

Life Group Topic #34
Keep Hope Alive

WELCOME: (15 minutes)

What are the top 3 things you are most thankful for at this time in your life?

WORSHIP: (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God- including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, and other art forms.

WORD APPLICATION: (45 minutes)

Briefly read or paraphrase the following sermon summary before moving to the heart of this section: the discussion around the application questions.

Meditate on the following passage: II Peter 1:3&4

By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. ⁴ And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

God has chosen to give us everything we need for living a godly life. It all comes about through our knowledge of Jesus and our knowledge of His promises. The promises of God become a key to me experiencing the hope that He wants for me---the hope that expects something new from God, keeps looking for it and dares to stay open to what He will reveal.

Optional: You could also meditate on Isaiah 54:1-4

¹ *"Sing, O barren woman,
you who never bore a child;
burst into song, shout for joy,
you who were never in labor;
because more are the children of the desolate woman
than of her who has a husband,"
says the LORD.*

² *"Enlarge the place of your tent,
stretch your tent curtains wide,
do not hold back;
lengthen your cords,
strengthen your stakes.*

³ *For you will spread out to the right and to the left;
your descendants will dispossess nations
and settle in their desolate cities.*

⁴ *"Do not be afraid; you will not suffer shame.
Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated.*

Word Application Questions:

- 1. Read out loud and then meditate on I Peter 1: 3-4 or Isaiah 54:1-4. What key words or phrases jump out at you? What is God saying to you through them?**
- 2. In what ways might God be asking you (or your Life Group) to “enlarge the place of your tent, lengthen your chords, strengthen your stakes?” (Is 54:2)**
- 3. Of all the appalling threats overhanging the human race, the greatest enemy is apathy. Ronald Hagen describes apathy as *a feeling of tentativeness rising out of suspicion that nothing can be done, that nothing can be changed*. Has there been a time in your life when this kind of apathy gripped your life?**
- 4. St. Augustine observed that hope has two daughters: anger and courage. Hopeful people have a holy anger with the way things are...this is not what God designed, this is not what He desires, and this is not what He deserves. But they also have the God-given courage to be agents of change. If Augustine was right about hope’s two daughters, which of the two daughters would most of us struggle with?**
- 5. Henri Nouwen suggests in his book, *With Open Hands*, that we must constantly expect something new from God. If Ephesians 3:20 is right, what might it be that we would dare to hope?**
- 6. How could we pray together about each other’s hopes?**

WITNESS: (15 minutes)

This section is a vision-casting time designed to get the group strategizing and making concrete plans towards reaching outward to a lost world. Relational outreach always has the goal of ultimately enfolding those we reach into the Life Group.