

## LifeGroup Questions

### The Challenge

Based On: 2 Corinthians 4:7-18

March 16, 2014

### Overview Joshua 24:14-28

Clay jars were the most commonly used storage containers in ancient times. They were cheap, fragile, and usually discarded after use. This would be a very odd place to store a valuable treasure. 2 Cor. 4:7 reads: “we have this treasure in jars of clay.” The treasure that the Apostle Paul is referring to is Jesus Christ as Lord. The clay jar does not attain its value by just being a jar, but by what it contains. Those who carry around the message of Jesus Christ as Lord are containers for this precious treasure. 2 Cor 4:8 reads: “<sup>8</sup>We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup>persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.” The ability to survive these things is not based on the strength of the individual, but on the power of God residing within them. Although we are temporary, fragile jars we are not to lose heart. Clay jars were never meant to be a permanent storage unit. They will eventually give out to time and wear. Believers are to keep this earthly life in perspective of eternity.

Everything we go through, the joys and struggles, are to be weighed on God’s scale of eternity. This can only be done when things in this life are viewed through the eyes of faith. It is really easy to get caught up in the here and now. It is easy to become stressed, despaired, and overwhelmed with all the trouble this life has to offer. Weighing life situations on God’s eternal scales is challenging. It will not make the pain go away. The pain of seeing a loved one suffer through cancer will still be there. The heartache over broken relationships will still exist. The pain will not go away but keeping eternity in mind in the midst of hardship will provide hope. It is with this hope that you can be hard pressed but not crushed, perplexed but not despaired, persecuted but not abandoned, struck down but not destroyed. This hope will empower you to not lose heart and to look at your circumstances in view of eternity.

### Bible Study: 2 Corinthians 4:7-18

1. What temporary storage units do you have around your house? How would you categorize everything you put in these storage containers?
2. Throughout this passage Paul is conveying the message of weakness and power. Jar containers are weak, but God is strong. How does God use your weaknesses to show His power?
3. What steps do you take when you feel overwhelmed by all of life’s struggles? Explain how keeping an eternal perspective can help.
4. Sometimes when people are going through a tough situation they are offered good intended, but calloused comfort. Discuss a time when someone was trying to offer you comfort, but it came across wrong. What are some ways to approach those who are hurting and suffering?

5. How can you use hardships and trials you have experienced to be an encouragement to someone else?
6. 2 Cor. 4:17 reads: “<sup>17</sup> For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.” Discuss how it is possible to grow spiritually in the midst of momentary troubles.
7. How would you explain to a non-believer that the troubles of this world are “light and momentary” when compared to eternity? What examples from your own life would you use to explain the importance of keeping an eternal perspective?
8. Read 2 Cor. 12:9-10. In what ways is your faith defined by how you handle hardships? What steps can you take to be able to look at hardships/weaknesses as opportunities to rely on God’s power?