

Essential: God's Perspective

Study Guide for Small Group Discussion and Personal Application
Lynn Haven UMC – June 14, 2020 – Pastor Craig Carter

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I have learned to be content no matter what happens to me. I know what it's like not to have what I need. I also know what it's like to have more than I need. I have learned the secret of being content no matter what happens. I am content whether I am well fed or hungry. I am content whether I have more than enough or not enough. I can do all this by the power of Christ. He gives me strength. (Philippians 4:11b-13 NIRV)

Discussion Starters:

⇒ Life can be quite the roller coaster, full of ups and downs. When things do not go as planned, we are usually frustrated and disappointed. What is something recently that was difficult, caught you off guard or did not go as you had imagined? How did you react?

Key Sermon Points:

How are we to respond when life is difficult? We must seek God's perspective.

1) God's perspective is essential when we face disasters.

Read the story of Paul's shipwreck in Acts 27.

⇒ What happens to Paul? How did Paul respond to this disaster? What can we learn from his response and conduct?

⇒ Have challenges in your own life caused you to turn away from God in frustration or anger, or caused you to draw closer to Him?

2) God's perspective is essential when we face detours.

Paul had a plan of action in Acts 16, but God sent him on a detour and used Paul to accomplish His purposes somewhere else.

Paul and Silas traveled through the area of Phrygia and Galatia, because the Holy Spirit had prevented them from preaching the word in the province of Asia at that time...[Then] Paul had a vision: "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" So we decided to leave for Macedonia at once, having concluded that God was calling us to preach the Good News there. (Acts 16:6, 9-10 NLT)

⇒ Can you think of a "detour" in your own life that God used for good? What can you do to ensure that you are listening to God and following His instructions?

3) God's perspective is essential when we face delays.

I was given a thorn in the flesh...Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me...For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10 NLT)

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. (Romans 5:3-4 NLT)

The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9 CSB)

⇒ How do you typically react when facing a delay or a trial? Do you think God is more concerned with your circumstances or your character? How can you work at keeping God's perspective in trials?

Closing:

⇒ Pray for your group members and the challenges they face. Pray for patience and endurance as to face challenges, pray for courage and hope, pray for wisdom and guidance – but above all pray for God's perspective.