Please the Lord with All Your Heart
March 8 - 9, 2012

I. WELCOME, 15 mins.
Plan one to two icebreakers for the purpose of mixing around and getting group participation or getting acquainted.

II. WORSHIP, 20 mins.
Prayerfully choose a few songs to lead people into God’s presence. During this time, cell leaders will encourage cell members to listen to the Holy Spirit and release the words of strengthening, encouragement, and comfort they have received for the cell group, the church and nations. Upon each word shared, the cell leader will lead members by thanking and praising God for His promise and/or praying aloud together for the needs, etc.

During this time, the cell leader will also lead the group to pray aloud for: (1) the mission organization or daughter church that the cell group adopts (2) the church ministry needs (3) blessings for new comers, the sick.

MISSION ORGANIZATION: ___________________, their needs: ________________
(Please contact the church if you don’t know the needs of the mission organization.)

CHURCH MINISTRY:
3/17 English Ministry Coworkers Training
3/22, 24 Transformation class by Dr. Ed Silvoso
4/8 Easter Sunday Prayer Walk

III. WORD, 45 mins.
A. Sharing from last Sunday’s message.
1. What is the main message from last Sunday sermon? What did God say to you from the message?
2. How would you respond to the message? What action will you take after listening to the message?

B. Discussion Topic: “Please the Lord with All Your Heart”

Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 5: 1 - 13
Memory Verse: So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:9-10 NIV)

I. Temporary Vs. Eternity (2 Co. 4:16 - 5:3)
1. Your thoughts determine your deed: In 2 Co. 4: 16 -18, Paul clearly shows us how we may not be lingered over by the worldly thoughts. The key is to be able to tell apart temporary from eternity. Once we have the spiritual understanding in mind, we know we are but sojourners of this world – just like how we stay in a hotel or go camping, we check out when the time is up. We would not spend too much time or money on the temporary dwellings; neither would we carry everything we have during the journey. We will sure to optimize what to the trip and only brings what’s needed.

2. Open spiritual eyes to see the value of eternity: Paul compares our physical body in this life to a tent. Tents are meant to be temporary living quarters, not permanent and they tend to deteriorate. (also see Heb. 11:9) He further uses the perfect and everlasting building, which is made by God rather than by human hands, to show us that God had planned something better for us: The life is eternal and the body is unblemished. Once the eternal mindset is established, our priority, focus, and desire will all be altered, and that is exactly what we believers should go for. The transformation in our spiritual view will take us to the next level. Instead of weighting down our ambition in this world, we renew our ideas towards this life. Our worldly dreams and hopes may appear to be dashed forever, yet our faith is deepened in Him. What we see used to be important is no longer so after our decision in our walk with Him.

3. Long to receive award from God: Paul advises us in 2 Co.5:3 - 4 “longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.” Just as what’s said in Col. 3:2, “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.” What’s “clothed” in our minds will emerge as priority we set in our lives. Are we to wear the heavenly dwellings or be naked? Whatever we choose, our decision will eventually appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

4. Live out the glory in your life: Though we groan and are burdened in this earthly tent, Jesus didn’t ask God Father to remove us from it for a purpose. If we understood that even we live in the world, we don’t belong to the world; our view of life will be more optimistic and positive. The transitory point of view helps us to make it our goal to please God by fulfilling our duty as sons of God; we do everything for God, we shine out to be God’s walking testimony, yet; we are not succumbed to worldly troubles but live out with God’s glory.

II. Please God and Holding on to the Sure and Certain Hope (2 Co. 5:4 – 5)
1. To be or not to be: “For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.” In verse 4, Paul describes the inconvenience and incompetence (sickness, suffering, &toil) of our flesh being the root causes of all our groans and burdens.
“Clothed with our heavenly dwelling” refers to the revitalized life through Christ. Aren’t we all torn between the dilemma as Paul also depicted in Php. 1: 23-24, “I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.” How we wish to depart from this world and be with the Lord forever, and yet, we Christians all have callings and duties to be fulfilled before our departure.

2. Continue to Steadfast Hope: There is one very important hope: God made us to be more than mortal – He made us to be alive, “so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.” How we all are threatened by the greatest.swallower: death and grave (Ps. 69:15 &Pr. 1:12). For a believer, our earthly bodies are temporary and can be destroyed, but Paul tells us to set our hearts on that day when through death, the body will be swallowed up into a new body, a better body, a glories body, a resurrected and living body, when we live forever and ever with our Lord.

3. The Hope Outweighs the Torment of Our Lives: As we fixed our eyes on the eternal glory, our hearts won’t be dragged down by the adversity and the threat of death. For if we do not have any concerns on mundane affairs, there won’t be room for the earthly threats. Therefore, the troubles and burdens this earthly body would not encourage us to hate this life, but to desire the eternal and glorious life in Christ.

4. The Lord is our true helper (2 Co. 5:5): God has given us His precious and powerful Word. He also cultivates and strengthens our character while we face times of difficulty and helplessness. As we walk in confidence with Him, we are able to tell from temporary to eternity and aim our goal to heavenly dwelling. We will also learn to prioritize our lives – instead of focusing on the temporary and pointless life of tent, we get to foretaste the triumphant and resurrected power of Christ. This spiritual fact assures us that life can actually swallow despair, hopelessness, and death. By this, He “guarantees what is to come.” (2 Co. 1:22 & Eph.1: 14)

III. Set it Goal to Lead a Godly Life (2 Co. 5:6 – 13)

1. God has a perfect plan for us: As we come to realize the difference between temporary and eternity, we shall walk in the confident conviction and live a different life. We set it goal to please God in every aspect of our lives. It may appear as we lose, but in fact we gain perpetually, because “we live by faith, not by sight.” Trust in the Lord and believe that He has the best plan in store for us.

2. The circumstance will change, but God’s will never changes: If we view the circumstances by sight instead of by faith, what we are able to accomplish will be impacted and succumb to what we see. We praise the Lord and at his service when all things come to our way. We stop doing so when things go the opposite way. Our wavering attitude cannot please God but please ourselves. We fail to walk on God’s way when we account ourselves on sight. God did not require us to understand His will, but simply needed us to obey it and grow our trust in Him.

3. A meaningful life comes from delight in God’s sight: Any believer should please the Lord with all his heart disregard life or death. As we make our goal to please God by walking on His path, whether we are at home in body or away from it, we will always be confidently and powerfully shape the meaning, purpose and direction of our lives. By doing that, it is sure that we face God with confident conviction and lead a meaningful and motivated life.

4. Welcome the work of God: We can never please God with our own work and effort. Always seek God’s will and allow God to work on us. “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Eph. 2:10)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is on your camping checklist? Will you bring everything from home? Why?

2. What are considered temporary from every facet of your life? What are eternal? How do you allocate your energy and time on these things? How would you adjust them if you have a chance?

3. Do you have a glorious hope while you are troubled and burdened in the earthly tent? Share how true this glorious hope is to you, and how you prioritize your life style and value to back up this glorious hope.

4. Would it be possible when you set your goal to please God, you may sometimes not please people? Share if you have similar experience.

5. What would you do if it’s too difficult to please God?

6. Cell group leader please bring your members before God with today’s Bible verses. Encourage everyone to lead a life to please God. (2 Corinthians 5:1-13).

Prayer:

Dear Lord, we thank you and we praise you! There is an eternal way in you, and to whom else should I need to follow? I pray that you would help me to please God with all my heart. Strengthen me when I am weak; help me not to be like the young officer who sadly walked away from Jesus without even asking for help. I pray in Jesus victorious name, Amen!

I. WORK (Pray for each other), 10 mins.

Please break into group of 2 or 3 to pray for each other’s needs.