

## Food for Thought

For the week of June 30, 2013

*(Questions and Scriptures for further personal study)*

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1. The story of Joseph in prison shows that God can take a jail cell and use it to shape a life. Joseph persevered in a tough situation and God built his character in the midst of it. Today we have several advantages and resources that Joseph didn't. Read the following passages and list the resources we have that can help us persevere in any circumstance.

John 14:25-26

Acts 1:8

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

2. Joseph had every reason to be bitter and focused on his own miserable situation. Instead, this week's story showed him caring for his fellow prisoners. Read John 13:1-17 to see how Jesus showed that same willingness to help others despite the fact that in the next 24 hours Judas would betray him, the disciples would desert him, Peter would deny him, and he would be unjustly accused, tortured and killed. After reading the passage, write down the choices he made, the attitudes or actions he portrayed, and any challenges or opposition he encountered. Then answer the following questions:

What clues do you find in the passage that give an understanding of why Jesus was willing to serve in this way?

If you had been sitting around the table with the disciples, what do you think your response would have been to what Jesus did?

Does this passage give you any insight into what Jesus thinks about you even in light of your sin and disobedience?

3. Joseph saw God use him to impact others despite his circumstances. Another person who saw the same thing happen in difficult circumstances is the apostle Paul. As you read Philippians 1:12-26, write down Paul's understanding of God's purpose for his life and how that influenced the way he lived and how he thought about life's difficult circumstances.

How can Paul's perspective influence how you view your current life situations?

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### **John 14:25-26**

25 "All this I have spoken while still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. [NIV]

### **Acts 1:8**

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." [NIV]

### **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. [NIV]

### **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**

9 Two are better than one,  
because they have a good return for their labor:  
10 If either of them falls down,  
one can help the other up.  
But pity anyone who falls  
and has no one to help them up.  
11 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.  
But how can one keep warm alone?  
12 Though one may be overpowered,  
two can defend themselves.  
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. [NIV]

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### **John 13:1-17**

#### **Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet**

1 It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

10 Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. [NIV]

3. Joseph saw God use him to impact others despite his circumstances. Another person who saw the same thing happen in difficult circumstances is the apostle Paul. As you read Philippians 1:12-26, write down Paul's understanding of God's purpose for his life and how that influenced the way he lived and how he thought about life's difficult circumstances.

### **Philippians 1:12-26**

#### **Paul's Chains Advance the Gospel**

12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14 And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. 16 The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. 18 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. 20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I

am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me. [NIV]

How can Paul's perspective influence how you view your current life situations?