

# ISSUES:

## Despair

**Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 4:7** But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

*If you only look at us, you might well miss the brightness. We carry this precious Message around in the unadorned clay pots of our ordinary lives. That's to prevent anyone from confusing God's incomparable power with us. As it is, there's not much chance of that. You know for yourselves that we're not much to look at. We've been surrounded and battered by troubles, but we're not demoralized; we're not sure what to do, but we know that God knows what to do; we've been spiritually terrorized, but God hasn't left our side; we've been thrown down, but we haven't broken. What they did to Jesus, they do to us—trial and torture, mockery and murder; what Jesus did among them, he does in us—he lives! Our lives are at constant risk for Jesus' sake, which makes Jesus' life all the more evident in us. While we're going through the worst, you're getting in on the best! – 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 The Message*

**Lesson:** Read Colossians 1:3-14

- Have you ever despaired?

Despair is defined as a loss of hope. Allow people to share from their own life experiences.

- What should we do when we feel despair?

Focus on Jesus Christ. Read Philippians 4:4-9. We are called to rejoice *at all times!* The circumstances of our lives cannot control our joy or our hope. If you pray why worry and if you're going to worry then why pray? As we pray, our focus shifts to God and the peace which transcends all human understanding will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus. Our hearts need to be protected against despair and only the peace of Jesus can do that. We are also called to think about positive things. Too often we dwell on our Earthly problems instead of our Heavenly future - that can make it very difficult to be hopeful.

Colossians 3:1-4 reminds us that we have been raised with Christ so we are to set our hearts on those things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Our life is now hidden with Christ – what a lovely turn of phrase. Our spiritual life is under no threat – any attack would have to go through Jesus first! That is the reason for our hope. Nothing on Earth can ever give us any real hope, but we have been raised with Christ. No matter what happens in this life, as we share in His suffering, we will share in His eternal glory as well.

- What are some reasons for our hope?

Colossians 1:3-14 gives us a number of reasons for hope. The first is still our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and

- >Our hope is stored in Heaven and so we know it is eternal.
- >The gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world.
- >We know there are other faithful ministers (like Epaphras, Paul himself, our pastors and small group leaders) praying for us.
- >We can gain wisdom and understanding from the Holy Spirit leading us to the knowledge of God's will.
- >We can live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way.
- >We can bear fruit in every good work.
- >We can grow in the knowledge of God.
- >We can be strengthened with all power according to His glorious might.
- >We can have great endurance and patience.
- >We can share in the inheritance of the kingdom of light.

God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves. He has forgiven our sins through Jesus Christ. He has restored relationship with us. He has given us the hope that we will spend eternity with Him. No matter what happens in life – we have hope.

## Daily Devotional Reading:

- Day #1: Philippians 4
  - Focusing on God and responding to His Word:
  
- Day #2: Colossians 1
  - Focusing on God and responding to His Word:
  
- Day #3: Colossians 2
  - Focusing on God and responding to His Word:
  
- Day #4: Colossians 3
  - Focusing on God and responding to His Word:
  
- Day #5: Colossians 4
  - Focusing on God and responding to His Word: