

## Small Groups – What does it take to live a great life?

By Pastor Richard Braun

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Week \_\_\_\_\_

### Mood Meter:

What has the past season been like for you? Rate it on a scale of 1 – 10, 10 being high. What did you do that affected you most, and how did it improve or change your life? Maybe it didn't; if so, why?

### Icebreaker

Are you living an extraordinary life right now? What is a great life? Define for the group your definition of what living an extraordinarily great life means.

### Opening Prayer – Please read Psalms 49:16-20 or pause for a short prayer before beginning

- 16 Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich,  
When the glory of his house is increased;  
17 For when he dies, he will carry nothing away;  
His glory will not descend after him.  
18 Though while he lives, he congratulates himself—  
And though *men* praise you when you do well for yourself—  
19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers;  
They shall never see the light.  
20 Man in *his* pomp, yet without understanding,  
Is like the beasts that perish.<sup>1</sup>

### Open It –

1. Who do you hold up in this world as a great person? What makes them great in your eyes?
2. Maybe you are considered a great person already by those who know you best, but if not, what one aspect of your life would you want to be known for so that people might say of you there goes a very great person? They were or are always \_\_\_\_\_. You fill in the ending.
3. One thing that keeps us from having or living a positive, significant life is regret. Do you have any regrets in your life that keep you from being a positive person? Please share one if you can.
4. How about resentment? Do you have any resentment in your life right now? When do you notice it, and how does it display itself in your life?
5. Do you feel resigned to a life of circumstances? What does control your life if you feel like you don't control it? Explain how you feel if it is another person, circumstances, a moral issue, or sin.

### Read – Philippians 4:4-9 God, through Paul, is teaching us about life and the mind we might have.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your forbearing *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. 9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The New American Standard Bible, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977.

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### **Explore It**

1. God doesn't condemn us into a negative relationship with Him. Rom 8:1 says, there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. I just read about a fellow who owned a significant corporation in So. California has 97 cars and four homes, and he lives in a 20,000 square foot house. He said life was shallow, lonely, and had little meaning. Isn't there some amount of greatness that comes with attaining a level of such stature and wealth? How could he not feel satisfied with life?

### **Get It**

1. Paul, writing from a jail cell, in verse Phil 4:4, says, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say rejoice." Paul was nearing the end of his life; in fact, it's thought he wrote the Philippians letter two years before his death. What on earth could have him so happy about life? Please explain.

2. Paul, in verse Phil 4:6, says to pray more and worry less. Is it really that simple? Does a positive life come from just praying and giving your anxiety to God? What else is required of us?

3. Phil 4:7 says, "And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." What is the peace of God, and how does it guard our hearts?

4. It sounds like we need to change our focus from self to God Himself for us to have peace from God. What is one way you do this in your life today? If you're afraid to do it, why?

5. Phil 4:8 has insight into where our focus in life ought to be. Reread verse 8, and restate it in your own words. Go around the group and have everyone do this for the group.

6. Paul seems to be bragging in Phil 4:9. He is saying do as you have seen me do, and the God of Peace will be with you. What is one attribute of Paul that you would like to claim as your own, and how can you begin to practice this behavior?

### **Apply It**

What did you learn from this study about yourself? Did you learn something different than you already knew? If so, what? Please try to explain it to the group.

How do you plan to practice what Paul is talking about in Philip 4:4-9? What is your plan?

Paul says we are not to be anxious about anything. Are you ever anxious, and if so, what are you anxious about right now? Try to set up a list on one piece of paper. Write down everything under your direct control on the left of the paper, and then on the right half of the page, write down everything God controls.

Next, pray over the left side of the list and ensure you've done your best.

All those things on the right, forget about them because you have no control over them anyway. Only God can make these things a reality.

### **Closing prayer** - please ask for praise reports or items needing prayer

Lord God, heavenly Father, we often puff ourselves up by thinking we are in control of our lives, yet we know you are in control. Please help me; help us realize that when we are weak, you are strong, but it's only through putting our trust in you. Please give us the wisdom we need to make those tough decisions about life we need to make. Change us, mold us in your image. In your name, Amen.