** - God is merciful, God is the source of all comfort, God comforts me. Forgives. compassionate. Knows what I'm going through. Helps me in my weakness. Condescends.

**C** - I can be selfish and miserable. I am sometimes too preoccupied with my own troubles that I forget to help others. I can be guilty of bearing a grudge and often allow my troubles to keep me in bondage. I can think of myself as strong and not needing the help that God offers.

**T** - Thank you for your mercy to me

Thank you that I know that if there is any comfort in anything, it comes from you.

Thank you that you forgive me and have compassion on me

Thank you that I'm not alone and that you know what I'm going through.

Thank you for the strength you provide

Thank you that you come to me rather than ask me, in my strength, to reach up to You.

**S** - Please give me wisdom and strength to be a comfort to those in need

- Please let Your compassion win my coworkers to see the truth of who You are.

- Please allow me to rely on your so that I can have a good reputation and bring glory to You.

### **Journalling your Prayer**

Using the A.C.T.S outline that your group members have just created, ask the group members to now write out a prayer in their journal (see the example below).

### **Praying 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 using ACTS**

Father your Word says that you are merciful and the God of all comfort. You forgive and are compassionate. Because you have been through it all, and You see everything that happens to me, you know what I'm going through and help me, even when I don't know it.

I'm not like that! I think about myself all the time. I live in a world of one and of course, that makes me miserable! I shut myself off for fear of being hurt .. or hurting others. It's like a prison that I've made for myself .. all the while thinking I'm strong enough for my trouble and I don't need You.

Father, it's so good to know you're running toward me right now, not with anger or displeasure but with a compassionate, merciful heart. Thank you. One thousand times .. thank you .. for your mercy to me today. I'm still breathing .... that's a grace from you! Thank you for presence, although i don't always acknowledge it, your rod and staff comfort me. You provide the strength for me to continue, as well as the grace to finish well.

Please use me. I know that you're quite capable of sending ravens, rainbows or bread from heaven to people in need but I also know that most often you send people to other people. So, if that's the case I need the wisdom and strength that you've promised. I want others to see this strength of Yours supporting me so that they will want it too. I want them to know that I have a God who is merciful and compassionate and that I live for Your glory. And as you comfort me, I will seek to be a comfort for others. What a privilege it is to comfort others with the very comfort you bring to us in all our troubles. So Father, on this gorgeous April morning, I'll wait for your grace as the earth waits for rain. I bring you my weighed-down heart and expect your comfort. I pray with anticipation, in Jesus' compassionate name. Amen.

### **Pray (for godliness) - 15 minutes**

For the group members that feel open to it, use this time to go around the group and pray the prayers that have just been written above.