

# SPIRITUAL: ADVERSITY L.G.

## LifeGroup Participant's Notes

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### DISCUSSION

1. In the sermon Paul quoted Craig Groeschel, “*God doesn’t only guide by what he provides, but also by what he withholds.*” Paul then added, “*God given limitations lead to spiritual multiplication.*”
  - a. Read through and discuss the quote above.
  - b. **\*Next Level\*** Share how this quote hits home for you or someone you know.
  
2. Read Peter, John and lame beggar’s story in Acts 3:1-10.
  - a. How do Peter’s financial constraints became his spiritual strength?
  - a. Can your group think of or find some other biblical examples of how spiritual scarcity leads to spiritual multiplication? We suggest dividing up into groups of 2-3 to see if you can find other examples. This is a friendly competition! Use the Appendix below to organize your examples.
  - b. To be a Christian is often not only counter-cultural, but counterintuitive.
    - i. How does Peter exemplify counterintuitive Christianity in Acts 3?
    - ii. For each of the examples you have brainstormed exemplify following God in a counterintuitive way?
  
2. The Apostle Paul is one of the Christian faith’s greatest spiritual heroes. Yet there was a time when God purposely withheld from Paul what he desired.
  - a. Read 2 Cor. 12:6-8. What is it that Paul desired?
  - b. Read 2 Cor. 12:9-10. Why did God withhold from Paul? What was God’s response to Paul?
  
3. Remember we’re discussing the idea that “*God does not only guide by what he provides but by what he withholds.*” Read through Philippians 3:1-14.
  - a. In this passage the Apostle Paul explains how he was provided with lots, and he had no lack... except for a relationship with Christ. In Philippians 3:1-6 what were Paul’s list of credentials? How would this have set him apart in that culture and time?
  - b. Imagine that you woke up tomorrow and you had everything you desired. Think through what that would look like. (**\*Next Level\*** Share it with the group!)

Would this help you live a spiritual life following Christ? Is it possible that abundance in your life might choke your hunger for Christ just as it did in the Apostle Paul's life?

- i. Paul came to know Jesus Christ dramatically and radically on the Road to Damascus (c. Acts 9). Reread through Philippians 3:7-11.
    - What is Paul's attitude towards the abundance he previously experienced (before Jesus) and his current situation (now having a relationship with Christ, yet being in chains etc.)?
    - Our experience might not be the same as Paul's (going from everything minus Jesus to Jesus minus everything) but how does Paul's response toward abundance and scarcity challenge our current goals and pursuits? Share some personal and specific examples.
4. Hana Gazdik shared how God used adversity and limitations to grow her spiritually.
- a. As a group try to recall some of the specific examples Hana described.
  - b. Everyone take out your phones or pen and paper, it's an introvert's favourite part of the night!
    - i. Write down some of your own past or present challenges or limitations.
    - ii. Let's recall how God has been faithful. Thank him for areas of provision and blessing. Are you able to thank him for the areas of lack and adversity as well?
    - iii. Are there some areas where you once said "if only" (i.e. if only I was born to better parents; if only I lived in a different time; if only I was smarter; if only had more money) that turned into a "thank you God!"
    - iv. What might radically change in your life if we started embracing these lacks and gaps as potential areas where God's strength might be shown through to ourselves and others?
    - v. **\*Next Level\*** Share some of your thoughts, learnings, or even some of the points you journalled.
  - c. During our Spiritual series we've talked a lot about spiritual disciplines as God given pathways for divine encounter. How might the spiritual disciplines of simplicity and fasting help us to embrace God given limitations?
  - d. **\*Next Level\*** During the week ahead, pick one of these options:
    - i. Personally **meditate** on Philippians 3:6-14 and share your learning with the group next week.
    - ii. **Fast** from one meal this week. Ensure you drink plenty of water and spend extra time in prayer. Share your experience with the group next week.

- iii. To practice **simplicity** find one resource you can give away this week, for example...
- Do you have something you no longer use you could give to someone who would?
  - Is there an area you could simplify your spending and donate? (i.e.: instead of buying coffee everyday for yourself, buy a stranger's coffee and share the love of God with them).
  - Could you prayerfully rethink your monthly budget?

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### PRAYER

- Praise God for his character, provision and faithfulness.
- Pray for the areas of adversity and lack that were shared by individuals in the group. Ensure everyone who shared is prayed over.
- Ask God for the ability to see areas of scarcity with spiritual eyes rather than earthly eyes.
- Pray that in the coming weeks your group would see God work through areas of weakness for his glory!

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## APPENDIX A -- Biblical Examples

<b>Biblical Character(s)</b>	<b>Passage</b>	<b>Area of Scarcity</b>	<b>Counterintuitive Spiritual Blessing</b>
Example: Peter and John	Acts 3:1-10	Lack of financial funds	Instead of providing money for the beggar he is healed by Peter and has the ability to enter and worship in the temple. We're talking a fully restored relationship with Christ! And other bystanders got to hear the gospel message!