

hope.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Welcome!

Over the next several weeks I invite you to enjoy this study of Hope. Whether this is your first time going through a group Bible study, or you're a seasoned Bible study expert, I believe you'll be refreshed and encouraged as you read God's Word.

In these lessons we'll look at key passages that deal with hope from the top down – God's plan and how He sees us...and hope from the bottom up – Our perspective and how we see Him. Through the pages of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation the story of hope is constant theme, and the theme revolves around God's plan to redeem us through His Son, Jesus. Since the dawn of time and man's fall from grace in the Garden, we've been looking for hope. And yet, with all the looking and longing don't we each know someone dear to our heart who has lost their hope? Perhaps even you have felt a sense of hopelessness to some degree in your own life.

This study grew out of my own personal experience with losing hope and finding it again. My story brought me through the pain of infertility, struggles with depression, an abusive marriage, and the destructive impact of addiction. For years I walked through my days under the cover of "Christian" woman and wife...but I had a nagging sense in my heart that there was really no hope for healing in my life and relationships. I believed in the big picture of hope - That God had redeemed us all - that there was a future and a hope for all who called on His name - that one day all would be made right. Hope in God for the big stuff? No problem. But in my day-to-day life, I had lost hope on a smaller scale. Hope for me. For my marriage. For my heart. Hope for me on a personal level? I had all but let that go. I've learned a lot through my journey, and I'm still learning so much every day. I'm looking forward to sharing in God's Word with you!

Let's grow together!

For starters, you're part of this first edition of the Hope Study! Thank you! As my first foray into writing a study, we'll be writing and digging into the Scripture together. Each time we gather you'll receive the new week's study materials to add to this notebook. You'll want to have the following with you during the week as well as at our Bible study get togethers:

- Your Bible – I'll be quoting mostly from the NIV, but any translation is fine. I recommend that you get a good Study Bible – I like my NIV Study Bible or the MacArthur Study Bible
- A Journal – or pages added to this notebook to journal in
- Pen and highlighter

In my role as a women's pastor I get asked a lot of questions, but there's one in regards to Bible study that comes over and over: "What do you use to help you study the Bible?"

That's a great question! Here's what I use...

- A Good Study Bible – I mentioned that above, but it's so helpful, I didn't want you to miss that. Ryrie, ESV, Scofield, NIV, MacArthur, these are among the best and the only ones I actively recommend.

And these websites:

- BlueLetterBible.com
- BibleGateway.com
- StudyLight.org

You could purchase any one of a number of excellent commentaries, dictionaries, and lexicons, but all the ones I use are freely accessible at the above websites and even on your phone as an app! Go, have fun, and check some out. A great way to start is to go to their home page and type a word like "hope", and do a search on it.

Here's how you will want to approach your study time:

Listen. As you read you are not only seeing the words of God but are listening to what He has said. Each study session is created to give you time in the Word – just you and God. No commentaries. No explanations. This might seem hard for you if you're brand new to reading the Bible, but it's a skill you'll develop. I'm confident of that. Pray before you begin –not sure how? Read Psalm 119:18, Proverbs 1:7 or James 1:5 – then read the Bible passage and follow that lesson's notes to guide you in thinking through and understanding what you've read. Then...

Look. Look again at the Word and make some observations to understand deeper. What figures of speech are there to understand? What about the culture of the time? Are there any allegories? Who was the intended audience? Who was the writer? The Bible was written largely from a Hebrew Middle Eastern mindset – that's very different from our 21st century western mindset! We'll want to

understand the Scripture from the author's point of view and not through the lens of this modern era and our sensitivities. Use your journal to write these observations down.

LIVE. Finally, what does it all mean for us personally? Clearly, the nature of this study on Hope is to not only understand verses on "hope" or just see examples of hopefulness in the Bible, but to move from the words on the page through our hearts and out into our lives. God's word isn't just a great book. It's not inspirational literature or self-help.

God's Word is alive and powerful. It's sharper than a sword as it slices to the core of our hearts and reveals what's really true about us in light of who God says we are. How empty it would be to first approach the Word with a "what can this do for me today?" mentality! And yet, we also must not just read to understand...we must read to apply. And that will mean making a shift in our thinking and most likely a change in our behavior as well. Not every verse was written to you, but every word was written for you, and there's a difference. One of my favorite Bible teachers, Kay Arthur, says it this way:

"When you know what God says, what He means, and how to put His truths into practice, you will be equipped for every circumstance of life."

— What can you expect? —

This is a Bible study. Simply put, we'll be studying the Bible.

We'll **Read** the Bible. We'll **Write** from the Bible. We'll prayerfully **Respond** to the Bible.

This study is organized around our bi-weekly meetings. There are at least 13 days between each of our group Bible studies. I've set up this study the lessons will take about 30-40 minutes each to complete. If you read through your study, taking time for church, your Life Group, or other mid-week study, you'll find it much better than doing the entire study the day before we meet! You have 168 hours in your week...imagine if you tithed (giving 10%) from your time. That would be 16.8 hours a week in study...that's more than two hours a day! What if you gave even 5% of your time? Or 3%? Just set aside the time, and you'll be so happy you did.

By the way, don't think you're the only one who gets behind and has to do all that catch-up the day before...or the day of! It happens to me too! And never, ever skip coming to our study because you didn't do the study...come!! We have great fellowship and teaching for you to receive! Why not pray right now and ask the Father to help you make time and priority for this study? Pace yourself and get an accountability partner to help so you stay committed to being in the Word daily.

Are you ready?

I am! I have prayed over every moment of time in my preparations, and I have prayed for you, dear sister, as well. My heart is that we would come away from our time of Bible study not just with a better understanding of hope, but that we would above all things know our Father and His truth.

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31

Ready to be free? Me too! Let's abide in His Word together! See you soon, and until then, know that you are loved and prayed for,

Jennifer Richmond

Women's Pastor, La Mirada Christian Church

p.s. You can reach me at Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com or 562.755.4964



Hope Study Teaching Notes

~ Session One ~

Welcome!

Why do we actually **study** the Bible?

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What should we look to get when we study?

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Critical Thinking -vs- Critical Spirit

|

My Part and God's Part

|

Let's Take a Look - Psalm 33:1-22

Written to _____ Written by _____

Why? _____

What does it say about God? _____

What does it say about me? _____

Discussion Questions for Week One

Welcome! Let's get to know one another!

What are you looking forward to in this Bible study?

When you were a child, did you find it easy or hard to hope for your future? Why?

Who has been the most inspirational and hope-giving person in your life? (Someone you personally know or someone you have never met...historical or present day)

Setting aside time every day to be in the Word, in prayer and in Bible study is such an important part of your spiritual growth. Do you have any questions about how to do this? Any tips to share on doing a Bible study even with a busy and demanding schedule?

Starting tomorrow, you'll have studies written to give you time in the Word and to draw you closer to God over the next two weeks. Set aside 30-40 minutes a day to read and complete your study for that day. Got a busy day? No problem. Combine two days together the next time you can study.

Need help?

Call on God. Ask God for wisdom and understanding. James 1:5

Call your small group leader(s) Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Call a friend in your small group

Name: _____ Phone: _____

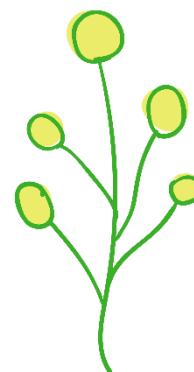
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Name: _____ Phone: _____

Call or email Pastor Jennifer. 562.755.4964 Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com



"My Hope is Built on Nothing Less"
by Edward Mote, 1797-1874

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, His covenant, and blood
Support me in the whelming flood;
When every earthly prop gives way,
He then is all my Hope and Stay.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found,
Clothed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne!
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.



You are loved
AND
prayed for.

~ Day ONE ~

It's a great day!

Scripture Focus: Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, John 12

Cross references: Zechariah 9:9, Isaiah 62:11

"Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Matthew 21:9



Do you remember the last time you felt like everything was simply perfect? It was a great day...a perfect day! Like the scene from the "Sound of Music" when Maria's twirling and singing across fields of green under a perfectly blue sky, *"The hills are alive...!"*

Let's set the stage for our first lesson by peeking in on what was probably at the time one of the most thrilling days of all history. A day so filled with hope that, had she been there, Maria would have been twirling and singing and romping her happy heart out. A day that if you were alive and had witnessed the events in person, would have been one of those, "I remember exactly what I was wearing and who I was with" kind of days! The day is referred to as "The Triumphal Entry" or "Palm Sunday", and it surely felt triumphant! It was great day for HOPE . . .the ultimate day! The kind of day that makes you think, "Maybe it's all going to be ok now." Read the following verses and compare the details of this great day noting below any interesting details...**who** was mentioned, **where** did this take place, **when** is the event happening, etc. Especially interesting is that the author of each of these books* is reporting on the exact same event. Do you see any details in one account missing from another? Jot your thoughts and observations here:

WHO

WHAT

WHEN

WHERE

- Matthew 21:1-11*
- Mark 11:1-11*
- Luke 19:28-44*
- John 12:12-19

**These three books of the Bible are referred to as the "synoptic gospels" because they summarize the events of Jesus' life from a similar point of view.*

If ever there was a "things are all going to be ok" kind of day in the Bible, surely this was it!



You're in Jerusalem...maybe you've been to visit Jesus...seen a healing...heard of hundreds more. All your life you've lived under the oppression of the Romans, and the weight of the history of oppression is a defining part of your life, your family, your past and foreseeable future. And now, you're seeing Jesus come through Jerusalem. His name is murmured in the crowd...and called out...and shouted...JESUS!! Jesus!! Hosanna! Hosanna! Salvation has come!! If people "high-fived" back then, I think there would have been high fives all around! This was quite an event! Imagine a sporting event where your team was the big winner...you might have a sense of how this day felt. Jesus - in person - the Man Himself! Be still my heart! Whataday! Take a minute to imagine and write about the scene. Close your eyes, breathe it in, and

imagine. . .

- What are you hearing?
 - What are you seeing?
 - Who is with you?
 - How do you feel?
- 1) *Could it be?* Is this the Savior? Is everything going to be alright? After reading these four accounts of the Triumphal Entry, what three similarities in the writer's accounts strike you? What differences?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
 - 2) As you read through the passages above from the different accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) you may have noticed footnotes that marked when an Old Testament book was quoted. It is so exciting to see that 500 years before Jesus came riding through Jerusalem, his triumphal entry was predicted!

Read Zechariah 9:9

- How is the coming "king" described? _____
- On what is he riding? _____

Does this strike you as odd? It does me. Kings are proud. Stately. Commanding. Riding in on a powerful, white steed...not a lowly donkey.



Read Isaiah 62:11

- Who is coming?
-

- What are they shouting?
-

Remember what the people were shouting while Jesus rode in on that donkey? They were shouting, “Hosanna!” and hosanna means?? That’s right . . .

“Salvation has come!!”

Everyone’s excited! Who wouldn’t be? Miracles! Powerful, authoritative teaching! A huge following! Crowd frenzy! All this culminating as they surely knew He must be a prophet! My goodness, they “hailed Him as their coming King!” So much excitement and hope and they’re all there to witness it firsthand! Salvation has come! What does this have to do with **hope** for you? Salvation has come. Have you ever just wanted those words to be true for you or a friend? Write your thoughts here about that moment in your life:

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- 3) As we begin our study and focus through God’s Word on hope, what are you hopeful for? What are you interested in gaining from this study? In a few weeks, you’ll be looking back on this first week. You’ll have learned some, shared some, gained insights and prayerfully, matured in your personal walk with God. What would you like to gain? Write a few sentences expressing your hopes for this study on hope.

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By the way . . .

There are eleven days in this study. Days 6 & 7 are combined so you can read them in one or two sittings. Also, the final days are a bit longer than the rest, so be sure to plan ahead. The big meat of our study is in those days, so be sure to set aside the time for them.

~ Jennifer



If you have time...

Do a word study on the word “hosanna.” You can use your Bible study books, websites, an internet search. What interesting things came up for you? What does that word mean in Greek? In Hebrew? Was it ever used before in the Bible? Anywhere else in history? Write what you find here:

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When skeptics ask...

Did Jesus really fulfill prophecy? If someone claims to be someone or be able to do something, he better make good on that, right? If not, he’s a fake or a liar. Two of the objections to Jesus being the Savior are that he wasn’t really who he claimed to be and he didn’t really fulfill prophecies from the Old Testament. If someone were to challenge you today about Jesus, what prophecies about Him could you point to after having done this study that would help them see that he was who he said he was? Write those verse references here so you’ll have them handy in the future. Also, highlight those verses in the Bible with a color that will help you remember these verses in the future. (We’re going to assume that the person you’re talking to is willing to accept the Bible as a reliable historical document at this point. There’s plenty of evidence to support that it is, but we’ll not be going into that quite yet. If you’re interested in learning more about this topic, please get “Evidence That Demands a Verdict” by Josh McDowell at your bookstore.)

What about you? Do you have a skeptic in your life? Maybe you **are** the skeptic. Can I assure you of two things, my friend?

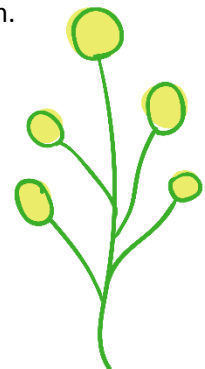
One – Jesus loves skeptics! Doubters, double checkers, “faith challenged” - you are in good company.

Two – Ask! Dig! Check things out! I am confident that the Word of God will hold up to any scrutiny.

Please don’t hesitate to reach out if you’d like to talk about things. I’d be happy to listen.

You can call me any time.... 562.755.4964

Jennifer





Hope
deferred
makes the
Heart sick.

But a
desire fulfilled
is a
Tree of
Life!

~ Day TWO ~

And then, everything changes..

Scripture Focus: Matthew 26:47-27:66: Proverbs 13:12: 1 Pet. 5:7

Cross references: Zechariah 9:9, Isaiah 62:11

"The Via Dolorosa - The Way of Suffering"

- 1) Read Matthew 26:47-27:68 which tells of Jesus' arrest through his death. Write down word or phrase or even draw the **emotions** that you imagine the disciples (picture yourself as one) and Jesus might be feeling at each section. (Your Bible has these verses divided and labeled, so use these as a guide.)

- 2) Re-read Matthew 26:56 "...then all the disciples deserted Him and fled..." (NIV)
Who or what were they running from? _____

Honestly, would you have fled? Why or why not?

- 3) What **one word** sums up for you how you think the followers of Christ felt when Jesus was betrayed and escorted away from the garden? _____
- 4) How about you? What information or feeling about things would you have needed to firm your resolve to stay?



5) Read Proverbs 13:12...Write it here:

Double underline the words: "heart" and "sick"

Does this verse from Proverbs capture the mood the disciples must have been feeling? It surely does for me.

Dejected. Dashed. Discouraged. All their hopes – deferred.
Only they don't know their hope is simply deferred.
From their perspective their hopes are completely
gone.

6) Where is your heart today, my friend? Have you fled physically or emotionally or even spiritually from the pain and shock of the circumstances you're surrounded by? Are you heartsick over a devastating loss? A broken relationship? A prodigal child? A crushing diagnosis? Take a moment to speak aloud to God what you are feeling. He hears. He sees. Name the "hope deferred" on your heart today and lay it before the Father. "Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you." (1 Pet. 5:7 NLT)

My deferred hope: _____

7) Now...Go back above to Proverbs 13:12...What does it say comes when desire/longing is fulfilled/comes?

8) What words does this imagery of a "tree of life" bring to your mind? Write several here:

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Today, as we close this portion of our study, would you take a moment to pray that God would reveal to you the truth of His hope.

His Hope.

Not your idea of hope.

Not what your friends might say.

Not what your pastor, or mentor, or a book says...

Think of God and what He wants you to understand about His Hope.

Read Psalm 37:4. Write it here:



What comes before our longings being fulfilled? _____

i'm praying for you, sister. that you would not be clouded in any way in your understanding. i'm praying that you would have a clear idea of what it means to have all your longings fulfilled.

i'm praying that you would allow God to fine tune your longings so that what you desire would be what He desires.





Delight yourself in the
Lord

and he will give you
the desires of your
heart.

Psalm 37:4

~ DAY THREE ~

Where's Your Hope During the Dark Fridays of Life?

Scripture References: Matthew 27:32-66: Psalm 13 and various others for personal study

— *Either* you've been there or you know someone who has, but during many seasons in our lives, feeling confused and discouraged by the events going on in life is not the exception...it really seems more like the rule. You've heard the saying, "It's always darkest just before the dawn." Maybe a friend offered that phrase to cheer you up. And as sweet as that is, in real life the sun doesn't always feel like it's come up. Life is hard. Good people get very sick and leave us too soon. Unexpected losses rob our dreams. A prodigal child breaks our heart. A spouse breaks their vows. So many times we simply feel at a loss to wrap our minds around the difficulties around us. Where is God? Is there any hope?

Sister, as we've been reading through these events, my prayer has been that you would not just read the words from the Bible but enter into the moments with your heart. That you would think about the details and really feel what these disciples must have felt. It's been dark. It's Friday. **Read Matthew 27:32-66 and write in your journal your observations as you read.**

Where is the hope?

It's gone.

It's in a tomb.

It's sealed up.

Guarded by the enemy.

It's Friday....and hope has dwindled. It's Friday, and it's darker than the darkest day and there doesn't seem to be any hope at all for any dawn that would matter. Even if the sun came up, it would still be dark. Hang in there with me and read on...You see, way back before our King of kings was born, the first great king of Israel, Jesus' great-great-great-great-grandfather David, shared his desperate broken heart in Psalm 13. It might just be the darkest, saddest, most desperate of all his psalms. He cries out:

¹ *How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?*

How long will You hide Your face from me?

² *How long shall I take counsel in my soul,*

Having sorrow in my heart daily?

How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

No matter where you are as a Christian in your faith journey, no matter how weak or strong you feel your spiritual maturity is, you can reach such a desperate place that you actually feel you've been completely abandoned by everyone —even God. Psalm 13 is exactly this feeling. Take a moment to read Psalm 13 journaling your thoughts and observations as you read.

Sometimes we have to hit bottom, go through dark waters, or face devastation in our lives to really see Him even though He's been there all the time. We'll dig deeper into the Psalms later in our study. But I wanted you to give you a peek today. The Psalms are honest - often anguished cries of brokenness. Oh, there's plenty of happiness too, but the heights of the happiness are more real because of the depths of the anguish.

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**W**hy is it that we relate to people who share their uglies with us? Their mishaps and mess-ups? If you went to a luncheon and heard a women's speaker address the ladies in attendance, and all she said was how lovely and picture-perfect her life had been to date, how would you feel? Jealous? Irritated? Discouraged?

We relate to testimonies of hope through hardship because we have a sense in our heart that the way things are isn't how it was supposed to be. Somehow this all feels broken. Someone expected this or that to happen and their expectations were foiled by injustice or illness or war or death...but here's the other deal, what we read in the Bible is not mere "story." It's reality, and it's truth, and it's not only written to ground us **in** reality and truth but to prepare us for an even **better** reality and truth – eternal life with Him! When we grasp the big picture of our eternal hope, then even on the darkest "Friday" seasons of our life we can surely have substantial hope.

Here's the thing, God made us for story and stories are compelling only if they move us through from a problem to a solution. From despair to hope! They're only compelling if they have a hero facing off and defeating a villain. They're only compelling if we can actually relate on some level to the challenges being faced. That's where we find hope. If they got through it, maybe I will too.

Tomorrow is the day everything changes as we get to read about the Resurrection, but keep in mind, you have the advantage of already knowing the outcome...Jesus does win! Love does win! Hope is realized and boy, is it ever!

But today in our reading we're just going to park it here on Friday. On darkness. On the not knowing. On the heaviness of waiting.

Let's be ok to meditate on the hard reality that sometimes – many times – what we want to happen in the way we had hope would happen...just. Does. Not. Happen.

Choose one or more of the following passages to read and journal about. Answer the following questions and be prepared to share with your Bible study group your thoughts on hope based on what you read.

- Genesis 3:1-24
- Genesis 50:1-21
- 2 Chronicles 34:1-33

1) Who are the main people focused on in this account?



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2) What has gone wrong?

|

3) What's going right?

|

4) What role (if any) did the people involved have in making things right?

|

5) What was God's role?

|

6) Think about what you are experiencing today as the "wrong" in your life or perhaps in the life of a loved one. After today's readings in the Word what insight have you gained?

|

7) Where do you see hope in the chapter you read?

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It's not always nice reading the dark parts of the story. But the point of this Bible study isn't to make you proficient in the nice parts of the Bible. The point is to tighten your relationship with and response to your heavenly Father! To bring Him glory and to better live out the great calling to love Him with your heart, soul, mind and strength and to love others in the same way! How can we truly do that unless we know Him? How can we best serve others and minister to them unless we have a deep reservoir of His Word from which to draw! That's the important focus. Pray that today's study continues to cement in your mind the truth and comfort of God's word so you can better offer hope to others.

Remember, the darkness of the tomb comes before the most joyous light – it truly was darkest before the dawn. And in the words of that famous minister, "It's Friday...but Sunday's comin'!"

*I love you, sister, and I can't wait to fellowship with you at our next study!*

*I'm praying for you today in whatever "Friday" you are facing*



you make known to me  
the path of life; you  
will fill me with  
JOY IN YOUR PRESENCE,  
with eternal pleasures  
AT YOUR RIGHT HAND.  
*psalm 16:11*

# ~ DAY FOUR ~

## The Resurrection!

Key Scripture References: Luke 24:1-12, Psalm 22, Psalm 16, Acts chapters 2 and 13

It's been a heavy couple of days...are you ready to rejoice?

Read Luke 24:1-12 highlighting your Bible and taking notes in your journal as you read.

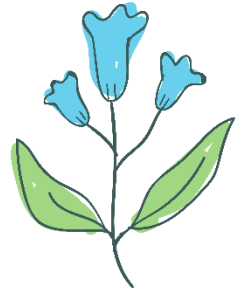
- 1) Aside from the obvious (Jesus is Alive!) what details did Luke include that were interesting to you?

WHO

WHAT

WHEN

WHERE



Read the following verses:

Luke 9:21-22

Luke 9:43-45

Luke 18:31-34

Luke 20:14-15

What did Jesus predict?

Now read these:

Psalm 22

Isaiah 53

Psalm 16:9-11

What did the Jewish Scriptures (Old Testament) predict?

Did you know that pictures and prophecies of the death and resurrection and Jesus conquering Satan are throughout the Old Testament? Really! In fact, literally from the first book! Read Genesis chapter 3.

- 2) What prophecy to you read here? (Key words: snake, crush, head, heel)

- 3) In Psalms you can find several foreshadows, but no psalm is quoted more frequently in the New Testament than Psalm 22. A thousand years before Jesus, David painted a powerful image of the Promised Savior (Messiah) hanging on the cross and even more details. Open your Bible to Psalm 22 and read and write notes detailing what the verses say about His death:

Psalm 22:1

Psalm 22:7-8

Psalm 22:14

Psalm 22:16

Psalm 22:18

John 20:27

What does Psalm 22:31 say about God's righteousness?

*If you have time ...*

As you read Psalm 22, note the footnote letters on each verse in your Bible. These will take you to the New Testament fulfillment of each of these verses. Take a minute to jot below those fulfillments written about in the gospels. For me, this is one of the most exciting times in my Bible study! Like finding the corners of the puzzle...then the edges...the middle pieces all start coming together!

I love God's Word!





Read Psalm 16. David, the “man after God’s own heart”, wrote this Psalm that pointed to Jesus’ conquering of death. Psalm 16 is quoted by Peter in Acts chapter two when he’s addressing the crowd in Jerusalem only a few weeks after Jesus was resurrected. Paul also quotes from Psalm 16 in Acts 13:32-35 when he’s reviewing Old Testament scripture with Jews and Gentiles reminding them that, “What God promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us...by raising up Jesus.”

4) What did Paul say in Acts 13 that God had promised?

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5) Re-read Luke 24:6 and write it here:

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Grab your favorite color highlighter or pencil and mark the most powerful words in this verse to you.

Jesus and the prophets before Him had predicted his death AND resurrection many times. A helpful search on [www.BibleGateway.com](http://www.BibleGateway.com) is to look up “resurrection” and read all the verses that mention it. Then **highlight** these in your study Bible in a color that will help you see them in the future. Also, your study notes from your Bible will point back to the Old Testament on many of these verses in the New Testament so you can connect the prophecies and their fulfillments.

What’s on your heart today, my friend? Reading through the prophecies fulfilled, hearing what God says about righteousness, how does this bring you hope? Write your thoughts here. Maybe take a minute to artfully pen the words to a verse that particularly spoke to you.





# ~ DAY FIVE ~

## Who does that?

Key Scripture References: Matthew 20:17-19: 1 Corinthians 15:14-19

**Who predicts their own death?**

**Who predicts they'll be raised from the dead?**

**Who makes such bold statements like, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!" — Matthew 20:17-19**

**Hint: This is one of those times when the correct answer is "Jesus."**

Jesus predicted these very specific events. But if things didn't turn out the way He said they would, He'd have been remembered as a charismatic but delusional teacher or a deceptive liar. The matter of truth in Jesus' claims has to be dealt with. Not only that, but if we don't get this right, then we may as well pack up this study and go read a romance novel instead. **This is the hook on which everything – ev.er.y.thing. – hangs!** C.S. Lewis (If you've never read his stuff, get thee to a bookstore! He's my favorite author!) said it this way in his now famous "trilemma":

Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a **fool**, you can spit at him and kill him as a **demon** or you can fall at his feet and call him **Lord and God**, but let us not come with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. . . . Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God. (*Mere Christianity*, 55-56)

- 1) According to C.S Lewis, what are the three options in this trilemma?
  - a. Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_ or
  - b. Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_ or
  - c. Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_



And the apostle Paul in his letter to the church in Corinth said:

*And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can't be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! **And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.** (1 Cor 15:14-19 NLT)*

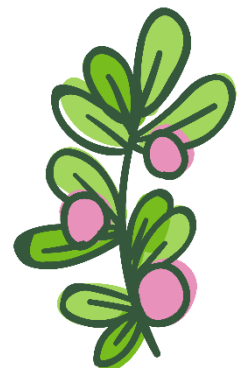
- 2) According to Paul, what are we if Christ did not raise from the dead?
- \_\_\_\_\_

Do you see how everything hinges on this one event, the resurrection?

- 3) When it comes to our hope we have NONE and are to be pitied more than anyone if the resurrection didn't happen. Log in to Facebook, or go to a self-help book, or watch a talk show...what do you find in abundance there? Quotes and ideas about living a happy, fulfilled life...Quotes that offer encouragement, advice and hope. But – and this is a big 'but' – what is that advice founded upon? Anything of real significance? What do you think? What is the world's hope founded upon?

- 4) Before we move any further in our study about hope, would you go back to one of your very first entries? Go back to page 11 where you wrote why you wanted to do this study and what you hoped to gain from it. Take a moment to re-read that, and if you need to, write it down here: What do you hope to learn...

- 5) If you were asked today how you knew God was real and active in your life, what would you say? Actually, if you were asked why you believed any one particular thing about God or Jesus or the Bible, what would you say? What Bible verse or life experience would you share?



## Consider this . . .

If your hope in your future is based on who you believe God to be, your hope is just wishful thinking, and as Paul said “your faith is useless” and you are to be “more pitied than anyone in the world.”

If the resurrection didn't happen, all the warm feelings...  
all the good thoughts about Jesus are empty.



If Christ didn't actually raise from the dead, then what we believe is as meaningful as a child's belief in the Tooth Fairy.

Hope is tragic if it's just wishful thinking.

Our next session will dig deeper into this. For now, close your time with prayer. Ask God to give you a heart to understand and the words needed to share your answer with others.



**Jesus** RESTORER OF HOPE Lord of Lords  
 THE WORD Holy One  
 Bread of Life Master BRANCH  
 STAR ALPHA & OMEGA Teacher  
 Dayspring Prince of Peace  
 Son of Man COMFORTER  
 MORNING everLASTING SHILOH Anchor  
 FATHER The Almighty Light  
 Counselor TRUE VINE of the  
 MESSIAH THE LIFE HIGH World  
 Giver of Life PRIEST  
 BRIGHT & Blessings THE BELOVED  
 FAITHFUL & TRUE WITNESS Shield ROCK  
 Mediator Wonderful Counselor  
 King of Kings  
 The Resurrection The Amen  
 Immanuel  
 LAMB OF GOD Healer I AM LIVING WATER  
 Good Shepherd Savior Redeemer  
 Advocate The Way, the Truth & the Life  
 ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

# ~ DAYS SIX & SEVEN ~

## True Hope or Wishful Thinking?

Key Scripture References: Hebrews 6:18-20; Luke 24:7; 1 Peter 3; Psalm 34; 2 Corinthians 11:22-33;  
Philippians 4:13

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*Every week* I meet with women who are seeking out prayer and counsel regarding a heartache or trial they are going through...

A sister in Christ who wept and asked, "I just don't see any light at the end of this tunnel. Is there any hope?"

The young married woman sitting next to me, grasping tissues in her trembling hands, pouring out the story of her broken marriage, "Why did he leave me?"

The mother of a prodigal daughter hung her head and cried heavy, tired tears while we sat in her family room, "Will she ever come home?"

The woman caring for her elderly mother with chronic sickness, "I'm completely overwhelmed. When do I get to breathe?" 0020

At the core of every questioning, hurting heart is this:

*"Is there hope?"*

Yes, my friend. There is hope. But hope is bigger than God fixing the problem. It's more lasting than God stopping the pain. And honestly, in the moments of anguish most of us just want God to be some kind of cosmic Advil™ or calming Zolofit™. This is understandable. But God's plan is to redeem your life...not just rescue you from your problem.

Think about it: The vast majority of messages we are hearing or reading or watching on TV from motivational people tell us to think positively, keep on hoping, even to trust "God." Great concepts on the surface, but what is the core? Why can we think positively? Why can we hope? In whom really are we hoping?



My friend has lived in Los Angeles for 60 years. She remembers when the LA Colosseum was built. She remembers the iconic Sixth Street Bridge which has connected the valley with Downtown Los Angeles since the 1930's. You've seen the bridge in movies and TV shows like "Terminator", "Grease", "Lost", "Columbo", and "The Great Race." As strong and stable as the bridge appeared over the years, inside that bridge a rare chemical reaction was happening causing the structure to begin to crumble from the inside out! It looked fine, but, on the inside it was quite literally becoming a death trap. When the day came to demolish the bridge,

Angelinos were invited to come out and take a stone home, but guess what? Hardly a stone was available. The insides were so decrepit that most could only take home handfuls of dust.

This is what happens when we hold on to worldly hopes or even “Christianish” hope quotes that reduce the Bible to inspirational literature or a self-help book. We are stepping out on a bridge of faith and hoping in something that only looks stable but is empty on the inside. Worse: it’s a death trap if we’ve missed the target of our hope. My prayer in preparing this study has been that we’d think bigger and deeper and wider about God and what having hope in God actually means; that by digging into the Word we’d understand the truth upon which our hope is founded. This might challenge your views. It may bolster them. Either way, don’t you want a completely true faith built on real hope? I know I do!

We have to circle back here. No matter how often, we must circle back and keep this truth at the foundation of everything. Read how the author of Hebrews puts it:

*Therefore, we who have fled to Him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God’s inner sanctuary. Jesus has already gone in there for us. (Hebrews 6:18b-20 NLT)*

- 1) Why is our hope a “strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls?” because:

|

Jesus has already gone into God’s inner sanctuary for us. He died and rose again! He is our High Priest! That’s what our hope is founded upon! It’s not wishful thinking – although we might feel like it. It’s confident thinking. Edward Mote penned this hymn, and I think it sums it up so well...

*My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.  
“My Hope is Built” by Edward Mote*

Jesus really did rise from the dead! Our hope is sure!

- 2) What about you? Write a few thought here about your hope and what it’s anchored in:

|

- 3) If we’re going to talk about hope then we need to talk about something worth hoping in and hoping for, right? Hope is the hook on which everything hangs. According to this verse, why is our hope sure?

|





Now re-read Luke 24:7 and write it here:

|

- 4) Underline and maybe even write a little number by the three key things (the verbs) that the “Son of Man” (Jesus) had to do.

✓ D \_\_\_\_\_

✓ C \_\_\_\_\_

✓ R \_\_\_\_\_

Delivered. Crucified. Rise.

Check. Check. And big-time Check! Don’t you love the feeling of marking things off on a check-list?

Done and Done.

- 5) If someone were to ask you why you believe in God or how you know He lives, would you be able to answer with confidence the reason you have this hope? Read 1 Peter 3:15 and write it here:

|

- 6) Be ready and prepared to give an answer...Do you feel ready? Now go back and read the verses that came before verse 15. Read 1 Peter 3:8-14...Why would people even ask you about the hope you have?

|

- 7) Go back and underline verse 14. Actually, double underline it! “...even if you should suffer...”  
Gasp.

It’s not pleasant to think about is it? But we’re going to stand out in this world because our behavior is different WHEN – not if – we are persecuted. We’re going to get asked questions about how we’re living because we’re doing life God’s way, not the world’s. I submit to you, my sister, that if you’re not getting questions about your faith, you’re doing it wrong. Our lives as believers should be

noticeably different than the lives of those around us. So different that people will be drawn to us and wonder what is going on. THAT'S when we're ready to give an answer.

- 8) Read Psalm 34 and focus on verses 12-16. You want to love life and see good days? According to this Psalm, quoted by Peter in chapter 3, what must you do? Write at least six behaviors you'll need to exhibit in your life:

|

As Jesus began to prepare his disciples for his death and resurrection, He gave some stern warnings about what was to come and what life would be like. We looooooove the Bible verses that say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me..." or "...be of good cheer for I have overcome the world." We like these verses so much that we're even willing to hear them quoted completely out of context. But how empty is our hope, how trite and fluffy, how "pitied above all" if we cherry pick these phrases and ignore the truth. Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-33

- 9) List some of the ways Paul was persecuted:

|

- 10) Read Philippians 4:10-14 Why can Paul say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me?" (Don't forget what you just read in 2 Corinthians):

|

Our hope is sure, not because of our wishful thinking but because we serve a God - even get persecuted for Him – who makes good on His word. He said Jesus would be crucified, die, and be raised...and check-check-check. He did all three. If you would like to dig even deeper into the sureness of our hope in Christ and the proofs of his resurrection, I encourage you to get one or more of the following books:

- "The Case for the Resurrection" by Lee Strobel
- "Evidence that Demands a Verdicts" by Josh McDowell
- "More Than a Carpenter" by Josh McDowell

If you would like a free copy of "More Than a Carpenter", please email me at [Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com](mailto:Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com), and I will gladly send it to you. These are just three among hundreds of great books written to defend the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. You do not need to know every fact and detail and be able to debate a skeptic, but learning more will be of great benefit to you.

11) In 1 Peter we read to “always be ready to give an answer”, and this is true. However, read Luke 21:5-19 when Jesus was preparing his disciples for the persecution to come. What does he say in verse 14 NOT to worry about?

|

12) If you feel concerned that you wouldn't know exactly how to answer someone who challenged your faith by denying the resurrection, I want to encourage you that the you can ask for wisdom! Jesus will give you what you need. Read James 1:5 and write it here:

|

Take time now to pray - maybe even write out your prayer — and thank God for this deliverance!

*What a day! What a promise! What a hope we have!  
It's real. It's true. It's sure!*

*Thank Him for His power over death and His promise.*

Write your prayer of thanks here:



Each session we'll share  
heart-felt stories from women  
like you who have been  
through difficult times. . .

Times that have tested their  
faith and brought them to a  
deeper understanding of  
what real hope means.



# A Story of Hope from Rebekah Canamar



*Lost, lonely, hopeless, abandoned. As far back as I can remember my daily life was merely to survive.*

*I endured and witnessed physical and mental abuse throughout my life. I didn't have much hope of things getting better. Why would I? My parents didn't protect me and they allowed such things to happen. I was born into a Mormon family. There I remained for my entire childhood, teenage years, and into adulthood. Growing up in a religion that teaches all about family and love, my family home life mirrored the opposite. I was completely empty and broken.*

*I longed for a loving family. A family I was sure that God had for me somewhere. Secretly, I hoped to be adopted by somebody who wanted me. From a very young age I remember flittering around in search of a family to latch onto, longing to belong. This continued into my adult life.*

*Growing up Mormon I did everything I was supposed to do. I did all that was required of me. I went to church every Sunday. I attended all activities. I held Leadership positions. I served a Mission. Why was I so empty and dark on the inside? I was everywhere I was supposed to be, working so diligently, yet I still had a longing to belong. My self-worth was dependent on and a direct result of my behavior and my works towards ultimately glorifying myself.*

*At 24 years old, I had just returned home from a 19-month Mission for the Mormon Church. Within 2 weeks of returning home God plucked me out of it. It was as if He said, "My daughter, you do not belong here." And He turned me around from walking inside the doors of that Mormon building. It was the first time I was so sure about what I was doing. And I never went back.*

*Within the next 2 weeks, God introduced me to a 6-year-old little girl and her family who would quickly show me who He is.*

*He is an Amazing Father who scooped me up into His arms and wrapped them around me as if to say, "I love you, my daughter, and I will never let you go." And I felt Him hold on to me with such love and adoration. God proved Himself faithful.*

*And, He did so in the most unconventional way with me. He gave me the family I so desperately searched for oh, so long ago. He brought a daughter, in need of parents, to parents, who were in need of a daughter. I was adopted into a surrogate family who loves me unconditionally. And, He continues to grow that family.*

*I had worked so hard for somebody, including God, to love me. But, it wasn't about me anymore. It was about Jesus. His grace is sufficient. It is enough for me and I didn't need to do anything to earn His love. God is faithful to provide. He brought me into the family of God.*

*~ Rebekah Canamar*



look at the **NATIONS AND WATCH**  
— **AND BE UTTERLY AMAZED.**

for i am going to  
**DO SOMETHING IN**  
your days **THAT YOU**  
**WOULD NOT** believe.  
even if you **WERE TOLD.**  
habakkuk 1:5

# ~ DAY EIGHT ~

## How'd We Miss This?

Key Scripture References: Habakkuk 1:1-5: Acts 13:40-41: Psalm 40:15

*Have* you ever been caught off guard by an event in your life? You missed all the warning signs?

When my son was in junior high school, I got a call from the principal. "Mrs. Richmond, I'd like to meet with you about a serious matter involving your son."

Gut punch.

My mind raced with the possibilities of what could have happened. I met with the principal and was informed that my son was involved with two other boys in possessing marijuana and pills of some kind.

Gut punch.

Nothing could have prepared me for that moment. I never saw it coming. I could never have guessed my little boy, my good kid, could be involved in something like this. As I sat across the desk in the principal's office, I received the news and tried to grasp the details of what I was hearing. Like a scene in a movie playing out in slow motion, I sat there as the principal's words rolled over me, swirled around me, and attempted to penetrate my mind...my son had been caught doing drugs.

Were there signs? Yes.

Did I miss the warnings? Obviously I did!

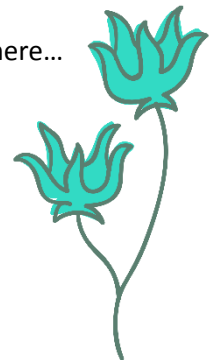
Could I have been more on top of this? Surely I could have!

What could I have done differently? So many things!

What were the clues that led up to this moment that I might have seen coming? Maybe I could collect those hints and share this with other parents so they'd be more likely to intercede in their own children's lives?

- 1) How about you? What event in your life caught you off guard? Write it down here...

|



2) Looking back now, were there signs you missed? What were they?

|

3) Knowing what you know now, are you able to see the signs better? Have you been able to pass along your experience with others and help them see the signs? What would you tell another mom or friend today because of what you experienced?

|

4) Here's the deal, we're not the only ones who miss obvious signs. In Habakkuk chapter 1 verse 5 the Lord tells his prophet that things are coming that he never could believe. You'll be "utterly amazed", "astounded", in "wonder" God says. You're never going to see this coming! Read Habakkuk 1:5 and write it here:

|

And, "sho 'nuff" as my grandma used to say - *stunned*.

Perplexed. Astonished. *"You would not believe, even if you were told."* Habakkuk 1:5

5) Paul quotes this prophecy from Habakkuk when he is speaking to the people in one of his sermons. Read Acts 13:40-41 What is Paul's warning? Write it here:

|

When you're in a season and you're in between darkness and light...in that waiting place...wanting to hope, holding to hope and yet, hope has not yet been realized, are you like this? Are you looking for signs? Reviewing your past? Worried about your future? Perhaps in the midst of the waiting you need to be reminded of the verses from our study today and to take your confident stance for the future based on God's faithfulness in the past. Read Psalm 40 (NIV)

6) What did David do in verse one? He:

---



7) What did God do in verses 2-3? (4 distinct things)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

8) What happens to those who trust in the Lord?

\_\_\_\_\_

9) What behaviors characterize the person who trusts in God? (v 4)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

10) When you're waiting and hoping why not anticipate God's goodness? Read verse 5 again and write it here but, make it personal...what wonders has God done already in your life? If you could only list a few of God's blessings what would they be?

|

*Waiting is hard. Wondering if we're missing the signs can be distressing. As we close our study today, just pray for a heart like David's to wait patiently and to recount God's blessings in the meanwhile.*



praise be to the  
god and father  
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!

in his great  
**MERCY HE HAS GIVEN**

US NEW BIRTH INTO A LIVING

hope through the resurrection  
OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD

1 PETER 1:3

# ~ DAY NINE ~

## Everything Is Going to Change - Part 1

Key Scripture References: Luke 24:13-35: Isaiah 43:18-19: 1 Peter 1:3

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When you get married.

When you're pregnant with your first child.

When you graduate college and get your first big job.

What do people say? "This is going to change everything."

And it does. You think you're prepared. You think you'll be ready. But really. No way. You've seen marriage before. You've read the books. You've been around kids. Heck, you may have even had very young siblings to tend to as you grew up. You've prepared for this job for a long time...but nothing can compare to the total shift in your reality that you experience after "I do" or "It's a girl!" or "You're hired."

Your "success" in this new season of your life is going to be connected to your willingness to totally embrace the newness, learn, grow, change, adapt and think and see in new ways. Right?

- 1) What new season (marriage, job, having a child, changing churches, etc.) in your life caused you to have to reevaluate your priorities? In what way?

|

So, my sister, here we are at a great moment in our study when everything changes. Can you feel it? As you read the accounts in Scripture are you feeling excited for the newness coming? Those tears of sorrow...now tears of joy...the posture of the grieving is now the dance of the redeemed!



- 2) Read 1 Peter 1:3 and write it here...This is a verse you should definitely memorize!

|

Read Isaiah 43:18-19 *"Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it?"* - Isaiah 43:18-19 (KJV)

When the Lord asks, "Shall you not know it?" He is saying, "Do you want to open yourself to My new thing? Are you willing to embrace it?" In the context of this verse, Israel was dealing with enslavement to the Babylonians, and God is getting them ready for big changes and reminding them of His mercies and their special relationship to Him as the "chosen nation."

The verb יָדָע (yaw-dah) "know" in the Hebrew language is far more than head knowledge or comprehending. It has to do with the total surrender of yourself. It's the same word used in Genesis 4, "And Adam **knew** Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain . . ." This "knowing" is a total receptivity, a total embrace. God is saying, "I'm going to do a new thing. Will you embrace it? Will you receive it into your life?"

Jesus asked questions as well. Oh, boy did he. We're not going to read every question he asked. But if you wanted to do that you'd be busy reading over 300! Yep. Jesus asked over 300 questions! We'll talk about some of them at our next get together. For now, we're going to move our lessons on hope forward by looking at the situation two men were in which prompted one of what I think was Jesus funniest questions. Yes. Jesus was funny. He asked questions...and he was funny...even sarcastic. Let's see:

- 3) Read Luke 24:13-35 As you read, take note of the W/W/W/W of this account and record the details here:

Who are the people mentioned in this account?

What basically is happening?

When is this taking place? (after what big event)

Where is it happening?

- 4) Read Luke 24:13 "...now that same day..." What day was this? \_\_\_\_\_

- 5) Luke 24:14 What do you think these two were talking about? The weather? The latest sandal styles? Ha! Write a few thoughts down here about what and WHO you think they were discussing...

Re-read Luke 24:15-16 Do you feel the anticipation here? Jesus HIMSELF joins these two! When I was a child, I remember my grandmother chiding me when I was being unkind to my sister, "Would you talk like that if Jesus was standing right there?" What? No way! Yikes! I didn't want Jesus to pop in and stand there hearing the mean things I was saying. No way. But what if Jesus did walk in right in the middle of when you were talking or shopping or at your child's ball game or . . . ?

These two disciples get to actually experience this!! Wow! Wow! Wow!

Here they are in the throes of the drama and their animated discussion and none but the Firstborn of All Creation, the Bright and Morning Star, the High Priest, the Mediator between God and Man...shows up and asks, "Hey, what's up?" Do you feel the sweetness here? Even the humor?

Ok, maybe not in those exact words...but c'mon...you gotta love the timing of the Lord Most High here and admire his humor a bit, right? I mean, of all the entrances He could have made - lights flashing, a big poof of smoke a la Houdini, an accompaniment of angels announcing his return, borrowing Elijah's flaming chariot and swooping down on that...but nope. He just slips right up on the path and joins them.

*Oh, Jesus how I love you for this simplicity.*

Once again, arriving on the scene in the least expected way.

But, what's this? Read on "...they were kept from recognizing Him?" (NIV) Why? Why on earth would this be necessary? Is this something God does? Does He keep people from seeing or recognizing? The Greek word here for "kept from recognizing" literally means that their eyes were "held." Jesus was holding their eyes and keeping them from perceiving who he was.

- 6) Why? What reason do you think Jesus was doing this?
- 7) Read Exodus 7:1-5 – What did God keep from happening and allow to happen here?
- 8) Read Numbers 22:21-31 – What did God keep from happening and allow to happen here?
- 9) Read Acts 9:1-7 – What did God keep from happening and allow to happen here?

10) God can keep people from having soft hearts? \_\_\_\_\_ (yes/no)

11) Opened eyes? \_\_\_\_\_(yes/no)

12) Recognizing Him? \_\_\_\_\_(yes/no)

Why? Doesn't God want us all to know Him? Yes.

But, sister, In. His. Time.

In His Way.

For His Glory.

13) Read Isaiah 55:8-11 – What does this say about God's timing and His methods?

|

14) What about you? Are you willing trust that God's "thoughts are not your thoughts", and that this is a good thing? Are you willing to see that this truth brings comfort and hope? When, like the disciples talking on the Road to Emmaus, you are not yet seeing the big picture, are you ready to acknowledge God's sovereignty and timing? Take a moment to write out your thoughts about this and give this to God in prayer:

|





Forget the former things;  
do not dwell on the past.  
See, I am doing a new thing!  
Now it springs up; do  
you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland.

ISAIAH 43



# ~ Day TEN ~

## Everything Is Going to Change - Part 2

Key Scripture References: Luke 24:13-35: Isaiah 43:18-19: 1 Peter 1:3

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Re-read Luke 24:17-19

Jesus asks the two: "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

I love that God likes to hear right from us what we're thinking about.

- 1) Think about a trying time you've had recently and imagine Jesus coming alongside you and asking you as you were wrestling with your thoughts or sharing them with a friend. If He had asked you the same question, what would you have said?



- 2) Read Genesis 3:8-11. What question does God ask Adam and Eve?



God knows the answer before He asks the question. But, like a parent who already knows the answer to, "Anything interesting happen at school today, son?" having already received a call from the principal, God wants to hear from us personally. Think about what that says about His character. He wants true relationship with us. Jesus, at this moment could have walked upon the disciples and said any number of things, but by simply walking alongside and asking to hear from them He accomplished many things...two in particular stood out to me. Read the two observations I made, and be thinking about what YOU think this says about God's character:

My first observation:

**He gave them the chance to share their own heart out loud.** There's something about hearing your own heart out loud that is so helpful. When I was writing this study my husband graciously listened while I read and re-read each section to him not only for his feedback, but for the help that reading aloud provides. By hearing my own heart out loud it helped me tighten up my thoughts and clarify my points and find silly errors. Surely Jesus knew their hearts (Jer. 17:10; Matt 12:25; John 2:25), but what clarity they provided when they spoke the truths about Him.

3) Review Luke 24:19-24 and write down the facts they cited about who they believed "Jesus of Nazareth" to be and what they witnessed happen to him:

\_\_\_\_\_

4) Look over your list and think about the ways they referred to Jesus. They called Him "prophet" which He surely was, but what could they have called Him? Check below:

\_\_\_\_ Friend                      \_\_\_\_ Rabbi (teacher)                      \_\_\_\_ Leader  
\_\_\_\_ Messiah                      \_\_\_\_ Healer                      \_\_\_\_ ? \_\_\_\_\_

5) They had enough respect to refer to Him as a "prophet", but why not call Him as He was...as He claimed to be? Read Matthew 16:13-20 and John 4:25-26 Who did Jesus affirm that He was? (Hint: it's not a trick question)

\_\_\_\_ Friend                      \_\_\_\_ Rabbi (teacher)                      \_\_\_\_ Leader  
\_\_\_\_ Messiah                      \_\_\_\_ Healer                      \_\_\_\_ ? \_\_\_\_\_

There are hundreds of questions you might have to answer in a given week and innumerable questions you'll likely have answered by the time your life is over. Some pretty frivolous, some pretty serious. Let's rate a few:

6) On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being highest priority/consequence and 1 being nearly inconsequential, how would you rate the following - I even left a couple blanks for you to write in!

# \_\_\_\_ "What's your favorite ice cream flavor?" ~ the ice cream shop kid

# \_\_\_\_ "Plastic or Paper?" ~the grocery store gal

# \_\_\_\_ "What's your major?" ~a friend in college

# \_\_\_\_ "In-N-Out or McDonald's?" ~a hungry friend who has the audacity to even propose the question! ;-)

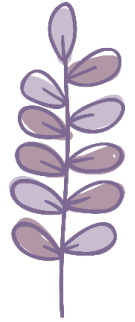
# \_\_\_\_ "Will you marry me?" ~your sweetheart

# \_\_\_\_ "Who do you say that I am?" ~Jesus

# \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_

*In* this pluralistic and “tolerant” society where statements like: “Hey, don’t judge me!” and “My truth is as good as your truth.” and bumper stickers like: “COEXIST” define the worldview of the vast majority, it is not a popular concept to teach that there is one way...One True Way. It takes strength of conviction to assert this and acknowledge that Jesus was THE Promised One...THE Solution...The Way, the Truth and The Life - but we must, if we’re honest, not only answer the question Jesus Himself asked, but be willing to live our lives in way that matches what we claim to believe.



At this point, they had just heard that He had resurrected...or did He? Were the women right? Could it be? I believe these two disciples were not quite ready to finish the equation. That’s why they recounted all those details and left His title at “prophet.” Oh, they could add up all the prophecies, they could count up all their eye witness accounts, but they weren’t ready to complete that equation with a bold equals sign. Are you?

Everything we’ve read + everything we’ve witnessed + everything we’ve heard = \_\_\_\_\_

My second observation:

**He modeled what was soon to come - their new relationship with the Holy Spirit!**

7) Read John 14:16 -- Who did Jesus say was coming? \_\_\_\_\_

This word for Holy Spirit in Greek is “paraclete” which means comforter, advocate, helper...but also, and literally “one who comes alongside!” What?! So exciting! Jesus was here walking alongside these disciples, hearing their heart, letting them speak their minds...and in a few moments he would confront their “slow hearts” and open their eyes...this is precisely what the Holy Spirit does in our hearts!

8) What else do you see that Jesus was doing by asking a question instead of announcing His presence?



Then Jesus speaks up after they recount the details: “He said to them, ‘How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!’” (Luke 24:25)

9) And again, he asks a question – a good, pointed, rhetorical question...read Luke 24:26 and write that down here:



What’s the answer to this rhetorical question from verse 26? \_\_\_\_\_



## How do we know?

Well, we just go back to *Scripture* – the only Scripture these disciples would have known – what you and I call the “Old Testament” they would have called the “Tanakh.” This is all the books from Genesis through Malachi – and guess what? Everyone one of them pointed to Christ:

- Christ is the Seed of woman and in Genesis 3:15 we are told He will one-day crush Satan.
- In Exodus we find the story of the Passover Lamb, and Christ is the sacrificial Lamb given for us.
- In Leviticus we read of the high priests making sacrifices for the people, and Christ has become our High Priest, making the perfect sacrifice to atone for our sins.
- In Deuteronomy Moses prophesied of a prophet who would come that would be greater than Himself. Jesus is that Great Prophet.
- In the book of Joshua, Joshua met the Captain of the Lord's host. That man is Jesus Christ.
- In Judges, the leaders were judges who delivered God's people, each of them typifying the Lord Jesus.
- Boaz, the kinsman who redeemed Ruth's inheritance, is a picture of Christ.
- David, the anointed one, pictures Jesus and Jesus is described as being the Son of David.
- In 2 Samuel when the king is being enthroned, the entire scene is descriptive of the Lord Jesus.
- The books of Kings speak of the glory of God filling the temple and the Chronicles describe the glorious coming king, both referring to Jesus, the King of Kings.
- Ezra depicts Jesus as the Lord of our fathers.
- Job says clearly that the Redeemer is coming!
- Esther offers a picture of Christ interceding for His people.
- Christ appears time after time in the Psalms, including when David describes Him as "the Shepherd."
- Isaiah details His glorious birth.
- Jeremiah reveals that He will be acquainted with sorrows.
- Joel describes Him as the Hope of His people.
- Amos tells us that Jesus is the judge of all nations.
- Obadiah warns of the coming eternal kingdom.
- Jonah offers a picture of Jesus being dead for three days, then coming back to life to preach repentance.
- Zephaniah says that He will be the king over Israel.
- Zachariah is the prophet who speaks of Jesus riding on a colt.
- Malachi is the one who calls Him the Son of Righteousness.

Can you see it? The entire Old Testament points toward Jesus as Savior, and if you miss that, you've missed the entire point of the Scriptures. Jesus is the Messiah and the fulfillment of prophecy.

*(Taken from "A Portrait of Christ" by Love Worth Finding Ministries - used by permission).*

All Scripture  
is breathed out  
by God  
and profitable for teaching,  
for reproof, for correction,  
and for training  
in righteousness

2 Timothy 3:16



# ~ DAY ELEVEN ~

## Everything Is Going to Change - Part 3

Key Scripture References: Luke 24:13-35: Isaiah 43:18-19: 1 Peter 1:3

Review Luke 24:28-29 – Highlight in your Bible and/or journal key verses to you.

By this point, they had been walking for quite some time. The road to Emmaus was about seven miles (Luke 24:13). At a normal walking pace across this unpaved road it would be about a three-hour jaunt. Three hours discussing with Jesus! Three hours relating their experiences! Three hours! Wow! What a walk that must have been, and sure enough, when they get to a point where Jesus seems to be leaving them, they just cannot get enough of Him, “Stay!” they ask. And get ready, this is where it gets wonderfully amazing! ... “so He went in to stay with them.” Luke 24:29 (NIV)

### *The Ah-Ha Moment to End All Ah-Ha Moments!*

- 1) Review Luke 24:30-32 Jesus joins the two and does what with them?

*Just to clarify: In your Bible translations it says “bread” in verse 30 and you’re thinking of a loaf perhaps like a baguette or shepherders bread? But this was still during the Passover Holy Days, so they would not have been eating any bread made with yeast because the laws they followed forbid the use of yeast during these holy days. For more details on the Passover, read Exodus chapter 12. So, when you picture Jesus breaking the bread and passing it to them as it describes in verse 30, imagine a crisp matzah cracker, not a fluffy loaf of bread.*

He took the bread... Gave thanks... Broke it...

Was it at the sound of the matzah cracking? Was it the sight of Jesus breaking the bread? Was it a glint in Jesus’ beautiful eyes? In the Greek, the word for used here is ἐπιδίδωμι (epididomi), which means that **while He was in the act of distributing** they recognized Him. He blessed, and having broken, was giving it to them, when, in an instant, their eyes were opened!

- 2) Reread Luke 24:32 According to this verse, what was happening in their hearts?

- 3) When was it happening?

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
This isn’t the first time – and surely not the last – when Scripture being recounted brought about a powerful response!

4) Read Nehemiah 8:8-12 – What happened when the people heard God’s Words?

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5) Isaiah 55:10-12 – What power does God’s Word have?

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6) Read Jeremiah 15:16 – How did Jeremiah feel about God’s Words?

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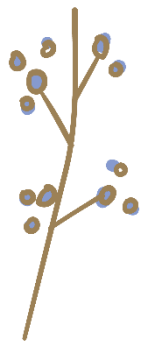
7) Romans 10:14-17 – How do we get faith?

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Take a moment to thank God for the power of His Word and the fact that He gave it to us!  
Thank you, Father for your love for us and for the  
joy, peace, faith, and power that Your Word brings!

8) Read Luke 24:33-35 Write three words or phrases that stand out to you in these verses. Or, if you love to draw, sketch the scene here...

|





## Urgency.

There's power in a sense of urgency. Important things can wait. Urgent things cannot. When it's urgent you stop what you're doing, redirect your thoughts, your plans, your mindset... and just go and do.

### **It's. That. Urgent.**

..... Do you feel the sense of urgency here in verse 33? .....

The crumbs from Jesus' freshly broken bread had barely fluttered down to the table...whoosh! Jesus has vanished and these two who had spent the better part of the day in deep, contemplative discussion, as they walked the path from Jerusalem to Emmaus now leave nothing to discussion...they. Are. Gone. G'bye! Out the door. This is too urgent to wait. No need to discuss, confer, review...we're outta here! Back to Jerusalem!

Back to the Eleven (actually probably just Ten since Thomas wasn't there).

And this time? No contemplative walking pace. I imagine these two bolting as quickly as the Prodigal Son's father ran down the road to greet his wayward son! Wayward sons these two may well have been had they not encountered the Risen Lord. But they surely did more than encounter Him. They had a faith-solidifying experience that altered their lives from that point forward.

Back to Jerusalem. Back to the grieving bewildered disciples. Back past the point where Jesus first joined them. Back past the spot where they had departed Jerusalem...Back to the lamp-lit room where the dejected disciples and several others had gathered, bursting through the door, they shouted,

*"It is true!"*

Let's pause here in their announcement.

- 9) Re-read Luke 24:34 After they announce, "It's true!" What do they say next? Write the next two details here:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

*SIDE NOTE: He appeared to Peter? Where earlier in the Luke account does it say this? (It doesn't.) When could this have happened?*

- 10) Read 1 Corinthians 15:5 (NIV)

*Jesus appeared to \_\_\_\_\_ and then to \_\_\_\_\_*

*Are you seeing the value in reading ALL of Scripture? When you read full books you'll connect the full picture and see details that bring it all together.*



WHY SO DOWNCAST, O MY SOUL?

*Hope in god*

FOR I SHALL AGAIN  
PRAISE HIM  
MY SALVATION  
AND MY GOD.

*Psalm 43:5*

*Sister*, I want you to grasp the hope affirming sweetness of this moment. Jesus could have appeared to the leaders of the day, the rulers and kings, the famous and powerful – and any smart writer would surely spin the account to include these types of people. But “His ways are not our ways!” – not by a longshot!

The resurrected Jesus appeared first to a woman who had been demon possessed and next to a loud-mouthed, rash man who had been the first to deny him and deny him loudly and publicly – Peter. Next he appears to two disciples heading out of town whose earthly significance only matters enough to have one of them even named, Cleopas. Jesus’ final days on earth echoed his pattern of His earthly ministry, that He came “to seek and save those who are lost.” (Luke 19:10 NLT)

*Have you felt that you don't matter?* Have you felt out of hope because surely you’re not important enough for God to notice or care to be with you? Perhaps you’ve prayed with a friend who is struggling with her sense of value. She feels unworthy – too damaged – too insignificant .... Here in these few short verses, this amazing account is your reminder to yourself and to that friend that you matter and there is hope.

- 11) From the previous days’ studies, which verse or passage brought you the most hope? Write it here and commit it to memory so you’ll have it on your heart and the tip of your tongue should you or a friend need to be reminded of the powerful hope we have because of Jesus Christ.

\_\_\_\_\_

As you meet with your study group this week, be prepared to share this verse with your group. I wonder if God will give someone else the same verse?

May God richly bless you as you wrap up your time in the Word today. I am praying for you and I’m looking forward to seeing you soon!

Your sister and hope-filled friend in Christ,

*Jennifer*



# Hope Study Teaching Notes

Chapter One Review: The Road to Emmaus and Our Ultimate Hope



## *Discussion Questions for Lesson Two*

### ~ Looking Back on Lesson One ~

- 1) From Day Three page 20-21 you choose a passage to read and reflect upon. Share the passage you chose and how you responded to the questions, especially #7.
- 2) Based on what you read and studied in God's Word over the past couple weeks, why do you think the resurrection is the central truth when it comes to our ultimate hope? (Review Day Five)
- 3) In our Day Ten study (pages 49-51) we read the account of Jesus coming alongside the disciples and NOT revealing His identity while they were walking. I shared two observations as to why I thought He chose to do that. What other reason(s) did you think of for why Jesus didn't reveal Himself or demonstrate his omniscience when He asked the disciples, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"
- 4) What verse did you write on page 59? Why?

### ~ Looking Ahead to Lesson Two ~

In the next two weeks we'll look at the Lord's Prayer how this model prayer points us to our great hope, reorients our view, and emboldens us to share True Hope with others.

- 5) What are you hoping to learn more about in the coming weeks?



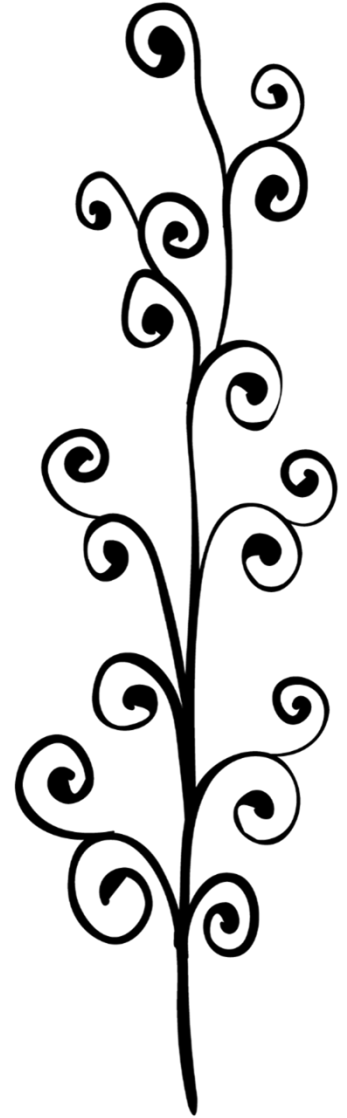
"My Hope is Built on Nothing Less"  
by Edward Mote, 1797-1874

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace;  
In every high and stormy gale  
My anchor holds within the veil.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, His covenant, and blood  
Support me in the whelming flood;  
When every earthly prop gives way,  
He then is all my Hope and Stay.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,  
Oh, may I then in Him be found,  
Clothed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne!  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.







# ~ DAY ONE ~

## Teach Me to Pray

Scripture Focus: [Matthew 6](#) and [Luke 11:1-13](#)

If there's one thing we've learned about hope from our last lesson, it's that it is founded on the Resurrection.

Sure.

Simple.

Truth.

And yet magnificent and complex and powerful. Where would we be without it? Any notions of hope end without the truth of, *"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."* ([John 11:25](#)) And this is why our study in hope had to begin right there. The Resurrection. We'll dig further into the resurrection in a future study, but in the studies coming over the next ten days, let's move together into the direction of living out our hope. We have a resurrection, that is sure. How then shall we live?

Take a moment right now, before you go any further to pray as you begin the study. One of my favorite prayers before I study the Word is from [Psalm 119:18](#). Take a moment to read that verse and pray.

Let's begin

Read the account in Matthew chapter 6 as well as the account in Luke 11. As you read, note the following:

1) Differences between the two accounts of this same event...

2) Similarities...

***On the next two facing pages write out the Matthew and Luke versions of the "Lord's Prayer" with plenty of margin room so you can refer back to these pages as we go through the study.***

~ Matthew 6:9-13 ~

~ Luke 11:2-4 ~

*My parents* are both beautifully gifted musicians. Neither choose music as a career, but growing up our home was filled with song. My mother played the piano and organ and sang, and my dad played the guitar, piano, and harmonica and he wrote and sang many, many fabulous songs of faith and Scripture. My mother's style was more classical, and she brought the great hymns of our faith to life. My father played blues, folk, even boogie-woogie infusing Scripture verses with these fun styles so his children and those in our church could sing the Word of God. He loved jazz and she classical and both brought life and song into our family with their talents. When I was in elementary school I took piano lessons. Sadly, my teacher made me nervous and fearful. She was stern, and I was always worried I wouldn't get it right. Eventually, I persuaded my mom to end the torture, and by 2<sup>nd</sup> grade it was over. I continued to love music, my parents' playing, singing together with my younger sisters as they accompanied us at church and outreach events, but my training was done, and I had no desire to return to the painful associations I had with that mean teacher.

*Until eighth grade* when I rediscovered piano on my own. During that year I would ride my bike to our little church at Newbury Park Baptist where my mom was the secretary and my dad a teacher. I would slip into the sanctuary or whatever room with a piano was open, and I would just open a hymnal and play. I tried to recall the old lessons I had learned. I loved those afternoons by myself singing and playing and recapturing a love of music. One day I decided to ask my mom to find me a piano teacher. "Mom, I need a teacher. I want to learn piano again!" Fearing I'd end up hating it if we found another mean one, I prayed that the teacher would be good and kind and patient...and she was! New books, new skills, new love flowing in my heart for music...I couldn't get enough!

*In college* the guitar bug got me, and I got an old steel string from my dad, "Dad, teach me to play!" I asked hopefully one weekend. It was the weekend before I was to be heading off to be a camp counselor, and I had exactly three days to learn to play guitar well enough to satisfy a few hundred kid campers at our sing-alongs every night! Why not? All the "cool" counselors I had had growing up were the ones with the guitar! I wanted to do that too! Learning the piano is fun and takes some time to get good enough to accompany others. Guitar on the other hand, while a little quicker to learn is also fun but painful! Oy! Developing callouses in a weekend is literally a bloody proposition! But I did it, and with my dad's patient help I learned a few chords, earned four painful callouses, and played all week for those campers! It was the beginning of a great season in my life, and I continue to play guitar and piano and even write worship songs from Scripture thanks to my parents and my teacher to this very day.

*I see me* and my story in the heart of the disciples from our passage today. Like me rediscovering my love of piano and guitar when I asked my father, "Teach me to play!" I didn't ask out of obligation or out of fear or pretense...just a heart to learn and be like my own father and mother. I wanted that beauty in my life, but I needed their help. I needed to be taught.

Read [Luke 11:1](#) (I really like the Holman Christian Standard version because of the helpful footnotes.)

3) What do the disciples ask Jesus?

|

4) Why? What information from the verse gives you and understanding as to their past experience and current motivation to learn?

|

It was not uncommon for disciples of a teacher (rabbi) to be taught specific ways to pray. Clearly, as we read in this passage, John the Baptist taught his followers. We know other great Rabbis also taught their disciples. The apostle Paul mentions the great rabbi, "[Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people](#)" in Acts chapter 5. Paul was disciplined by Gamaliel before his conversion.

*My sister* is a personal trainer. Among other things, she trains those who want to complete a marathon. The other day she posted an article with this headline on her online business page, "Learn How to Run." I had to read the headline twice. Really? Do people need to learn how to run? Don't we just do it? I mean I do. I walk. Then I walk faster. Then, well, guess what? I'm running. Tah-dah! Ha! Actually, I never run – but that's beside the point. Running for a regular Joe like me doesn't require training. But what if I wanted to complete a marathon? What if I wanted to run for better health but it was painful for some reason? You know what I'd do? Yep. I'd call up the expert. When you have a higher calling, a greater purpose, a grander goal, you need the training and a willing heart to accompany that.

Read [Hebrews 12:1-3](#)

- 5) Who do we look to as our ultimate example? \_\_\_\_\_ How else would you describe Jesus in terms of His living and written example for us. Use words from these verses in Hebrews as well as from other verses and your own life experience:

|

The heart of a true disciple is a heart willing to learn from the master.  
~ How much more is the heart of God to teach the willing? ~

Read [Exodus 4:12-15](#)

- 6) Who was willing? \_\_\_\_\_ Who was resistant? \_\_\_\_\_ and yet, God did win Moses' heart over and indeed, Moses went on to lead and become the greatest prophet of the Old Testament.

Read Psalm 25 (NIV)

- 7) Write Psalm 25:4-5 here:

|

- 8) Underline the three verbs from this passage that show what the Psalmist wanted from God.

- 9) According to Psalm 25:4-5, why do we go to God?

|

Where is your heart today? I'm praying for you, my sister, that you would have a teachable, eager heart. A heart that hopes in the Lord, that looks to our Master like the disciples did and expectantly says,

*"Teach me to pray!"*

## ~ Day Two ~

### *Our Father in Heaven*

Scripture Focus: [Matthew 6](#) and [Luke 11:1-13](#)

*I would like to encourage you – challenge you actually – to pray Psalm 119:18 or other prayer before beginning each lesson and prayer the Lord’s Prayer at the end. Make this a special part of your daily time in the Word and I know you’ll be richly rewarded.*

*In the early years* of our marriage my husband and I would take long backpacking trips up through the southeastern Sierra Nevada Mountain range. Glen would plan for weeks the exact trails he wanted to take, the supplies we’d need, the size of packs and the thickness of sleeping bags. We’d shop for dried meals and sample MREs from the military store. We compared trail maps, broke in hiking boots, practiced putting up our lightweight tent, and paged through fishing and backpacking magazines for the region. This was years before cell phones and GPS were so easily available to regular folks like us. But that was fine; Glen knew how to read topographical maps. The night before we’d head out for the trailhead, Glen and I would set out every last ounce of supplies we’d need for the 8 to 10-day trip, and we’d thin out the ounces so our packs were as light and efficient as possible. Glen’s pack was always a good 20 pounds heavier than mine. With every ounce weighed and every pound accounted for, off we went...just what we could carry on our backs. A week and a half of no one to see or hear from but the free-ranging cattle, an occasional fellow hiker, and lots of squirrels. The splendor of nature lay ahead of us, and we couldn’t be happier.

*Glen is as outdoorsy* as they come. He probably could have made a career as a park ranger had he planned to that end, but instead, this Business Economics major and his English major wife were deep into the high altitudes of the beautiful and wild Sierra Nevada and loving the escape and beauty of it all. If you’ve never been at high altitudes, you might not relate to this, but let me share that it is difficult to breathe for the first day or two...or three! It takes some time to get acclimated. Even if you were casually strolling on a groomed path with nothing but your binoculars and a bag of gorp, you’d find yourself catching your breath. But our trailhead alone was above 8,000 feet and we were hiking upwards of 12,000 feet in elevation, on ungroomed trails, with 40-70 pounds on our backs. It was slow going – well, at least for little ol’ me. But Glen was amazing, like, superhero amazing! Seriously, he would hike the trail along with me, get ahead of me, encourage me to keep on going, and as I wheezed and trudged along I’d pause, hands on knees, to catch my breath, look up and see his six-foot plus stature far ahead of me at the crest of the hill we were crossing. He stood tall and lanky silhouetted against the bright blue sky behind him as I squinted against the sun to keep my tired eyes on him.

*I’m a worker.* A doer. A git-yer-butta-outta-bed and make things happen sort. I always respected the sensibilities of our Pilgrim forefathers and mothers and their work ethic, and I aspired

to be like the bold settlers who blazed trails across the west in wagons and on foot. When faced with a mountain path like the one I was on, weighed down with a pack that felt heavier than a wagon wheel, I would imagine I was a settler or pilgrim or other brave and strong wilderness-conquering woman and forge ahead, but this mountain was kicking my butt, and this pilgrim was tahr'd. (That's settler speak for "tired.") What happened that day on the trail taught me a deep and valuable lesson in the idea of "us" and "we" and the power of "our" and applies uniquely in our study today. My brave, bold, boundlessly energetic husband who had hiked all the way to the top of that mountain, dropped his 70-pound pack and hollered down to me from the heights, "You can do this, hon! Hang in there! Just a few more steps!" And I'd stand upright and forge ahead a few more steps. "Hooray! You're totally doing it, sweetie!" I'd take a few more faltering steps, breathe deeply, and wonder how I would make it and still preserve my dignity when I felt like flopping onto the dirt and giving up.

*No sooner had* I finished contemplating my "to flop or not to flop" plan when I felt the release of the weight of the pack off my shoulders. The sweat waterfaling down the center of my back was cooling me down as the pack lifted and the mountain air swooshed around me. Glen had set his pack down at the crest of the trail and had come all the way back down to relieve me! My sweet hero. With Glen bearing the weight of my pack I was renewed. With the thought of his kindness I was invigorated. "I" became "we" and we both hiked that trail together...he for the second time, me for my first. "Follow my steps" he cautioned, "This rock area is a little tricky." He hiked ahead of me with his right hand holding his walking stick and his left reaching back to give me a guide. I followed best I could manage in his steps and made it to the top with him. The spectacular view really made me feel like a settler seeing the Sierras for the first time. I gulped down the water Glen offered, soaked in the panoramic view and stored the memory. The power of "us" and our relationship connecting together on that trail left a deep impact on my heart and a deeper understanding of hope.

*It's the power* of "us" that I see in the first word of the prayer we're studying.

I often stop and think of not only how Scripture is worded, but how it is NOT worded. Think of it: The disciples said, "Teach us to pray!" and Jesus could have said, "Pray like this, **My** Father in heaven..." or just "**Dear** Father, in heaven..." But there in the moment on that day with His disciples He reminded them all and even you and I today, of **our** Father. God wants to relate to us in community, to be together not only in person through His Son, but through corporate and individual prayer.

Read [Isaiah 63:15-16](#)

- 1) Isaiah cries out to God to do what?  
|
- 2) The prophet Isaiah is the first person known to have referred to God as \_\_\_\_\_ and as being the One who is in \_\_\_\_\_.

Read [Jeremiah 3:19](#) and [Malachi 2:10](#)

- 3) How does God see his role to all His creation? \_\_\_\_\_

- 4) Do you think the disciples, fresh and eager to hear his response to their, "Teach us to pray!", would have been surprised that the opening of Jesus' tutorial prayer was "Our Father in heaven..."? Why or why not?

Read [Hebrews 4:14-16](#)

- 5) How can we come before God? \_\_\_\_\_

Read [Romans 8:14-17](#) and [Galatians 4:6-7](#)

- 6) Circle the word "Father" in your Lord's Prayer pages and draw a line from it to the margin, then write the word you read in these verses from Romans and Galatians naming who we can come to God as to make that connection. Who is our Father? \_\_\_\_\_

- 7) To whom do you pray? \_\_\_\_\_

Read [Ephesians 2:1-3](#)

- 8) Before coming to Christ what were we children of? \_\_\_\_\_ (the Holman Christian and New American Standard versions have a preferable translation here)

### No longer!

Aren't we all "children of God?" I have heard this said by Christians and non-Christians alike - that we are all God's children. Sister, this is not the case. Yes, by virtue of being His creation as it says in [Malachi 2:10](#), "Do we not all have one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our ancestors by being unfaithful to one another?"

We are all from the one God who created us. But let us be clear, unless you have submitted to the Fatherhood of God, unless you are "in Christ" you are not part of His family.

Read [John 8:44](#)

- 9) To whom was Jesus speaking? \_\_\_\_\_

- 10) Of all people, these were the "spiritual leaders" of the day. They would have been well-versed in the Law and Prophets (the Old Testament). How did Jesus refer to these men?

- 11) Who is their "father?" \_\_\_\_\_ (Ouch!)

In Christ, the hope of the Gospel is made true. As we saw in our last chapter, He conquered sin AND death and this is the sureness of our hope. In Christ we **are** brought into the family. God is now our Father. We are His children.

In Christ, everything changes...

Our past — Cleaned.

Our present — Connected.

Our future — Certain.

When my husband came down the hill for me he showed his heart — desire for togetherness and for our paths to be together. The result when we reached down to me was hope! When Jesus taught His disciples to pray He was in the very opening words reminding them of the togetherness God has provided for us and reminding us of that open relationship — the tender and loving one the Father



desires to have with His children. The beauty of the first words of Christ's prayer is a simple yet powerful reminder that you are a child of God and you have access to God just like a child does to her Father.

And this should bring you hope too!

*My sister, as we close our study today, know that you are loved. You have a Father in Heaven who desires relationship with you. Seek Him today. Thank Him today. Surrender your cares and your doubts to Him and let Him Father you.*

Pray the Lord's prayer with a renewed sense hope because of your relationship to God as your Father.



# ~ DAY THREE part 1 ~

## May Your Name Be Sanctified

Scripture Focus: [Matthew 6](#) and [Luke 11:1-13](#)

Read [Matthew 6:9](#)

- 1) Using any footnotes from your study Bible, other versions with variations in wording, or even the dictionary, what does the word “hallowed” mean? (I particularly like the ESV if you have it.) Write your notes here:

...and go to your Lord’s Prayer pages, circle the word “hallowed” and connect that word with the synonyms and/or phrases that clarify the meaning for you.

Read [Exodus 3:15](#)

- 2) When God first revealed His name...  
to whom did He reveal it? \_\_\_\_\_  
  
what was the name? \_\_\_\_\_

Read [Psalm 148:11-38](#)

- 3) To whom is God’s name important? \_\_\_\_\_

Scripture addresses God by no less than 900 names. 900! When you pray, “hallowed be your name” which name are you “hallowing?” How exactly do we “hallow” a name? Let’s be clear, this is not an exercise in trivial concepts. The name of God and our use of it is important. Important enough to make the Top Ten. Read on...

Read [Exodus 20:7](#)

- 4) Right up there with murdering, adultery and coveting, what does God say about His name?
- 5) Compare several translations on this verse and write your thoughts on what it means when the commandment says not to take the name of the Lord your God “in vain.”

When I was a first-year school teacher back in 1988, there was a trend in education to throw out spelling books. The “Whole language” education approach loosely taught that students in primary grades could use “invented spelling” and learn to spell by seeing the words in context of whole pieces of literature rather than selections collected into an anthology and weekly spelling word lists. Out with phonics! In with invented spelling.

Not surprisingly, test scores were abysmal and students weren't spelling well at all. So after several years, the pendulum of educational trends swung back, and phonics returned. Student had to learn their phonics from teachers who may never have learned phonics themselves. Educational trends aren't the only aspect of our culture that have swung over the decades. From clothing fashion to hair styles, approaches to life sway in pendulum-like motion in many ways. Religious expression swings as well.

Christianity and our expressions of faith have not been immune to the pendulum swings over the centuries either. In the 60s the "Jesus Movement" swung the pendulum from formal and distant relations with God to a more casual and connected relationship focus. Dressy, stiff churches dwindled as "hippies" shared Jesus on the beaches of Southern California. Surfers became pastors and spread the gospel personalized to the tie-dye generation seeking answers and hope in a confusing decade. A more approachable Jesus and a more relational God was what drew many of that generation in. The pendulum had swung. But like losing the structure that phonics provided to spelling, this "Jesus is my Bro" approach had lost much of the reverence that we are instructed to have right here in the Lord's Prayer. God was pulled down from being Our Father in Heaven to being Our Buddy on the Beach. Is this ok? When Isaiah, a man of power and direct connection to God Almighty uniquely qualified if anyone was to chill with God, actually saw God in a vision he cried, *"Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"* God is holy. Let us never forget this.

When Jesus instructed us to make His name holy – or as the more poetic wording reads, "Hallowed be His name" – this was making a statement about God, but it was also a call to action.

Are you ready? Let's Study God's Word!

Read [Genesis 1:3](#) and write God's statement here:

The verb tense used here in the Hebrew is the same used in the Greek Lord's Prayer. It is an imperative or command tense. Do it. Make this happen.

God called out light to exist, he commanded it. The words "hallowed be Your name" are a command as well. Make my name holy.

As with any pendulum swing in our lifestyles, we should be discerning. What could we keep? What should we dismiss? Tossing out phonics? Bad. Reading from whole books? Great! Why not keep the phonics AND read whole books?

Stuffy distant churchiness? Bad. Reverence for God's holiness? Great!

Why not keep the reverence AND enjoy a closeness to God? But, many have not been discerning. It is more common today to hear about a God who is our "daddy" our "friend" our "buddy" than it is to hear of a Holy God to be feared – a Holy God who demands our holiness in return. This is a shame. It's not that we cannot call Him friend, or daddy... We sure can. It's just that we need both.

Recently my husband and I were watching a movie that had been edited for TV. The actors swore like sailors and every profanity was edited out with an alternative word – every profanity except for God's name. How far we've come. No wonder we live among doubtful, fearful, anxious and hopeless people. Our society has diminished the Name of the One whose very words brought into existence light and life itself.

What is there left to hope in if God is less revered than vulgar words? There is no hope.

If we are to be women of hope – true Hope – we must do as Jesus said and "make holy His name."

Read [Psalm 145](#)

- 6) From verses 1-6 write all the many "I wills" that David says he'll do:  
|
- 7) From verses 7-21 write out the many ways David describes who the "LORD is"?:  
|

This word "LORD" is referred to as the "tetragrammaton" which is a four-letter combination of Hebrew consonants. (Have fun impressing your friends with that cool new word over coffee this week!) The word for God is from Exodus chapter 3 which we have already studied. Any time you see the name of God spelled with all capitals as LORD, indicates that the translators have rendered the unpronounceable yet most holy name of God. In Hebrew it is spelled with the four consonants: יהוה (yod-hey-vav-hey), and it the most used name of God in the Bible. Reading the footnotes in your study Bible will provide more information on this powerful name for God. I encourage you to go further in your study of the Name. A word study on "LORD" would provide nearly 7,000 occurrences in the Bible. I hope you pursue this study on your own. You will be blessed. For now, let us consider how we should make this name holy because that is a high and worthy calling, so worthy, that Jesus made sure to instruct His disciples to do this when He gave us this model prayer.

Read Exodus 3:14 again.

- 8) Who does God say that He is? \_\_\_\_\_ As odd as it may sound to our ears to read this, this is nonetheless **the name** by which God instructed Moses to be called. As if God was responding to Moses by saying, "You want to let people know who sent you? You want some authority to back up why you're making demands on Pharaoh? Let me give you the most ultimate, the most comprehensive, the most powerful truth about my nature that will leave no shadow of doubt as to who I am." I AM. I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE.

So, we have the Name and the seriousness of the Name...How do we make it holy?

The word ἁγιάζω (hagio) translated as "hallowed" in Matthew 6:9 and Luke 11:2 means:

*"to make holy" (from hagios, "holy"), signifies to set apart for God, to sanctify, to make a person or thing the opposite of koinos, "common;" it is translated "Hallowed," with reference to the name of God the Father in the Lord's Prayer (Vines Expository Dictionary)*

**DAY THREE part 2 ~**  
*How can we set apart the His name?*  
We can do this by Praising the Name of God

The Bible actually has an entire book that does just this. It's the longest book of the Bible! Psalms. In Hebrew, the name of the book is, "tehillim" which literally means "praises." It is filled with praises to

God, which in Hebrew is word you are likely familiar with: Hallelujah! This word is from two Hebrew words: hallel + yah

Hallel is another word for praise and “yah” is a shortened form of God’s holy name from the tetragrammaton you already learned: YHWH or Yehovah. So every time you say, “Hallelujah!” you are literally praising the name of God/Yah!

Open your Bible to the book of Psalms; we’re going to do something a little different. Instead of offering you key verses to study, simply open to the Psalms and read. Find a chapter that speaks to you in its praising and extoling and sanctifying the Name of God. Select several verses from one or various chapters and write them here. Underlining key phrases that direct you to praise His Name and be ready to share your selection at our next Bible study.

*How else can we make His name holy?*

We can do this by Proclaiming the Name of God

Read [Revelation 19:1-10](#) and [Psalm 148:1-5](#)

- 9) Revelation 19:1, 3, 4, and 6 all shout what word? \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) This image of angelic praise in Revelation is taken from Psalm 148 as we see who praising the LORD? Make a list from these verses:

In 1969, history was made and God honored when astronaut Michael Collins was the first human to praise God “from the heavens...in the heights above.” When Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin finished their spacewalk and Buzz announced the “hatch is closed and latched” Collins, who was the pilot of Apollo 11, upon hearing that the crew was back inside, depressurized, and doffing their space suits said, “Hallelujah!” If ever someone was able to praise God from the heights, it was an astronaut! What an amazing moment for all!

You may not be able to get to a space ship, but why not go outside, take a walk and get to the highest spot you can find and proclaim the greatness of His Name!

Grab your Bible and get thee to a hill, a peak, a high-rise...your roof?

# Praise His name from the heights!

*How else can we make His name holy?*

We can do this by Performing Deeds in the Name of God

Read [Leviticus 22:31-32](#)

11) According to this passage, how will the Israelites sanctify God's name? \_\_\_\_\_

12) How will it be desecrated (made unholy)? \_\_\_\_\_

In Hebrew, to profane the Name of God is שִׁמְלֵה שֵׁם (chilul hashem), and to make holy the Name of God is קִדּוּשׁ שֵׁם (kidush hashem)

Read [Ezekiel 20:39](#)

Driving along the 99 freeway brings you through the central valley of California. I love this drive as it is my connecting route between my mom's and my homes. You see billboards dotting the landscape across the highways across the country, but one series of billboards caught my attention recently. "Pray for Rain." During a time of severe drought these billboards were a plea for the people to come together and seek that God would bring rain. And could He? Certainly. We know from reading Scripture that we can seek God for relief such as this. But, perhaps, in light of the Scripture we are reading this week that billboard is could say instead, "**Obey for Rain.**"

13) The prophetic words recorded in Ezekiel proclaim God's righteous frustration with the people of Israel. What had they been doing to cause this harsh response from God?

Read [Isaiah 42:6](#): [49:6](#)

14) The people of God are sanctified (set apart) to be what? \_\_\_\_\_

Read [Ezekiel 36:20](#)

15) What did they do when they went among the nations? \_\_\_\_\_

Read [Matthew 5:16](#)

16) The Lord's teaching prayer is nestled in the Sermon on the Mount where earlier in Matthew chapter five Christ said, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may..." do what?

And James 2:17 reminds us that "faith without works is dead."

Read [Ephesians 2:10](#)

17) What are we created to do? \_\_\_\_\_

Select one of your praises from Psalms to close your time in prayer today. Read and pray it to God as you praise Him, proclaim His greatness, and seek to be a light by living obediently to His Word.

Sister, as you seek to praise, proclaim, and perform obediently for God you will find hope and assurance. Not only that, but in praying as the Lord taught us to pray we find hope for ourselves and can also offer that hope to others. My prayer is that you will let your light shine before others so they may see your good works and make holy the name of God. Close your time by praying the Lord's Prayer



# ~ Day FOUR ~

## Your Kingdom Come

Scripture Focus: [Matthew 6](#) and [Luke 11:1-13](#)

Is there any more hope-giving idea than to pray that God's kingdom would come? When I was growing up, as I have shared, music was an important part of my life. We sang songs as a family and I sang alone in my room. One of my favorite songs was the upbeat country tune, "[This World is Not My Home.](#)" Since my dad wrote so many songs, for years, I thought he wrote this one too! But, it was written by Jim Reeves and the first verses go like this:

*This world is not my home  
I'm just a-passing through  
My treasures are laid up  
Somewhere beyond the blue.*

*The angels beckon me  
From heaven's open door  
And I can't feel at home  
In this world anymore.*

My youth and most of my adult years were spent hoping for this heavenly world to come, and that is what I thought – and was taught – that this verse from the Lord's Prayer meant. That we were to pray for God's kingdom to come because this world isn't our home we're "just a-passing" through. Based on my word studies, this is not quite the meaning as I now see it. To journey with me we'll need to view the final phrase of the Lord's Prayer, and it is only included in the King James Version. Let's plumb the depths of this phrase and draw deeper into its meaning so we can better live out His calling and have more effective prayers.

Are you ready? Let's study the Word!

Read [Matthew 6:13](#)

- 1) What do you notice in the footnotes?

With the exception of the King James Version, all other versions place in brackets the phrase we all close the prayer with, "*for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever, Amen.*" This blessing is not found in early Greek manuscripts and is considered to have been added by a scribe. But why?

Read [1 Chronicles 29:10-11](#)

- 2) Sound familiar??? What words or phrases do you see in 1 Chronicles that also appear in Matthew 6:13?
- 3) What did King David say about God's kingdom? In particular, **when** is God's Kingdom?



Read [Zechariah 14:9](#)

- 4) What did Zechariah say about God's kingdom? In particular, **when** is God's Kingdom?

When you read in the Hebrew Bible you see God is the King of kings – that's NOW and God is the coming King . . . that's THEN. It's both.

Read [Psalm 24](#) (NIV)

- 5) How many times does it use a present tense verb and the word "is"? \_\_\_\_\_

Surely, as the Scripture says, "The earth is the LORD's and everything in it!" Not will be...IS!

Is it hard for you to think that this world is the LORD's now? I'll be honest. It is for me. As beautiful as the sunsets and sunrises are, as breath-taking as the Grand Canyon is, as majestic as the mountains, the seas, the forests all are, I feel the weight of the curse. I feel the burden of a dark and sin-filled world. I don't have to venture far to find the darkness of this world. My own sin brings that reality home. Like the hymnist, Robert Robinson, I know the tendencies of my wandering heart, and I am impatient for my Lord's return:

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for Thy courts above.  
O that day when freed from sinning,  
I shall see Thy lovely face;  
Clothed then in blood washed linen  
How I'll sing Thy sovereign grace;  
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry,  
Take my ransomed soul away;  
Send thine angels now to carry  
Me to realms of endless day.

[Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing](#) by Robert Robinson

Like King David whose kingdom was usurped by his own evil and rebellious son Absalom, if this is God's kingdom now, it feels usurped. So, when the disciples heard this portion of the prayer surely they were excited. Many, if not all who were following Jesus were expecting him to bring the Kingdom of God on earth now. In fact, in reading the gospels you find the phrase "kingdom of God" 53 times and in nearly every case the phrase comes from the mouth of Jesus himself. Matthew's gospel is highly focused on this teaching. You can find "Kingdom of God" 32 times in his gospel. The parables of Jesus often were to help His disciples understand the kingdom and Jesus used the parables to compare the kingdom to: a mustard seed, a treasure, looking for pearls, and a grand banquet prepared by a king. The kingdom of God is at the core of the gospels and it was for this proclamation that Jesus was sent!

Read [Luke 4:42-43](#)

- 6) How did Jesus define His purpose? Write His words here underlining His stated purpose:

God is truly the King of the Now. He rules and has dominion over every particle in the universe. God will also be King in the end-times.

Our versions of the book of Matthew are translated from the Greek manuscripts known as the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Sinaiticus (don't worry, I can't pronounce them well either!). The rendering of the Greek is how we get the familiar "Thy kingdom come" phrase in the Lord's Prayer. In the Greek it reads:

ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου

literally: "let come the kingdom of you."

But, and this is so exciting, there is a **Hebrew** translation of the book of Matthew based on over 28 manuscripts preserved and stored in the Jewish National and University Library in the heart of Jerusalem. Nehemia Gordon, a Karaite Jew, and Keith Johnson, an African American pastor discovered this Hebrew version and collaborated to write their journey and what they learned. Their work has been illuminating to say the least! In finding this translation their work now sheds light and insight on the intent of the "Your kingdom come" phrase.

What they discovered was that the Hebrew rendering brought the intent of this phrase closer to "O, Father, may your present-day kingdom be blessed!" Interestingly, this aligns with the additional phrase we read about earlier that had been included by the Scribe, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever." It's a blessing!

When Jesus instructed His disciples to pray the kingdom it is likely – and we see this in the Hebrew – that He was saying not "Your kingdom come" but, "May your kingdom be blessed."

*"The Hebrew is not speaking about a future end-times kingdom but a present-day kingdom, one in the here-and-now" (from "A Prayer to Our Father")*

What does this mean? What does it mean to "bless" the kingdom? The Hebrew for bless comes from the word בָּרַךְ (barch) meaning "knee." The idea is that one would kneel before a king to offer his blessing. We see this exemplified in Solomon's life at the dedication of the Temple...

Read [1 Kings 8:54](#)

- 7) What had Solomon been doing then entire time while he was praying? \_\_\_\_\_  
(I'd encourage you to go back to verse 22 and read the entirety of Solomon's blessing. It's quite powerful!)

From the time He called His people out of Egypt, God's plan was for His people to live blessed and under His Kingship, but that was not to be.

Read [1 Samuel 8:4-97](#)

- 8) What did Israel demand? \_\_\_\_\_  
9) Who were they rejecting? \_\_\_\_\_

*Where is your heart today, my friend?*

Are you like the Israelites rejecting God's kingship? As you look around and experience the hardships of this world are you "prone to wander" from the God you love? Are you demanding that God's kingdom look more like what you envision? Perhaps today is the day to ask as David did in Psalm 51 that God would give you a clean heart and renew a right spirit within you, a spirit that truly longs for

God's kingdom, not just the future kingdom to come but that His dominion and kingdom now would be blessed. One day, all will bless His name. One day, all will be made right.

Read [Isaiah 45:23](#) and [Philippians 2:10-11](#)

Write the Philippians verse here:

As you close in prayer today, why not kneel before the Lord your God – your Maker? Why not lift your hands in the privacy of your home while you kneel and bless the Lord like Solomon did. Pray the Lord's prayer aloud and pray specifically that you would accept the truths of His kingship today. Pray that you would bless His kingdom and be a blessing as well.

*I am praying for you, dear sister, that your heart would be filled with the joyful Hope of His return and the blessed assurance of His dominion in your life today.*

*He loves you so much!*



# ~ DAY FIVE ~

## *Your Will Be Done on Earth as it is in Heaven*

Scripture Focus: [Matthew 6](#) and [Luke 11:1-13](#)

Top Ten in my list of favorite comedies is the movie based on the book “The Princess Bride.” If you have never seen it, please don’t tell me. I like you, and I don’t want my opinion of you to change. You simply must see this movie, and you must love it. It’s that good. There’s a princess (of course the title gives that away), and there’s a prince – an evil one, and there’s a good guy named Westley, and some other good guys, and a swamp, and some “rodents of unusual size”, and a giant, and a short mean guy. It’s filled with action and sword fights (so the guys love it too), and daring escapes, and true love . . . ah, “twew wuv.” And woven into the action and love and adventure are great themes and wonderful dialogue. My favorite line is three words long, “As you wish.” But, if you’ve never seen the movie (I can hardly bear the thought) those words will make no sense to you. If, however you have seen the movie, then not only do you know that line, but you read it in Westley’s voice and you are seeing him in your mind’s eye tumbling down the hill as the words echo up to Princess Buttercup, “Aaaaaaas . . . youuuuuuu . . . wiiiiiiiiish....!!!” Go watch the scene right this very second so we can move forward in our study. Go on... Here’s the link: [As You Wish](#)

You don’t have to be a fan of the movie to potentially grasp where I might be going here. Oh, that our hearts were as selflessly devoted to the will of our Father as the fictional Westley was to his Princess Buttercup. How powerful it would be to know and see and be a part through prayer of God’s will being done on earth. That we could be the “as you wish” to His will. Are you ready? Let’s study the Word!

Read [Psalm 103:20-21](#)

- 1) This Psalm uses a common literary device (synonymous parallelism) by repeating themes for emphasis in alternate ways to make an emphatic point. What three ways are the angels described as doing the will of God?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_

David could have said, “angels do His will, angels do His will, angels do His will” but by employing this style of repeating the concept in three different but similar ways, we get the picture even more profoundly: Angels do God’s will, angels never don’t do His will, they’re totally and completely, 100% successful in doing the will of God. Humans on the other hand? Read on . . .

Read [Isaiah 53:6](#)

- 2) What are we like? \_\_\_\_\_

Read [Romans 3:10-12](#)

- 3) Who is righteous? \_\_\_\_\_

- 4) Who understands? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Who seeks God? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Who has turned away? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Who has become worthless? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Is there anyone who does good? \_\_\_\_\_

Quite a contrast from the angels, yes?

St. Augustine wrote:

*“The Angels serve Thee in heaven,  
 May we serve Thee in earth!  
 The Angels do not offend Thee in heaven  
 May we not offend Thee in earth!  
 As they do Thy will,  
 So may we do it also!”*

*St. Augustin: Sermon on the Mount; Harmony of the Gospels v6, pg. 285*

Where angels obey humans defy. Defying God’s will is a serious matter.

Read [Psalm 143:10](#)

- 9) Do you want to do God’s will? Look to David’s prayer as a reminder of what to do. What does he say here?

This is an important mindset. Willing to do God’s will and doing God’s will.

Read [Matthew 7:21](#)

- 10) Who enters the kingdom of heaven?

Well then, “How do I know God’s will?” I believe that at the heart of this question is a sincere desire to get it right. And that’s good. Jesus reminds us the importance of doing God’s will and how that is connected directly to our eternal place. No one wants to be among those who are dismissed from heaven. So what is God’s will? We need to clarify that we are asking, “What is God’s will?” and not, “What is God’s will for me in this exact scenario?” Be clear on this. God doesn’t have a will for you in the sense of which parking spot you should choose. Nor are we talking about God’s will in this sense of which car you should buy or which home loan to go with. It’s not that God doesn’t care. Certainly the God who has every hair on your head numbered didn’t count them to win at Trivia Pursuit. God does care. The Scriptures are abundantly clear on this. To know God’s will one must seek the heart of God. In the verses immediately after the Lord’s Prayer Jesus reminds us to do this very thing especially as it relates to anxiety. Are you worried? Do you wrestle with tomorrow and what is to come? How can you pray, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” in one breath and continue to speak of our anxieties about tomorrow with the other?

Read [Matthew 6:25-34](#)

11) What does this tell you about worry?

One thing is certain: worrying is **not** in God's will for you! Worry robs our hope!

When I was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade the big thing to do at school was to play this prediction game called M.A.S.H. We'd all sit around with a scrap of paper the acronym M.A.S.H at the top of the page, and see what our future would hold. M.A.S.H stood for where we'd end up living – a mansion, apartment, shack, or house – and the page had different categories for boys we liked, jobs we wanted to have, cities we'd live in, the type of car we'd drive, and the number of kids we'd have. The best was when I could sort of manipulate the results so I'd end up with my crush du jour, living in Cape Cod with three perfect children and two cars in the driveway - a Miata for me and a Porsche for my honey, Scott Bonowitz. I'm not sure where I planned to seat the three kids we were supposedly having, but at least I managed to avoid the grody-to-the-max scenario of having eleven children and living in a shack with Timmy Steinbaum – gag me with a spoon!

When we pray that God's will be done we must pray in accordance to the fullness of His will, not what we imagine His will might be in our own lives. Remember, "Your will be done" is a call to action – I will submit so that God's will can happen. It is also a recognition – with or without me, God's will shall be done. We're not playing a game of M.A.S.H. with God's will here. This isn't us manipulating the players or the scenarios or God to bend God's will. It's not a prayer that God's will is changed, but that our will is bent to God's. Amy Charmichael said it beautifully:

*And shall I pray to change thy will, my Father, until it be according to mine?  
But no, Lord, no that shall never be rather I pray thee blend my human will with thine.*

However, like the M.A.S.H. game, we can lay out before the Father the people, places, and desires of our life. You may not even realize the extent to which you are playing with God's will like a game of M.A.S.H. The Bible says that, "The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? (Jeremiah 17:9 NLT)

Read [1 Peter 5:6-11](#)

10) Write down all the commands in this passage. What are we to do? (I counted at least 5)

Now, make a lists of your cares. Include the names of your loved ones, job issues, finances, marriage, health, housing, etc.

Go back to you list, and after each care write, "Your will be done."

My job...*Your will be done.*

My home...*Your will be done.*

My family...*Your will be done.*  
My finances...*Your will be done.*  
Your list won't look like mine. But be as specific as you can.

*The central truth in this mindset is a heart that is not just asking that God's will be done, but a heart that seeks the glory of the Father.*

*Do you want* God's will to be done? Really. Do you? I understand that the right answer might seem to be self-evident. "Of course I want God's will to be done! How could you even ask that?" Well, I ask it because while many of us say with our lips that we want God's will, our hearts speak differently. If it was God's will that you lost your home, would that be ok with you? What about getting an illness? Losing a job? Being betrayed by a friend? No! No, I do not want any of that! And yet every one of those situations is found in the Bible happening to men and women of God. In Psalm 139, David prayed fervently, "Search me, O, God. Know my heart. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead in your everlasting way."

*Dear sister*, are you willing to let God search you and point out any offensive, rebellious ways in you? Your ways might not look offensive on the outside. I mean, it's not like you're in a biker gang tagging up the neighborhood. You're not starting the "I Love Satan" club on school campuses for goodness sake, right? But if your heart is resistant to the will of God; if you are praying "Thy will be done" but you have not fully surrendered to His will, then I submit to you that you are in rebellion against God. You cannot have it both ways. Come today, right now, before our Father and fully surrender your heart, your will, your life to His. "If any man come after me, he must deny himself, pick up the cross and follow me." (Luke 9:23)

*Kneel and lift your arms* like Solomon and pray the Lord's Prayer today with a renewed fervor and a fully surrendered heart. Let the tears flow and sense the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. You are loved and prayed for, my friend.

*As you are reading this, know that I have been praying for you. My prayer, dear sister, is that today you would find the hope and peace that only comes in a life fully surrendered to the Will of God. I love you. Pray the Lord's Prayer today with a renewed desire to truly do the will of God.*



# ~ Day SIX part I ~

## Give us today our daily bread

Scripture Focus: [Matthew 6](#) and [Luke 11:1-13](#)

*So many moments* of my life are connected to my memory because of the power of aroma.

When I smell chalk dust – yes it has a smell – I am transported to 1988, my first classroom as a fresh-out-of-college teacher. I can see the empty desks lined up in that small room, the tiled floor, hear the humming of the fluorescent lights in the ceiling – chalk dust brings it all back.

The other day I was walking past a gentleman at the mall when I caught the distinct, smoky, scent of Stetson cologne, and *zoom!* – off I went to 9<sup>th</sup> grade and my first boyfriend. Walking me to class, holding hands on a field trip, sneaking me a note during algebra, cheering for him as he played basketball...and my first kiss at sunset in early June – Stetson brings it all back.

*But the best aroma memories* of all are of food because the memories they bring

transport my thoughts and my heart to the occasion and most of them bring me to my grandmother's house. She was a child of the depression and that left her with a strong work ethic and a thrifty spirit that turned her into somewhat of a magician when it came to using and reusing everything from scraps of fabric for clothing and mending to scraps of food for her many wonderful meals. There wasn't a day that we would visit when grandma didn't have something in the oven or at least cooling on a rack. And that meant her home was a swirl of the most delectable aromas – ham, casseroles, cookies, pies with homemade crust...and bread, oh, the bread! Bread is the Holy Grail of aromas. Lots of people can put a ham in the oven, bake a casserole or a batch of cookies, but bread? Bread is memories of home and comfort and love – homemade bread brings it all back

*Even as far back* as the 1970s people just weren't baking bread any more. But Grandma

Garrett was. She had one of those Tupperware rolling mats with circles imprinted on it that she used to scale her pie crusts, and she'd also use it to knead out those loaves of bread. She'd knead and pound and flour and repeat in between letting each lump rise and rest, then she'd start again and repeat until the dough had quadrupled. Then she'd separate it all into beat up, well-loved, metal loaf pans – each aged and seasoned with use so the bread would bake to perfection. Into the oven the loaves would go after she split the tops and brushed each one with butter. . .and then the waiting. I'd play with my sisters as grandma hung laundry – she had a dryer but she still hung laundry across the yard on that clothesline.

*We'd wait* for the first scent of fresh bread to waft out of the kitchen and that meant. . .almost!

Almost time! Br-r-r-ring! The timer would sound, but grandma was already in the warm kitchen, with her full coverage apron and hand quilted hot pads. She didn't need a timer to let her know the bread was ready. . .her nose knew! Time to wait again for the bread to cool and of course this was the most tortuous part. But when the bread was cooled enough to slice, Grandma wouldn't need to call us to the kitchen. Oh, no! The rattle of the knife drawer opening and the ching of the bread knife coming out was the only call we needed. I'd get the butter and a jar of homemade strawberry jam, and my sisters would grab the plates. Off to the kitchen table we'd scurry with glee and giddy with anticipation! My sweet, happy, god-fearing grandmother would slice that still-steaming bread and place the perfect slices onto our dainty Corelle "Butterfly Gold" patterned plates while my sisters and I chattered away about how fabulous it smelled and how fun it was to watch the butter melt



and how amazing she was to make it and...nom, nom, nom...sigh! Oh, the joy of that fresh bite!  
There is nothing quite as comforting as homemade bread.

*Surely the Father*, who created every sense we have – taste, touch, hear, see and smell – planned in His gracious love to give us a special connection with bread. Every sense is engaged in the making and enjoying of bread. There is no other prepared food more mentioned in the Bible than bread. Bread is first mentioned in Genesis before Adam and Eve had even been banished from the Garden of Eden. From there it is mentioned over 290 times, and it has a depth of meaning I believe, dear sister, that you will be blessed and challenged and encouraged to learn more about!  
Are you ready? Let's study the Word!

### Read [Genesis 3:19](#)

- 1) If you're reading in the NIV you'll see the word "food", however, most translations show the more literal translation - bread. The word for bread in Hebrew here is **לֶחֶם** (lechem). Why do you think God specifically mentions bread in this verse? Keep in mind the context as you consider your answer:

Bread is made when flour and water are beaten up a bit, right? We must knead the dough by hitting it, rolling it, smacking it on the breadboard, turning it over. . . it's pretty rough – like a fight? Interestingly, the root of the noun for "lechem" (bread) comes from the verb **לָחַם** (lacham), and, guess what? It means to fight. In addition, the place called Bethlehem is actually two Hebrew words **בֵּית לֶחֶם** (Beit Lechem). "Beit" means "house" so together, Bethlehem means, "house of bread."

### Read [Exodus 12:8](#) and [Deuteronomy 16:3](#)

- 2) In Exodus, when God delivered His people from slavery in Egypt among His first directions to them was to, "eat...bread made without yeast." Considering the context again, why no yeast? And in the Deuteronomy verse, the retelling of the directions, God's description of the bread is even more clear. But, why, "bread of affliction?"

In the Exodus verse the word for bread is **מַצָּה** (matzah – meaning "without sourness"). In Deuteronomy the words for "bread of affliction" are **לֶחֶם** (lechem) and **עֲנִי** (oh-nee). Because the bread was made in haste, with no leavening (a symbol of sin – see [1 Corinthians 5:8](#)), the traditional preparation was to pierce the dough several times so that it wouldn't bubble and rise but stay flat enabling it to bake even faster. [Isaiah 53:5](#) reads, "In fact, it was our diseases he bore, our pains from which he suffered; yet we regarded him as punished, stricken and **afflicted** by God." And in [Isaiah 53:7](#) we also read, "He was oppressed, yet when he was **afflicted** he didn't open his mouth. As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is mute, so he didn't open his mouth." The word "afflicted" in these last two passages comes from the Hebrew root **עָנָה** (anah), which comes from the same root of "onee" that we see in the "lechem onee" that we read about in Deuteronomy 16:3. This bread of affliction is connected to Messiah's sacrifice for us! And, if we go back a little to Isaiah 53:5, one version of this reads, "But he was **pierced for our transgressions**. He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought our peace was on him; and by his wounds we are healed." Did you catch that? "He was **pierced**..." Like the Bread of Affliction, our

Savior was pierced! Oh, the beauty and depths of God’s Word to us. That He would give a foreshadowing of His only Son’s sacrifice in this first of the Holy days He ordained when He called His people and delivered them from slavery into freedom is a powerful truth! Jesus is our

- 3) How is Jesus like the Bread of Affliction? Make a chart here comparing the qualities the Bread of Affliction with Jesus the “Man of Sorrows”

| לֶחֶם אֲפִיָּה<br>Bread of Affliction | ישוע<br>Jesus |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
|                                       |               |

I encourage you to do a word study on the word “bread” in the Bible. You’ll be blessed by what you find! Now that we have some background, let’s take closer look at the words of our Savior in the Lord’s Prayer.

Read [Matthew 6:11](#)

- 4) Compare the word count from verse 11 to every other verse in the Lord’s Prayer. What do you notice?

I found it interesting that the verse of the prayer with the least words – the simplest phrasing – also brings with it the focus on the simplest, most basic of needs – sustenance.

Take note of the footnotes in your Bible or online version of the Bible, especially the Holman Christian Standard, which I find to be the most accurate and helpful rendering: “Give us today our daily bread.”

*Footnotes: Matthew 6:11 Or our necessary bread, or our bread for tomorrow*

The Greek word for bread is ἄρτον (arton), and now that you’re practically a Hebrew language expert, you already know that the Hebrew rendering for bread is \_\_\_\_\_ (bonus points if you write it in Hebrew – otherwise a transliteration is fine. Hint: starts with “lech” ends with “em”)

~ Day SIX part 2 ~  
Give us today our daily bread

Pause a moment and try to picture in your mind the scene here with Jesus sitting with His disciples. To help set the scene for you . . .

. . .read [Matthew 5:1](#)

- 5) Where are they? \_\_\_\_\_ The exact location is unknown, so use the general word given in the verse.
- 6) Jesus was a masterful teacher. In nearly every encounter whether it was on the shores of the Galilee where he first called the disciples, on the sloping hills where he taught the multitudes, at the Temple in Jerusalem, or in the still of the night with a nervous Nicodemus, He brought His instructions to life with imagery. Now, hear Jesus say the words, “Give us today our daily bread.” Can you picture it? What do you see as you hear Jesus speaking the words?

Remember in our last study when we read about the two disciples' encounter with the resurrected Jesus on the road to Emmaus? Do you remember at what point the disciples' finally realized that it was Jesus? Read Luke 24:30-31 or go back to your notes from that day. And write it here:

7) \_\_\_\_\_

8) In the phrases leading up to verse 11 we have been focused on the Father.

Our \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven

May \_\_\_\_\_ be glorified

May \_\_\_\_\_ come/be blessed

May \_\_\_\_\_ be done.

Now we shift. But only after we've set the tone – prayer is first about God: coming to Him for His glory, His kingdom, His will. When we consider that this Lord's Prayer is really a model prayer, we realize that while the Lord spoke it, it is better named the "Disciple's Prayer." And as I consider myself a disciple of my teacher Jesus, and I think you do as well, we could even think of it as "My Prayer." Like me, trying to bake bread, I follow a recipe so I can see how to get it right. I model the movements, the timing, the nuances, of my grandmother's style. Then I can start adding my style and flavor. But I don't deviate from the essential recipe. It's not bread if I do that. As we move into the portion of our prayer model that addresses our place, let's be humble and keep in mind the recipe He has given us. And it is essentially this: God First, God some more, More God, and more still...then bread. Me and my needs come only after God gets His due and my heart and mind are properly focused on His will – not mine.

The Hebrew words here say, "give us our bread תמיד (*tamid*)." *Tamid* means "continual/daily." There is no direct Greek equivalent to this word. So, when the words of Jesus recorded by Matthew and Luke were written into the Greek they actually ***invented a word*** to try to come close to conveying its meaning! I think that's pretty exciting! The meaning of *tamid* is translated into the Greek as: ἐπιούσιος (*epiousios*) which is only used two times in the entire Bible – here in Matthew 6 and again in Luke 11 – both in the "Lord's Prayer." So if your translations differ slightly, this is due to the attempts of translators to accurately render this invented word to convey the thought Jesus was getting at. "When Yeshua [Jesus] wanted to communicate the idea of "continual/daily" bread, he used the word *tamid*, a perfectly good Hebrew word that was well-established in the Hebrew Bible and well-known to his audience." (Nehemia Gordon and Keith Johnson, *A Prayer to Our Father*, p. 134.)

9) What does it mean to you to get only what you need "daily/continually?"

Are you satisfied with that? Are you satisfied getting the basics of what you need on a daily and continual basis? I have noticed that this truth hard to find among many of the most popular TV preachers of our day. Many preach a "prosperity" gospel when they should be preaching a "provisional" gospel. We have been instructed by Jesus to pray for our "lechem" our bread of provision not of prosperity. Read [Proverbs 30:7-9](#)

10) What does Agur (the author of this Proverb) say about his daily needs? Why?

The next time you hear a message of the “prosperity” gospel align it with Scripture. If it doesn’t match up...toss it out.

Read [Exodus 16](#)

11) What did God provide? When? How often?

Read [Deuteronomy 8:3](#)

12) Was God’s provision literal? \_\_\_\_\_ According to this verse, was there also a symbolic application? If so, what was it?

Jesus quoted this very passage in Matthew 4:4 in response to Satan’s temptation to “turn these rocks into bread.” Jesus warded Satan with the Power of His Own Words! This is not only a powerful reminder to us to “extinguish the flaming arrows of the Evil One” with the “shield of faith” and to take up the “sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.” (Ephesians 6), but a great point to consider because Jesus, in continuing His teaching on prayer says, “If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?” (Luke 11:11 HCS). Hey, if it’s good enough for Jesus, it’s good enough for me! Right?

Read [Proverbs 9:5](#), [Isaiah 55:2-3](#), and [Amos 8:11](#)

13) Each one speaks of bread. What does this say about our need for physical bread and our need for spiritual bread?

14) What do you think was Jesus’ desire for us in teaching us to pray for our “daily/continual” bread?

*As you conclude today's study in the Bread of Life, pray and thank God today for His continual provision for your needs. Pray for a heart that is satisfied in God's will, God's plan, God's provision.*



## ~ DAY SEVEN part I ~

*Forgive our debts . . . Forgive us our sins*

Scripture Focus: [Matthew 6:9-14](#) and [Luke 11:1-13](#)

At every phrase of our study through the Lord's Prayer I have thought about introducing or concluding our lesson on that particular phrase with a reminder that THIS phrase is the one that is the most central to the ultimate message of the Gospel.

"Our Father" ... that's the central message! We have a Father!

"Hallowed by Your name..." There it is, the central message is the holiness of God's name!

"Your kingdom come, Your will be done..." Ah-ha! Got it! God's coming and our doing his will!

"Give us this day our daily bread..." How beautiful, here's the central message!

And even as I was preparing this day of our study, I thought again, THIS is it! This is the message of the Gospel. "Forgive us as we forgive others."

- 1) What do you think? If you are unfamiliar with the word "gospel", in a biblical sense it is from the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον (euaggelion) which means: Good News. The word is first used in Matthew 4:23 where Jesus "went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the **gospel of the kingdom**, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." Think about all the phrases from the Lord's Prayer that we've read so far, and write your thoughts here about how they relate to the Gospel – good news:

Read [Matthew 6:9-14](#)

Up to verse 12, we have read about our position toward God and our asking of God, but today we come to the first mention of our own inner life and toward our fellow man. When God supplies our provision (bread) He meets our physical needs, but when God forgives He meets our spiritual need. God's forgiveness also reorients any skewed aspect of how we are relating to Him.

In order to understand this verse, we need to back up and acknowledge a need.

*When we read* about bread and asking God to please supply it for us daily that was fairly self-evident. Surely everyone understands that we need to eat, to have our physical needs met. We don't eat = we die. It's so obvious.

*As obvious as* our need is for physical sustenance, so we tend to be oblivious to our need for spiritual sustenance and what that takes. Bread? Yeah, totally. I need that. I gotta eat. Forgive my debts? Well, sure, I guess I was a little snippy with my husband this morning. I suppose I was sort of coveting my friend's new car. Maybe I could have been more gracious with that irritating lady at the store. I did gossip the other day.

*Sister, we cannot fully grasp* the power and need for these words, “Forgive our debts...” if we don’t acknowledge – really, really acknowledge – that we need forgiveness. But our tendency is to compare our sins to the worst among us. “I’m a decent person. I mean, I’m no Hitler.” I heard a gal say. Wow. If your standard for goodness is measured against the evil of Hitler, you might have missed the point of the Gospel. But this is not a popular concept. You don’t hear the women’s conference speakers drawing in thousands of ladies to hear a message entitled, “You Are a Wicked Sinner.” Go to the Bible bookstore and find the ever popular, “I’m a Wretched Sinner.” or the New York Times bestseller, “Me and My Evil Heart” or my new favorite, “The Power of the Depraved Woman.” You won’t find any of those titles. You want to hear that you’re ok, it’s all going to be ok, you’re not a bad person, it’s just a bad world.

While the message of the gospel is indeed a message of hope and salvation and power, it can only be that if we acknowledge that we are hopeless, in need of saving and powerless to fix things on our own.

*If you want* a hope-filled, abundant life, then you must face your depravity. As sweet and good and kind of a person as you are, you must come to terms with this truth. You’re a sinner.

- 2) Go back to your answers from Day Five from Romans 3:10-12. What does Romans say about our state? \_\_\_\_\_

When we read “our Father”, when we read “give us” we visualize **all of us** as disciples, and yet this was a personal prayer as well. This was Jesus teaching us all and us individually. So, when you read, “forgive us” personalize this as well and think: “Forgive me.” Why would you need forgiveness if you didn’t do something wrong?

Read [Romans 5:8](#) and [Romans 5:10](#)

- 3) According to these two verses, who are/were you? \_\_\_\_\_

The Hebrew word for sin is חטא (châtâ’) which literally means, “to miss.” Proverbs 19:1-2 will help you visualize it:

Read [Proverbs 19:1-2](#) (NIV)

- 4) What happens to “hasty feet?” \_\_\_\_\_ The Holman Christian, New American and King James Bibles translate the word חטא as “sin” or “error.”

Read [Deuteronomy 5:32-33](#) and [Matthew 7:13-14](#)

- 5) When you sin you miss a step. You walk outside the path of God. What did Moses say to the people in Deuteronomy and Jesus to the people in Matthew on the idea of the “path” and how we are to walk it? What does it mean to be faithful to God?

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God takes sin seriously. Do you?

I realize you’ve been through a lot in your life. You’ve been hurt, you’ve been maligned, you’ve been on the receiving end of pretty awful behavior from people who should have been there for you. I hear your heart, sister. And I promise, we’ll come to that. For now, are you willing to recognize your sin with not one thought of that other awful person? There’s an interesting split among women and how they see themselves. It’s been my experience that women are in one of two camps when it

comes to how they view themselves. There's those that beat themselves up unmercifully and feel unworthy of love and there's those who see everyone else as the big, ugly sinners. We cannot embrace the truth and hope of the Lord's Prayer in our lives if we live in one of these camps. You're not alone in this mindset, my friend. Not at all. One of the greatest men of God who ever lived found himself wrestling with the same dichotomy.

Read [Psalm 139](#)

6) In verses 1-18, David's focus is on God. Write a few summary thoughts about his focus:

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7) In verses 19-22 we read a big shift in tone and focus with exclamation points and everything! Upon whom is David's focus in these verses? What emotions are you reading in these verses?

|

8) In verses 23-24 another shift...Now where is David's focus? What are you sensing about his heart in these verses?

|

Do you recognize your tendencies in the progression David goes through in this chapter? I surely see myself. First, I'm so in love with and in awe of God I can hardly contain my expression of joy! Looking toward the heavens I praise and proclaim His power and glory and goodness with all my heart and soul. Then I look around and notice this world and the creepy creeps around me, "Hey, these awful people don't get it at all! Why don't you just get rid of them so we can have some peace and joy and love in this world! You and me, God, let's do this!" And then, whoa, wait a minute, I'm pretty messed up. My relationships are broken. I can't keep my own mouth shut when I need to. I'm a short-tempered, selfish, scoundrel who needs you to clean up my heart."

The focus is often:

Up – to God

Out – toward others then

In – to myself.

When it should be Up...Up...Up...and let God take care of the Out and In.

Take a minute to pause and pray to that end. Pray that the Father would tune your heart to His grace and desires and that you would keep your focus on Him.

~ Day SEVEN part 2 ~

*Forgive our debts . . . Forgive us our sins*

When we pray, "Forgive our debts" or "Forgive our trespasses" what are we saying?

The word translated "debts" or "trespasses" is a banking term from the Greek that literally means to "cancel a debt." If you had a mortgage balance of \$150,000, how jubilant would you be if

you checked your bank statement and found that someone had paid it off? Pretty ecstatic, right? I know I would be!

Read [Luke 7:36-50](#)

9) What is the most impactful part of this story to you? Why?

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There are many names of God in the Bible – nearly 1,000. An understanding of just a few of those names can give us a deeper insight into not only who He is but how He relates to us.

Read [Psalm 99:1-9](#)

10) In verse 8 we read that God did two things. What were they?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

In Hebrew, this name for God is “El Nahsah” – The God who Forgives.

What a blessing. What a mercy. What a relief.

The God who knows me as well as David wrote in Psalm 139 will forgive me!

Read [Ezekiel 16:59](#) and [Obadiah 1:15](#)

11) What does this say about forgiveness?

|

Read [Matthew 6:14](#)

12) What does Jesus say about forgiveness?

|

Are you sensing a theme? Is this hard for you?

In Psalm 103 David says, “For as the east is from the west, so far has removed our sins from us.” We are not asked to “remove sins” from others, but we are asked to “be holy as I am holy” (Leviticus 11; 1 Peter 1:16) and in Ephesians it says, “Be kind and compassionate to one another forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

And how exactly DID Christ love us? Well, I think we’ve already covered this territory. Go back to Romans chapter 10, while we were still sinners - we didn’t ask for forgiveness yet, we didn’t say we were sorry, we didn’t make it right, we didn’t have our act together, no when We. Were. Still. Sinners. Christ died for us. Died!

Read [John 15:12-17](#)

13) How can we be like Jesus?

|



Folks, seldom will a man lay down his life for a good person, but Christ died for sinners like me, like you, like all of us. Are you starting to feel the greatness of the weight of these verses?

*One of the hardest things to do is forgive.* I understand that. I have lived it. In 2004, two weeks before Christmas, I discovered that my husband had been having an affair. He had been sexually unfaithful with a woman for nearly a year. I cannot bear to relive the moments of anguish I went through that evening when I found the truth. The pain was crushing like a physical weight on my soul, sapping the breath and life from me. I wept bitter broken tears. The ache was horrendous. I wouldn't wish it upon anyone. Over the next hours I screamed at God not in anger towards Him, but in desperation to release the betrayal my body was absorbing. I shuddered at the images that crashed through my mind, I cringed at the months I had lived under the same roof with a man who had broken the most sacred of vows.

*Alone at home,* as the days went forward, I spent hours on my knees in prayer. Where do I go? Who will deliver me from this pain? Can I ever move on? What next? Where? Help me, Oh, God. I wanted to die. I wanted to vanish. I wanted the pain to end. Christmas day was coming and I had no desire to celebrate. The tree was already up and decorated, presents had already been wrapped and placed, holiday plans made and now. . . what? On Christmas Eve, after kissing my son goodnight, I went back downstairs and sat on the sofa next to the tree. Alone with my thoughts in a dark, empty home. The only lights on in the house were the white lights of the tree. I just sat and stared and thought. What next? The shocked and anger had seethed into desperate hurt. I wept and stared some more.

*Looking at the tree* I saw the ornaments from each of our Christmases together. Our first Christmas as an engaged couple – skis from Mammoth – Our first Christmas as a married couple – a little house – Our first Christmas with a baby – a little baby in a manger...every ornament hanging on that tree represented a year of our life and I felt that I wanted to crush every one of them, throw them all in the fireplace and burn them up. Thoughts of my sweet eight-year-old son sleeping upstairs and looking forward to Christmas morning kept me from doing something rash. Instead I clutched the sofa and screamed out a silent scream lifting my head and wailing to God, "I'm so afraid! I'm so hurt! What do you want me to do?" I heaved and hiccupped through the tears and when I could breathe again I heard a whisper in my heart, "Forgive him."

I wanted the pain and fear to end.

I wanted the one who had caused the pain to pay.

I wanted to be free and whole and done and healed...but in no way was I ready to forgive.

Too soon.

Too much pain.

But I had clearly asked God what to do. And He had clearly spoken.

Forgive.

*Sister, I have no explanation* for what took place in my spirit in the next hours, but I do know this. I had presented my request to God, "What do I do?" and He had answered. When I released the tension in my shoulders. When I unclenched my fists from the edge of the sofa. When I breathed out and breathed in again, a tranquility came over me that defies understanding. These Words of God became more real to me in that moment than ever in my life, "*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer...present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*" (Philippians 4)

*My heart felt* the protective guard of His peace. I could breathe. I didn't know how I could forgive, but I could breathe and I could trust God to show me how to forgive sometime eventually at least. And so, I called my husband and told him to come for Christmas morning. The season of healing and repair to our marriage that began that night continued on Christmas morning when I told Glen that I forgave him. He wept and we held strong for our young son and let him have a beautiful and memorable Christmas morning.

The Gospel, as I shared in the opening of our lesson means, good news or good tidings. The angel that greeted the shepherds and announced the beautiful truth of the birth of the promised Messiah said, "Fear not, I bring you good news of great joy..." This very Jesus spoke good tidings into my fearful, aching heart the night before. The fear and anguish in my heart gave way to healing and hope:

*Love has come  
For the world to know  
As the wise men knew  
Such a long time ago  
And I believe that angels sang  
That **hope had begun**  
When the God of glory  
Who is full of mercy  
Sent his Son*

*"Love Has Come" Amy Grant*

*Sister*, do you need to forgive someone in your life today? A parent? A child? A husband? A friend?

Only the love of Jesus can right the wrong done to you. Only the love of Jesus can bring the peace you need. Only the love of Jesus through the power of his forgiveness, can give you the release and peace and healing you need. Your heavenly Father has forgiven you. Today is the day you can forgive.

*As you close your study*, fold your hands or lift them high. . .kneel or stand arms

outstretched, and pray the Lord's Prayer asking God to forgive your sins and ask Him to help you forgive those who have sinned against you. You can't do it alone, but you can do it with the power of God in you. I'm praying for you, dear friend that tonight you will lay your head down on your pillow and know the surpassing peace of God because you have a clean heart and a willing spirit to forgive.

I encourage you to watch or read the powerful testimony of Corrie Ten Boom who shared how God showed her that she could forgive the very soldier who had tortured her and her sister in a Nazi concentration camp. If you think you could not possibly forgive the person in your life, you must read Corrie's story.

Read [Corrie's Story Here](#)

Watch [Corrie's Story Here](#)

The underlined titles are live links when you view through the .pdf I emailed to those in the Bible study group. If you didn't get the email, you can contact me at [Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com](mailto:Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com)



# ~ Day EIGHT part 1 ~

*And lead us not into temptation . . .*

Scripture Focus: [Matthew 6:13](#) and [Luke 11:4](#)

- 1) Read each version of this portion of the Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6:13 and Luke 11:4. Note any differences and similarities here along with any footnotes from your study Bible:

|

- 2) Look up the words "test" and "temptation" in a dictionary and write their definitions here:

Test:

Temptation:

I've been a school teacher for a long time. A loooooong time. I've been a mother for only a slightly shorter time than that. Let me assure you – in case you needed assurance – kids have no need of a leader when it comes to temptation! I actually laughed out loud (in my defense I was a young teacher) when a parent said to me, "Oh, you must love teaching the little ones. Kids are so sweet. So innocent." Bwah-ha-ha-ha-ha! Kids are rascals. Kids are sneaky. Kids are little stinkers! Sweet and innocent? Sure, I suppose they have their moments, but there's a reason why schools used to have corporal punishment. There's a reason why we have a "Time-Out" chair. There's a reason why Solomon said in Proverbs 23:

*Don't withhold discipline from a youth; if you beat him with a rod, he will not die.*

*Strike him with a rod, and you will rescue his life from Sheol.*

Kids are stinkers, prone to sin and guess what? So are we! So, when we read in this prayer that we are to ask the Father to "lead us NOT into temptation" does it strike you as odd? Unnecessary? Unscriptural? Can God the Father even lead us to temptation?

Most versions you will read translate the Greek word πειρασμός (peirasmos) as "temptation." The word has a broad meaning and is somewhat ambiguous and, depending on the context, can be translated "test" or "tempt" even "prove", "trial", and "experiment." But this word usually means "test."

Read [Matthew 16:1](#)

- 3) With the exception of the terribly awkward wording found in the King James, we see that the Pharisees and Sadducees came to do what to Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

That same Greek word is used here but translated "test."

Nehemia Gordon in "A Prayer to Our Father" points out that "The Hebrew version of the prayer shows that *the Hebrew behind the Greek* is "test," not "temptation," and therefore the Greek should be translated: "lead us not into a test." God's Word itself confirms this rendering:

Read [James 1:13](#)

4) Does God tempt us? \_\_\_\_\_

Does God test us? I think you might already know that answer. Let's read the Word and see:

Read [Job 1:1-21](#)

5) Who was tested? \_\_\_\_\_ By whom? \_\_\_\_\_ Who allowed it? \_\_\_\_\_

6) What was Job's response in verse 21?  
|

Read [Genesis 22:1-19](#)

7) Who was tested? \_\_\_\_\_ By whom? \_\_\_\_\_ Who allowed it? \_\_\_\_\_

8) What was the results of the test?  
|

Read [Matthew 4:1-11](#)

9) Who was tested? \_\_\_\_\_ By whom? \_\_\_\_\_ Who allowed it? \_\_\_\_\_

10) What was the results of the test?  
|

## ~ DAY EIGHT part 2 ~

Would you like to go through a testing like this? The Hebrew translated "test" is בָּחַן *bachan* and carries with it the sense of testing in the same way you proof metal so it becomes as pure as possible. This is the same root word the "man after God's own heart" used when he wrote Psalm 139:23 and said to God, "Search me, O God, know my heart. **Test** (בָּחַן *bachan*) me and know my anxious thought." And it's the same word God uses in Malachi 3:10 when He says, "Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the **test** (בָּחַן *bachan*), says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need."

"Yes! Test me in this way! Open me up so I can be proved faithful, true, emptied of sin, full of righteousness. By all means, Father," should be our prayer, "Test me in this way!"

When Jesus says, "Lead us not into the hands of a test" He is instructing us to ask the Father to keep us from facing a test from our Enemy that could lead us to sin.

Read [1 Corinthians 10:13](#)

11) What will happen when you are tempted?

Read [James 1:14-15](#)

12) What are the steps of evil temptation outlined here and where do those evil desires originate?

Steps:

Origin of evil desire: \_\_\_\_\_

Read [Hebrews 2:18](#) and [Hebrews 4:14-16](#)

13) What has Jesus done? \_\_\_\_\_

14) What does that enable us to do? (write verse Hebrews 4:16 as your answer):

Sister, you have an Accuser and you have an Advocate. In Matthew 6:13 we read “but deliver us from evil.” The Greek word here for “evil” is πονηρός (ponēros). Here is a helpful understanding: “Although the KJV renders this 'deliver us from evil,' the presence of the article indicates not evil in general, but the evil one himself. In the context of Matthew's Gospel, such deliverance from the devil seems to be linked to Jesus' temptation in 4:1-10: Because the Spirit led him into temptation by the evil one, believers now participate in his victory” (*Daniel B. Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, p. 233*).

What is Jesus teaching us? We should pray for protection against the Evil One – Satan!

Read [Psalm 31:1-5](#)

15) What is the central plea of this Psalm of David?

Deliver me. And note the reason in verse 3: “for the sake of Your name.”

Surely, Jesus, having been tempted by Satan in the wilderness knew how trying that kind of temptation would be. Surely, in His love and mercy and kindness, He would want us to never have to face the full fury of Satan’s schemes.

Read [Proverbs 30:7-9](#)

16) What happy medium, if you will, does Agur pray for in his life?

Satan’s desire is to tempt you, sift you, accuse you, keep you from trusting God. This could be through trials, poverty, or even great success. It could be through the accusations of Satan as well. In

Revelation 12:10 Satan is called “the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night.” But reading on we see that he is conquered by what?

Read [Revelation 12:11](#): \_\_\_\_\_

**Satan is vanquished. The accused will overcome!**

*My sister*, the Lord has taught us to pray that we would not be brought “into the hands of a test” but be delivered from the Evil One.

Take a moment to go back to your handwritten Lord’s Prayers back at the beginning of our study. From each phrase make a note connecting that phrase to how it fulfills our need for hope and affirms the truth of hope we have as we “wait in Hope” for our Savior.

As you close our time in study today, let this be your fervent prayer. Pray the Lord’s Prayer today and as you pray be mindful of the richness of the meaning that you have studied over the past several days.

We’ll be meeting together soon to fellowship and pray and share what the Father has opened our hearts to in our study of this prayer. How has our study brought you a deeper sense of hope? This will be a key focus of our get together. I look forward to seeing you soon, until then, know that you are loved and prayed for.



# Hope Study Teaching Notes

Lesson Two Review: The Lord's Prayer- Hope in Relationship



## *Discussion Questions*

~ Looking Back on Lesson Two ~

1) From

~ Looking Ahead to Lesson Three ~

In the next two weeks we'll look at several Psalms

What are you hoping to learn more about in the coming weeks?



"My Hope is Built on Nothing Less"  
by Edward Mote, 1797-1874

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace;  
In every high and stormy gale  
My anchor holds within the veil.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, His covenant, and blood  
Support me in the whelming flood;  
When every earthly prop gives way,  
He then is all my Hope and Stay.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,  
Oh, may I then in Him be found,  
Clothed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne!  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.



# ~ Lesson Three Introduction ~

Welcome back! I'm looking forward to the next lesson and chapters in our study together! We have built our lessons covering hope on the sure foundation of the **resurrection** of Jesus. We've meditated through the Lord's Prayer to see how this hope draws us into **relationship** with our Father in Heaven. Now, our study will walk with those who have **wrestled** with hope.

## Resurrection — Relationship — Wrestling.

As we add to our understanding, I pray that you are adding to your hope in our wonderful God. In this lesson we will see what hope has looked like in the lives of the writers of some of the most powerful and emotionally charged books of the Bible: Psalms, Job, and Lamentations. Our study focus will be unpacking the Hebrew word for "hope." As in the English language, there are many ways hope is expressed in the Hebrew. Consider these two uses of the word:

*"I hope I get extra sprinkles on my donut." And "I hope he comes home safely."*

One is simply wishful thinking while the other is a deep yearning of the heart. We understand the relative weight of one statement over the other because we understand the context of the situation. We're going to get into some interesting word studies in the coming days. I think you'll really enjoy the depth of understanding that seeing the Hebrew words will give you. There are at least fifteen words that can be translated "hope" in the Tanakh – the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament.) Here are the six main root words for hope that you'll learn plus the words that build from each root listed under each:

- 1. בַּטַּח**     **batach**     **trust, confident(ce), secure, bold, hope, hoped, sure**  
בַּטַּח     betach     safely(ty), assurance, boldly, care, confidence, hope, secure, surely  
בִּטְחוֹן     bittachone     confidence, hope  
מִבְטָח     mivtach     confidence, trust, sure, hope
- 2. חָסָה**     **chacah'**     **to trust, to make a refuge, have hope**  
מַחֲסֵה     machaseh     refuge, shelter, hope, trust
- 3. יָאֵשׁ**     **ya'ash**     **no hope, despair, desperate,**
- 4. יָחַל**     **yachal**     **hope, wait, tarry, trust, stayed**  
תּוֹחֵלֶת     towcheleth     hope  
יָחִיל     yachiyl     hope
- 5. שָׁבַר**     **sabar**     **hope, wait, view, tarry**  
שָׁבַר     seber     hope
- 6. קָוָה**     **qavah**     **wait, look, wait for, look for, gathered, misc**  
תִּקְוָה     tiqvah     hope, expectation, line, expected  
מִקְוֵה     miqveh     linen yarn, hope, gathering together, pool, plenty, abiding

**KEEP THIS IN MIND AS YOU STUDY:**

1. **Read from a translation not a paraphrase Bible** - I could print the chapters out for us to read, however, there is more value to you in getting familiar with your own Bible. I'll be using several translations throughout the study, but my personal study Bible is an NIV. Use whichever version of the Bible you prefer – just use a translation and not a paraphrase. Examples of paraphrases are the New Living, The Message, and The Living Bible. *Instead of these, you'll want to read from a reliable translation* like the New International, English Standard, New American Standard, Holman Christian, or New King James.
2. **This is a Bible Study – not a devotional** - You are beginning a Bible study and this is different than reading a passage in the Bible, and it's different than reading a devotional. Study takes being a good student and that will mean thinking like a student and practicing good study habits. *Usually we read a passage and think of how it applies to our life in that moment*, but in this study, as up close and personal as each chapter will likely feel, you will want to have the mindset first of what the Bible says about God and finally how you can apply it to yourself – if at all. Sometimes, you'll just be reading to edify God.
3. **Study to Glorify God, not solve your problems** - As you read the verses in our study instead of reading to find that personal message of hope, read to deepen your understanding of who God is. Ask, "What does this tell me about God?" instead of "What does this say to me?" Will you find what it says to you as well? Certainly! But let's review what we just read in our last lesson through the Lord's Prayer. Where did that prayer begin? "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." Relationship begins with a right understanding and acknowledgment of who God is. And who He is to be in our lives. He is our Holy Father in Heaven whose name we must live to make holy on earth. Let's have that as our focus.
4. **Study takes time** - You will want to set aside time to complete your study. Depending on your familiarity with the Bible, you might find that it takes you longer than you think it should. Please don't be discouraged if you think you're not understanding things or if you find yourself pressed for time and behind. There are two weeks in between each of our study get-togethers and only 10 days of study in this lesson. Make it your goal to read every day. Remember, you're adding something new into your life and you'll likely need to move aside something else you are already doing. *We each have the same 168 hours in a week, which of those hours are you going to purposefully set aside for your time in the Word?*
5. **Get a Study Buddy** - If you haven't already, get a study buddy! Really! Find a friend from your small group and text or call each other daily with a reminder or a word of encouragement. As well-intentioned as we all are to start and finish something, the hours can simply slip away. With an accountability partner you can be there to encourage one another. What a blessing God has for you for your commitment to His Word!
6. **You are loved and prayed for** - Finally, know that I am praying for you daily! It's true. I take time every day to pray by name for the women who are enrolled in this study. Let's do it together! I may have written the study, but I am also completing it again along with you every single day. You can join me live as I read and complete every lesson day. The recordings are here at [www.DwellingRichly.podbean.com](http://www.DwellingRichly.podbean.com) You can also join our Facebook community at "Dwelling Richly." Email me with any questions or to share what you're learning at

[Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com](mailto:Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com)





# ~ Lesson Three — Day One ~

## We Wait In Hope — Part 1

Scripture Focus: Psalm 33

Pray Psalm 119:18 “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your Law.”

*Please Note: I'll be using the NIV. If you're using a different translation, some wording might be slightly different. I recommend [www.Biblegateway.com](http://www.Biblegateway.com) or the YouVersion Bible app on your phone/tablet to help you look up verses in a different translation.*

Read Psalm 33 — Are you ready? Let's Study!

Read the first three verses of Psalm 32 and of Psalm 34.

1. Who wrote these Psalms? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do we know who wrote Psalm 33? \_\_\_\_\_ Maybe it was David. Maybe it was one of the other writers of the 150 psalms in this book: Moses, Asaph, a son of Korah, or Solomon. There is no author given for this Psalm. It's simply nestled in between two of David's with no credit given.

*Psalms, as we learned in Lesson Two, is a book of the Bible that is a collection of praises. The word “psalm” means “praise.” This particular Psalm is one that gives beautiful praise but also sums up the reasons we can praise and why those praises give us hope.*

Now let's read Psalm 33 again, and as you read, think about who is speaking, to whom they're speaking, about whom they're speaking. Write your observations here:

3. Who is speaking? \_\_\_\_\_
4. To whom is the author speaking? \_\_\_\_\_
5. To whom is the author pointing our attention? \_\_\_\_\_

*Remember, you're writing your answers based on your best thoughts. Don't use a commentary or study notes to assist you. This is an important step in personal Bible study: just you and the Word and trusting that God will answer your prayer that you just prayed from Psalm 119:18.*

*I'm not the kind* who likes to read the final chapter of a novel before I start it, but I do read novels based on a friend's recommendation. “You will loooooove this book!” she will say, “It's so inspirational!” or “It made me really think!” or “I loved how the story all tied together.” I feel the same way when it comes to reading the Psalms. Often the final wrap-up is stated at the very end of the chapter. The set-up to how we can get there is throughout the chapter and verse by verse as we read we see it building to the final take-home thought.

Read the final verses of Psalm 33, verses 20-22

6. Who do we wait for? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Who is He to us? \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

8. Why do we rejoice?

---

Write verse Psalm 33:22 here:

The Hebrew word נָחַח (chacah') is the word translated "wait in hope" or "wait expectantly" in the English. In some versions it is translated simply "wait", however the idea of this waiting is not merely like waiting for a bus or waiting your turn in line. The word here means an expectant waiting, a hope-filled waiting, a waiting based on knowledge of the One in whom our waiting waits! Ok, that was a little wordy, but you get the idea. That's what's so meaningful as we go back to the beginning and read the verses leading us here. We're going to see exactly for whom we are waiting, and it makes all the difference in the world.

Read Psalm 33:1-3

9. Who is the one singing? (two descriptive words)

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

10. What do the righteous and upright do? \_\_\_\_\_

11. How do they do it? (I see at least 6 ways!)

In verse 3 it says "new song." This doesn't mean to sing a song you've never heard of as much as it means to let the praise you have in your heart be like new every day!

## ~ Lesson Three — Day Two ~

### We Wait In Hope — Part 2

Scripture Focus: Psalm 33

Read Lamentations 3:22-23

12. What do we read here about God's mercies?

They're new not because He came up with new ways to be merciful, but because they are renewed in our lives every morning! This is how our praise should be to Him...renewed, not stale. Not same 'ol-same 'ol...NEW! Refreshed. Not feeling it? Then go back to verse 1 and re-read the kind of people for whom they are new: the righteous and the upright. And how are we made righteous? How are we upright? By

walking humbly before God. Do you see it? I know it's hard to feel fresh and new to God every day, but His mercies are there for you fresh and new – let's make our praises to Him be the same.

Read Psalm 33:4-5

13. Why do we sing praises? Three reasons in verse 4

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

14. What does the LORD love?

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

15. In verses 4-5, what does it say about the word and character of the LORD?

|

Understanding and really embracing the nature and character of God is central to our ultimate willingness to trust in Him and to “wait in hope” for Him. If He has a fickle character, why would we wait for Him? If he wasn't faithful in **all** He does, why should we count on Him?

16. Verse 5 says, “the earth is full of His unfailing love.” From your own experience or from Scripture you know – or both – what examples in the earth do you see that show His unfailing love?

|

Read Psalm 33:6-9, Genesis 1:3 and Hebrews 11:3

17. What do these verses tell us about creation and the power of God?

|

Read Psalm 33:10-17

Let's back up a bit: In verse 8 we read, “Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere Him.” And yet, they didn't then and clearly they do not today. This is a central reminder in every book of the Bible. Every chapter of the story of God redeeming and rescuing His people is a call to fear God. Fear God. Fear. God. Proverbs 1:7 gets the entire collection of wisdom started by stating, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.”

With this in mind, as you read verses 10-17 complete the chart listing the ways the world thinks and what it values on the left and the character and behavior of God on the right:

| <u>WORLD</u> | <u>GOD</u> |
|--------------|------------|
|--------------|------------|

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

Now, you don't have an army, you're not a warrior by trade, you don't depend on your horse to get you out of scrapes...but you, like me, might have a tendency to put your hope in things of this earth from time to time, to trust in your own understanding even when you know that you need to trust God. So, next to the words you wrote above about what the nations put their trust in, confess what you might be trusting in today: Your job and the money it provides? Your spouse? Your stamina, determination, knowledge?

18. Write as many things as you can think of and prayerfully lay each one down to the Father.

---

# ~ Lesson Three – Day Three ~

## We Wait in Hope – Part 3

Scripture Focus: Psalm 33

Read Psalm 33:18-19

The first word of verse 18 translated “But” in the NIV is the Hebrew word **הִנֵּה** (hee-nay) which means “Behold” or “here” with the sense of make note of this. What do verses 18-19 say in comparison to the what we just in verses 16-17?

19. What kind of people is God watching over? (v18)

---

20. What will He do for them? (v19)

---

The worst that life can offer – death and dying a slow death. God. Will. Deliver. We saw that clearly in our Lesson One study when we studied the foundation of our hope. And what is our hope founded upon? The resurrection!

*“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death is your sting?”*

(Hosea 13:14, 1 Cor. 15:55)



Are you getting excited to think about this?

I am!

I am thinking back to verses 1-3 in our chapter. No wonder why the author was singing joyfully, praising with a band, singing a new song, and shouting for joy at the very beginning of the Psalm!

We have real hope,

a true hope,

a bigger, better, *awesomer* hope than those who trust in what the world can provide!

Kings? Peh! . . .

Warriors? Ha! . . .

Horses? Pbth!

We have the LORD God almighty on our side!

I feel like Isaiah when he wrote,

“Do you not know? Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God

the creator of the ends of the earth!”

Read Psalm 33:20-22

Read it aloud and really emphasize “the LORD” and “He” and in “Him” and “His” to drive home the point. Go on....aloud. (I know you were just sort of reading it to yourself.) Why not stand up and reeeeaally put your back into it. Read it like you mean it.

While others may trust in kings, warriors, horses, presidents, jobs, personal wealth, etc., we fear God and will be placing our hope in the LORD!

21. And look again, what does the author say in verse 21? In Him our hearts do what?

(write it in ALL CAPS!) - \_\_\_\_\_ (just like in verses 1-3!)

22. Why can our hearts rejoice? (second part of verse 21)

---

*Remember* from Lesson Two the important of His name? This is that same name. The name that

Moses was instructed to use when Pharaoh would ask who he was sent by. The name is the “I AM. I WAS AND WILL ALWAYS BE” – YHVH – Yaweh.

In this final verse the author uses the Hebrew word **יָחַל** (yachal) which means to have an expectant hope. Verse 22 sums up also in a unique way, because not only are we hoping, but the meaning here “even as we put our hope” means that in proportion to our hope/trust in Him, His love will be upon us.

*I sure want His love* - also translated “mercy” and “lovingkindness” - to rest on me! Don’t you?

It’s not that He’s withholding his love because I am not fully giving him my hopes here. Don’t misunderstand. The idea is that I’m able to fully be open to His unfailing love because I’m fully open to total surrender in my willingness to hope in Him.

*Sister*, as we close our time today, let this be your prayer that you would surrender every tendency you

may have to trust in the people and things of this world and that you would rejoice in the God of the Word, His Truth in your life, and His promise of power over death. Write your prayer on the following

page naming in your prayer truths of who God is and your commitment to Him to trust Him fully in every corner of your life:

# My Prayer



# ~ Lesson Three – Day Four ~

## I Have Put My Hope in Your Word – Part 1

Scripture Focus: Psalm 119

*When I began* my study on what the Bible says about hope I began with a basic word study. I

literally looked up every verse that had the word hope in it. Some Bible translations use the word “trust” or “wait” where others use “hope”, but in my overall study I began to see a theme and flow. Hope – true, worthwhile, biblical hope – is only ultimately possible because of the truth of the resurrection. This leads us to a relationship with the Giver of hope, and in relationship we need to come to terms with or wrestle with what that hope looks and feels like in our lives. It’s easy enough to say that we “hope” this or that will happen – not easy at all though, to face a devastating season of what feels like endless loss and disappointment. Do we honor a God who gives hope in these most desperate times? Certainly. But do we really, confidently hope – or do we have simple wishful thinking? I believe that true hope is both simple in its availability and difficult in that we often have to wrestle to really grasp it.

*This wrestling* has been at the center of much of my own story. During each season of waiting on God

it was ultimately the truth of His word that strengthened my hope. Did you catch that? It was the truth of His **word** that brought me the most hope. What has God promised and does He have a habit of keeping or breaking His promises? Over and over, in spite of the disappointments I faced, I saw that God, through time most definitely kept His Word. As I faced infertility, I looked to His Word for encouragement and hope. Through the pain of a broken marriage, His Word brought me wisdom and hope. In coping with my husband’s depression and substance abuse, His Word was my strength. So, it was no surprise that in my studies I found that the chapter in the Bible most filled with hope was the one whose entire focus was on the importance of the Word of God – Psalm 119.

*Psalm 119* is one of the most unique chapters in the Bible. That’s clear enough reading it in English, but reading it in Hebrew is even more amazing. When you read it in Hebrew you see the beauty of the structure. Psalm 119 is divided into 22 sections: one for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Each section is composed of 8 verses and each verse begins with the same Hebrew letter. It’s not only beautifully written, it’s got a purpose! It’s special kind of poem that makes learning the word easy and you might have learned this way in school. This kind of poem is known as an acrostic. Each verse contains a special word pertaining to God’s commandments, law, ordinances, word, judgments, statutes, precepts and decrees.

*If you are familiar* with Psalm 119 then there might be one big question on your mind as you’re reading this introduction right now, “How are we going to study Psalm 119 in two days of home Bible study?” We’re not. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible with twenty-two sections that each have eight verses. With 176 verses in the entire chapter, it would be too much to cover in a single day. Instead, we will be looking at several verses that specifically point to the hope we have because of God’s Word and then I will be encouraging you take the time to read through Psalm 119 on your own.

*My heart* is that you will come away with a renewed passion to be in God’s Word!

Pray Psalm 119:18 “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your Law.”

Are you ready? Let’s Study!

1. Read Psalm 119:1-24 Make a note of several verses you read that shows how King David\* feels about God’s word.

While studying, we want to see David as our inspiration and role model. Inspired by the Holy Spirit (Hebrew: the ruach chodesh), he wrote this Psalm over 3000 years ago and yet reading it today I feel that David could be sitting across from me sharing his heart. The Bible says that God called David a “man after His own heart.” That is high praise and calls me to want to get to know David all the more through this Psalm.

\*David is not named as the author. Some think it might have been the prophet Ezra. However, tradition and scholars tend to agree that David was, so for our study I’ll be referring to King David as the author.

2. Read Psalm 119: 25-48 What did David do when he was discouraged? Write the verses and examples here:

Write Psalm 119:43 – underline the word “hope”

Where has David placed his hope? \_\_\_\_\_

This is the verse where the word “hope” first appears in this chapter. The word for hope here is the Hebrew word: יָחַלְתִּי (yi-ḥā-lā-tî) from the root יָחַל (yachal) meaning an expectant hope. This word does not mean to wonder if something will happen and “hope” it does but, to “know” that something will happen in the future. We do not hope that God will protect us, we “know” he will.

The word “hope” might appear here, 43 verses into the chapter, but if you’ll look you’ll see hope throughout from verse one to verse 42. It’s centered on one hope-giving reality: God’s Word. In fact, David so treasures God’s Word that after 42 verses of recounting how deliberately he needs, wants, works for, memorizes, treasures, recounts, and obeys God’s Word He asks God to not take – literally “snatch” – the “word of truth” from his mouth.

Does this strike you as odd? Why would he even be concerned that God do such a thing as snatch the word away? Well, David’s been through a lot – A LOT – and by “a lot” I mean serious sinful behavior.

3. Read Psalm 51:1-19 The introduction in your Bible will give you a reminder about why David wrote this psalm. He had broken the word of God. He had sinned by coveting, murdering, lying, committing adultery. What does he say to God in verse 11?

What does he say in 51:15?

Before that in verse 11 he cried out for God NOT to cast him away or take His Holy Spirit, and later in Psalm 119:43 he pleads again, don't take this from me! What does this say about David's priorities? Write your thoughts here:

What about you?

Where does God's word rank as a priority in your life and heart?

Write your thoughts here:

## ~ Lesson Three – Day Five ~

### I Have Put My Hope in Your Word – Part 2

Scripture Focus: Psalm 119

*I remember a season* of my life when it occurred to me that I hadn't opened my Bible for personal study in over a week. I had read it with my students at school where I was teaching (a Christian school), I had opened it at church, I had even opened it to quickly race through answers in the Bible study I was attending! Ha! But there it sat in between those moments completely untouched, totally unread – no priority in my personal life and relationship with God. Maybe you've heard it said, "Seven days without prayer makes one weak?" I suggest to you that the same is true for being in the Word. Truly being in

God's word isn't checking it off a list of to-do's to accomplish any more than spending time with your best friend or grandchild is. You treasure and long for time with them. Do you feel the same about God's Word?

Think of it the way a friend of mine said:

"One day without the Word and you'll know it.  
Two days and your husband will know it,  
three and the whole world will know."

If you don't think so, perhaps it's because you are not experiencing the transformational power of what truly being in the Word can bring, and so missing the Word is par for your day instead of rare.

*There are no lifestyle* activities I can imagine literally going without. A lifestyle activity is something I enjoy doing, but don't have to do - like watching TV. I can certainly live without it even though I enjoy it a lot. I can live without reading books, talking walks with my dog, going out for a cup of coffee. None of these are life-saving, just pleasurable lifestyle activities. I used to treat reading God's Word like that. I could live without it, but it was nice when I did it.

That is no longer true for me. Now, I cannot get enough of God's word.

*I long to spend time* reading and praying and learning more from Him. David wrote in Psalm

119:20, "My soul is consumed with longing for your laws..." vs 81 says, "My soul faints with longing for your salvation..." vs 82, "My eyes fail, looking for your promise..." I actually know just how he feels! Do you?

Take a moment to pray about this. Consider how you might adjust your schedule so you can give God the time He deserves.

*Have you put your hope in God's judgments? Is what He has decided final enough for you? David had most definitely been on the receiving end of God's judgment. In fact, David and Bathsheba committed adultery, conceived a child, and part of God's judgment on their sin was that their child would die. Harsh and so painful! And yet, David can come before the Lord and say that he has "hope in your judgment." This hope is because of David's confidence in the righteousness of God. That is why we can hope in the Word of God. It is right. It is true. It is not going to fail us even when we fail Him.*

Read Psalm 119:49-50

What a strong thought!

4. From verse 49, write what David wants God to do and why. Then from verse 50 write from where David draws comfort:

\_\_\_\_\_

In Psalm 119 we see at least FIVE verses where David repeats this phrase.

Using the chart on the following page, write the opening phrase in each of these verses in the first column.

Write the hope phrase in the second column. In the third column, think about your life and how it would look if you let David's model be yours.

How would it look in each instance to really live as if your hope was fully in God's Word?

Think of relationships, your job, your family, your health, big decisions you're facing. Use the verses before and after each one to clarify how this might look in your life.

| Psalm<br>119: | Opening Phrase | Hope Phrase | My Life |
|---------------|----------------|-------------|---------|
| 43            |                |             |         |
| 74            |                |             |         |
| 81            |                |             |         |
| 114           |                |             |         |
| 147           |                |             |         |

Now, select one of these verses to commit to memory. That's right. You can totally do that. Grab a stack of Post-It™ Notes, write that verse down on several of them and post it alllllll over your house – your mirror – your car – your purse – your refrigerator – where ever you're going to see it and remember, "Hey Lady, God's got this! Let your hope be in his Word!"

In a few days, Lord willing, I'll be seeing you face to face at our next Bible study. And guess what I'm going to ask you? I'm going to ask, "Where have you put your hope?" and do you know what I expect you to be able to say? Loud, proud, strong, and bold, like there is no way God or anyone anywhere could snatch it away from your lips...

**"I have put my hope in His Word!"**

In fact, better yet, the moment you say "amen" after you finish today's study why not text me? Send me a text and simply say, "I have put my hope in His Word!" My personal cell number is 562.755.4964 It doesn't matter to me if we've met or not before, my heart echoes what David wrote in Psalm 119:63, "I am a friend to all who fear You, to all who follow Your precepts." Let's be Bible verse friends and praise our awesome God together, proclaiming boldly that we have put our hope in His Word! Amen? Amen!

In closing today, why not write out your own prayer of passion for the Word? Ask God to increase your desire to be in the Word and to bless you as you seek Him daily. Write your prayer here:

*My Prayer*





# The Alef-Bet in Psalm 119

There are nearly a hundred more verses in this most powerful and hope-filled Psalm. Set aside time right now to read Psalm 119 from alef to tav – beginning to end. Make this a special goal over the next two weeks to read the entire Psalm every day. I know that God will fulfill His word to “open your eyes and let you behold wonderful things from His Law” as you read.

You may have noticed in your Bible that each section of Psalm 119 is divided into 8 verses and each of those verse groups has a Hebrew letter heading. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alef-bet (alphabet), and guess what? There’s 22 sections in this Psalm! Not only that but every word in each section begins with that section’s letter of the alphabet. You won’t notice that at all in the English though, so here is the Hebrew along with the English translation of verses 1-8. Note the first letter in each verse begins with ALEPH (in blue).

| N                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 1 ALEPH                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>אָשְׁרֵי תְּמִיּוּדָךְ הַחֲלֵכִים בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה:<br/>YHWH TORAH</p> <p>אָשְׁרֵי נֹצְרֵי עֲדוּתוֹ בְּכָל־לֵב יִדְרְשׁוּהוּ:<br/>EDAH</p> <p>אֵף לֹא־פָעְלוּ עוֹלָה בְּדַרְכֵייו הַלְכוּ:<br/>DEREK</p> <p>אִתָּה צִוִּיתָה פְּקֻדֹתַי לְשֹׁמֵר מִאֵד:<br/>PIQUUD</p> <p>אֲחֲלִי יִכְנֹו דְרָכַי לְשֹׁמֵר חֻקֶּיךָ:<br/>CHOQ</p> <p>אִז לֹא־אֲבוֹשׁ בְּהִבִּטִי אֶל־כָּל־מִצְוֹתֶיךָ:<br/>MITSVAH</p> <p>אֲוֹדךָ בִּישָׁר לֵב בְּלִמְדֵי מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ צְדָקָה:<br/>MISHPAT</p> <p>אֲתַחֲזֶקֶךָ אֲשֶׁמֶר אֶל־תַּעֲזֹבֵנִי עַד־מָאָד:<br/>CHOQ</p> | <p>1 Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to <b>Yahweh’s law</b>.</p> <p>2 Blessed are those who keep his <b>statutes</b>, who seek him with their whole heart.</p> <p>3 Yes, they do nothing wrong. They walk in his <b>ways</b>.</p> <p>4 You have commanded your <b>precepts</b>, that we should fully obey them.</p> <p>5 Oh that my ways were steadfast to obey your <b>statutes!</b></p> <p>6 Then I wouldn’t be disappointed, when I consider all of your <b>commandments</b>.</p> <p>7 I will give thanks to you with uprightness of heart, when I learn your righteous <b>judgments</b>.</p> <p>8 I will observe your <b>statutes</b>. Don’t utterly forsake me.</p> |

# ~ Lesson Three – Day Six ~

## My Hope Is in You – Part 1

Scripture Focus: Psalm 25

Psalm 25 is another acrostic, where each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet...sort of. The sixth letter “vav” is skipped then “kof” is skipped and replaced with “resh”. Other than that, it’s an acrostic. Because it’s an acrostic, the theme doesn’t present in chronological or cause/effect flow but rather a collection of thoughts, concepts, statements, and desires that focus on a theme. Let’s dig together and study God’s word.

Are you Ready? Let’s Study!

Read Psalm 25:1-22 (from the New International Version)

Write verses 4-5 here:

1. What does David want God to do? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who does David say God is to him? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Psalm 119:105

3. This verse says that God’s word is a \_\_\_\_\_

Not only is God’s Word a lamp to illuminate our path, but David is reaching to the personal God and Savior in his life. David uses the personal revealed name of God that we learned about in an earlier lesson: YHVH – LORD – Yaweh – along with the Creator name of God: Elohim

David is asking the Lord God to be his guide.

Read verses 8-10

4. What is the Lord like?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. As a result, what will He do?
  - 1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_

Read verse 11

5. What does David ask God to do? \_\_\_\_\_

Read 1 John 1:9 and write it here:

|

Will you do this? \_\_\_\_\_

Read 1 Peter 5:6 and write it here:

|

Will you do this? \_\_\_\_\_

**Jesus said,** “Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.” (John 14:21)

Are you willing to keep God’s commands? \_\_\_\_\_

## ~ Lesson Three – Day Seven ~

### My Hope Is in You – Part 2

Scripture Focus: Psalm 25

There’s a reason why I wanted you to commit to those last three rather self-evident questions. I met with a woman not too long ago who said to me that she knew why so much wrong, so much hurt and disappointment, so much pain was happening in her life. She knew, she said with tears welling up and spilling from her eyes, because she had done so many bad things in her past that God was punishing her. I’ve met with women like this in every season of ministry - an elderly great-grandmother, an infertile woman, a young mother of three, a widow, a divorcee, a homeless woman, a woman with chronic illness...even me. But this is not the message of God’s Word. God’s Word, we see here in Psalm 25 is full of hope for those who are humble, teachable, obedient, and willing to confess their sins.

*Sister,* I believe that you want to live a hope-filled life. You want to live confident in the hope of the resurrection and in the hope of your relationship with God, but are you letting that hope – like I once did – remain in the future? That someday, after we’re done “a’passin’ through” this world, you’ll have that hope met? Are you – like I once was – hopeful for God’s kingdom to come, but not experiencing hope now? As we learned in our last study God’s dominion is now, His kingdom is now, His relationship, His hope is for now and it’s for you. This is where the wrestling comes in. Remember though, we “wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Eph 6:12 KJV) David meets us right here in Psalm 25 again. See who David is wrestling with:

Verse 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 3b \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 7 \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 11 \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 19 \_\_\_\_\_

God’s word reminds us that we have an adversary! We have an enemy constantly accusing us. We read Revelation 12:10 in our last study (look it up and mark it in your Bible if you haven’t yet). It says that Satan is our accuser and he accuses us day and night. Not that we needed any help, though. Many of us do a fine job reviewing our sinful past and recalling the sins that God has promised, upon our confession, to forgive. We might not be able to forget, but we need to remember that our youthful and sinful ways are not reasons for God to disengage with us. Not if we’re repentant.

David, in verse 7 acknowledges his sinful past. Read that verse carefully again. How does David ask God to “remember” him? \_\_\_\_\_

Instead of God thinking of you (“calling you to mind” it means in the Hebrew) through the lens of your wrongdoings, David asks that God recalls him in accordance to His mercy, His love, His “covenant loyalty” (lit. Hebrew).

Now, look again at verses 14-15. There’s three things that David says that Yaweh (the LORD) does for those who fear him and have their eyes on him. Write them here:

Verse 14 \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 14 \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 15 \_\_\_\_\_

~ Confide --- Reveal the Covenant --- Release from Snares ~

Think of the first and last things in these verses that God will do:

He’ll confide or whisper. This word in Hebrew is טִיף (sow-d) and it means “secret.” Where does someone have to be to whisper a secret to you? Hollering across a room? Yelling from the around the corner? No! They’d have to be right up next to you! In. Your. Ear! Up close and personal. That’s how David sees his relationship with God. And that’s how you can too!

Next, in verse 15 it says, “he will release my feet from the snare.” Sister, again, how close does someone have to be to release you from a snare? He’d have to bend down and untangle your feet. He’d need to be close enough to see your distress and help you out. Are you catching on, here? This isn’t a far-off God who recalls your knuckleheaded behaviors or your willful wickedness and angrily tosses them back at you to remind you of your failings! This is an up-close and personal God who cherishes you, sees you through the lens of His great mercy, and is close enough to whisper His counsel in your ear. And when you slip up - whether by your own doing or by the treacherous ways (see verse 3) of those who know better – He will

...

Read verses 16-20 and write at least 9 things God will do!

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

5) \_\_\_\_\_

6) \_\_\_\_\_

7) \_\_\_\_\_

8) \_\_\_\_\_

9) \_\_\_\_\_

This is a powerful and intimate way to remember our Great God and what He will do for those who fear Him and hope in Him. When you're "lonely and afflicted" . . . when your "troubles have multiplied" . . . when you're surrounded by hateful enemies . . . Go back to this list!

Now read David's beautiful, final words in verses 21-22,

*"May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope is in you.  
Redeem Israel, O God, from all their troubles."*

Where, again, is David's hope? \_\_\_\_\_

And his selfless ultimate call in the final verse is that not only would he as an individual be protected and hope-filled, but that all God's people would be the same. In Psalm 33:12 we read that the nation whose "God is the Lord" will be blessed. How can a nation be blessed if its individual people aren't living for the Lord?

*Sister*, my prayer for you today is that you would pray "lift up your soul" to the Lord. That you would put your trust in Him. Using Psalm 25 as your model, why not write your own prayer here:

*My Prayer*



# ~ Lesson Three – Day Eight ~

~ O Israel, Put Your Hope in the Lord ~

Part 1

Scripture Focus: Psalm 120-134 – The Songs of Ascent

*Growing up,* traveling to grandma’s house from ours wasn’t “over the river and through the woods, but it was down the 101 freeway, then to the 5 and finally into the heart of San Diego in a little neighborhood called “Normal Heights.” There were a couple of rivers along the way, but no woods. With or without rivers and woods, my two sisters and I would sit in the back seat and sing much of that drive from Thousand Oaks to San Diego - silly camp songs, fun church songs, and if it was the season, festive Christmas songs. We’d clap and bounce and sing and play the time away all the while looking forward to not just seeing Grandma and Grandpa but hoping the house would smell of cookies and breads and other treats. We looked forward to tasting all the foods of the holidays, playing with our cousins, watching the slide show of their latest trip to the Grand Canyon, and falling asleep to the songs from the Lawrence Welk show. The trip to get there was also filled with Mom’s and Dad’s stories. Both of them had grown up in San Diego, so as we’d get closer to their childhood homes they’d point out places they’d been, telling stories of where they’d met, antics they’d done as teens (Dad’s were the best – what a stinker he was!), “That’s my old elementary school, girls” and “That’s where I pulled a prank on Old Mr. What’s-His-Name” and “That place used to be my barber shop.” – pointing out a record store. “I got in a fight on that corner...” and on and on. And it didn’t matter if we’d already heard every story. For me, and my sisters I’m sure as well, I liked hearing them again and picturing our parents as a kids or teens. I liked imagining them in the clothes of the day looking like kids from the set of “Leave It to Beaver.”

*I imagine* that there’s a special place in your heart as well for the memories you have in traveling to a loved one’s home. Like me, you can picture the route, the familiar buildings, homes, parks and see the things that have changed over time. Every corner has a memory and the final place where you’re heading is dear to your heart because of all that has happened there. I hope in our study you’ll read the chapters we’re going to look at with this in mind. Each chapter is a reminder and was written to honor and draw our hearts to a significant place of hope – God’s City – Jerusalem.

*We’re going to look* at a special group of Psalms called the “Songs of Ascent.” You may have never noticed that fifteen entire Psalms get this special category. King David wrote four of them (122, 124, 131, 133). Solomon wrote Psalm 127 and the remaining ten are anonymous. They are “ascent” psalms because they were sung as the Jews would walk up to the city of Jerusalem “a city on a hill” (Matthew 5:14). When YHWH delivered His people from Egypt, He set for them Holy Days to observe. Three of those seven holy days required that they go to Jerusalem – Passover, Feast of Weeks (Shavuot), Feast of Booths (Sukkot). These became the traditional songs to sing as they “ascended” the hill to Jerusalem, Mount Zion, the Holy City. Also, some traditions say that the Jewish priests would sing these Songs of Ascent as they walked up the steps to the temple in Jerusalem.

Are you Ready? Let’s Study!

We’re going to take two days to study this collection, so divide up your reading as best suits your schedule. In every psalm we’ll be reading I would encourage you to picture yourself walking the road up to Jerusalem. Maybe you have sandals, dusty and road-worn, perhaps a leather satchel slung over your

shoulder, and you're singing these songs. As you get closer to Jerusalem you may even hear the sounds of other families and groups singing as well. Then as you gather closer and closer your songs join and you are singing in unison the familiar words of one of these songs as you ascend to the Holy City – the city of David.

This entire collection of Psalms is about ascending to what place? - Jerusalem, the City of God. Why include this special focus in a study on Hope? Because, my friend, as we will see, while Jerusalem is a real place we could visit today, it is also a reminder of God's provision and deliverance and His ultimate victorious return. How much more hope could we want? As Christians we have not grown up with a religious tradition that focused on an earthly Holy City, but God's people, the Jews, have from their earliest youthful prayers to their final prayers at death's door prayed for the peace of Jerusalem. Maybe you have been blessed to have been able to visit the Holy Land and walk the streets of Jerusalem. This is a longing of my heart for sure! As Christians we do not have a central place of worship that calls us from every denomination together. We go to all just go to our own churches every Sunday. But as Jews, while they may worship in a synagogue, their hearts collectively hope for Jerusalem. At the close of every feast, Passover in particular, Jews sing or recite:

**לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם**  
Leshana haba'a biy'rushalayim  
Next year in Jerusalem!

Jerusalem is referred to by at least 70 different names in the Bible! Here are a few:

- |                                              |                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) Adonay Yireh The Lord is seen (Gen 22:14) | 12) Kiryat Hannah David City Where David Camped (Is 29:1) |
| 2) Ariel Lion of God (Is 29:1)               | 13) Kiryah Ne'emanah Faithful City (Is 1:25)              |
| 3) Betulah Virgin (Lam 1:16)                 | 14) Klilat Yoffi Paragon of Beauty (Lam 2:15)             |
| 4) Drushah Sought After (Is 62:12)           | 15) Moriah (Gen 22:2)                                     |
| 5) Gai Hizayon Valley of Vision (Is 22:1)    | 16) Neveh Zedek Righteous Dwelling (Jer 31:22)            |
| 6) Gilah Joy (Is 65:18)                      | 17) Oholivah My Tent is in Her (Ezek 23:4)                |
| 7) Ir Ha'Elohim City of God (Ps 87:2)        | 18) Shalem Peace (Whole) (Gen 14:18)                      |
| 8) Ir Ha'Emet City of Truth (Zech 8:3)       | 19) Tzur Hamishor Rock of the Plain (Jer 21:13)           |
| 9) Jebus (Judges 19:10)                      | 20) kiryat melekh rav City of the Great King (Psalm 48:2) |
| 10) Kir City (Ezek 13:14)                    |                                                           |
| 11) Kiriya Aliza Joyful City (Is 22:2)       |                                                           |

If you have time...look up those verses and highlight them in your Bible. Next time you're reading you'll see them and remember how special Jerusalem is. Let that highlighting be a reminder for you to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem."

1. Read Psalms 120-123 - A moving phrase that only occurs three times in the Bible (once in Ezra and twice in Psalms) is found in Psalm 121:1 and Psalm 123:1, "I lift up my eyes..."  
In Psalm 121:1-2, where does help come from? Write the complete answer (v2) here:

2. Read Psalm 123 and answer:  
To whom we look: \_\_\_\_\_  
And what are we expecting from Him: \_\_\_\_\_

# ~ Lesson Three – Day Eight ~

~ O Israel, Put Your Hope in the Lord ~

Part 2

Scripture Focus: Psalm 120-134 – The Songs of Ascent

3. What words or phrases in Psalms 120-123 tell you that the writer is picturing Jerusalem and the paths to and from Jerusalem? Write those words/phrases along with the verses here:

Example: *121:8 the Lord will watch over your coming and going*

*I found at least 9 in these chapters. There are eleven more chapters in this collection of psalms and every one of them points to Jerusalem in some way. As we continue to read, be alert for these words and phrases.*

4. Read Psalm 121:2, 124:8, 134:3 – What phrase is repeated in each of these psalms? Write it here:

Who made the earth? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will bless those who “trust in Him?” \_\_\_\_\_

Who will bless Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

*Dear sister,* when you are facing challenges and hardships, I would encourage you to recall exactly to

Whom you pray: The Maker of the Earth.

He is the One who by His very word spoke the entire universe into existence. He knows you, cares for you, sees you and desires relationship with you. If that is not hope-giving, I honestly do not know what is.



Read Jeremiah 32:17 – and write it here:

|

What's too difficult for God? \_\_\_\_\_

What about your finances? Your relationships? Your job? Your health? Your loved one's diminishing health? Are any of these too difficult for God? \_\_\_\_\_

I realize this is one of those easy Sunday School answers. I realize also, that while you'd never – I don't think – actually say that anything was too difficult for God, that it's not the just problem itself that you wrestle with. It's your feelings about the problem you're facing that are hard.

*You want the stress to end.*

*You want the sadness to cease.*

*You don't want to feel anxious any more.*

*You have an intellectual grasp of God's power, but you're not "feeling" it.*

And when you think you're doing better, something triggers your emotions again and off you go – anxiety, stress, fear, doubt – they all come swirling around you all over again. Sound familiar?

5. Read Psalm 124 – What perils are mentioned? Write them here:

|

6. Where was the Lord during each of these perils? \_\_\_\_\_ (vs 2)

7. Read Isaiah 43:2 What does God say about going through trials?

|

*Sister*, you may be reading this and going through deep hurt and disappointment. You may feel swallowed by the flood or torn by the teeth of the of the hurtful people in your life, but you can have hope. You may have a loved one wrestling with their faith in light of the pain they are going through. Read Deuteronomy 31:6 (quoted also in Hebrews 13:5) and write it here:

|

Even when we do not feel God's presence in the midst of our pain, we can still believe His promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us. Like God's people walking to Jerusalem, facing perils along the way and having been delivered from the attacks of men and natural disasters, you too can keep your eyes on the God of Israel, the God of Jerusalem, the God of you and me.

# ~ Lesson Three – Day Ten ~

~ O Israel, Put Your Hope in the Lord ~

Part 3

Scripture Focus: Psalm 120-134 – The Songs of Ascent

Read Psalm 126

8. Where had the captives been (generally speaking)? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What was it like for them when they returned? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Ezra 1:1-3

This verse recounts when the Jews returned from their Babylonian exile. Scholars believe this may have been the occasion for which Psalm 126 was written as it prophetically describes the Jewish return from the Babylonian exile. The Psalm describes how, when the long-awaited return to Zion finally comes, the recollection of the harsh and bitter exile will seem like just a bad dream – and we will explode with joy at the miraculous turn of events. (The verb tense of the Psalm indicates a vision of the future redemption, when "our mouths will be filled with laughter.") To this day, Psalm 126 is recited by Jewish families as an introduction to "Grace After Meals" on Shabbat, holidays, and other joyous occasions.

Read Psalm 126 and take note of the word "joy." Write the phrases that mention joy:

10. Reading through this chapter why do the people have joy?

*The other day at church,* my husband and I were at our quarterly meeting with staff, deacons, and elders. There were some new faces since we had last met so everyone was going around making introductions – how long we'd been attending La Mirada Christian Church and what role we have. I introduced myself, "I'm on staff as the women's pastor and have been attending since June of 2010." When my husband's turn came he stood and said, "I'm an elder, and I've been attending since May 5<sup>th</sup> of 2013." Only Pastor Jay and I knew the special significance of that day and my heart welled with joy looking at my husband standing there saying, "I'm an elder." How far he's come since that May 5<sup>th</sup>. That day is Cinco de Mayo for most of California, but it's Sobriety Anniversary for my husband.

*That was a day and a weekend I'll never forget.* Unbeknownst to me, Glen had been

in a drunken rage and had been racing and driving recklessly with our 17-year-old son in the car. Jonathan had to nearly jump out of the moving car to get away from his inebriated and cursing father. He called me panicked to tell me what was going on. I hung up the phone and raced to pack a few belongings so I could leave the house before and if Glen made it home. But that was the weekend that Glen, after years and years of drinking, violence, rage, and abuse, finally hit bottom enough to get sober.

*For three years I had gone to church alone.* But for the ten years before that, even when Glen had gone to church, I had lived with a "church husband" and a "home husband." At church he would look fine, but at home he was either depressed and reclusive or unpredictable and rageful. Either way, he drank himself to sleep almost every night. My life was an exile of sorts. I was far away from what I hoped my reality should be. I was a captive of my broken and often terrifying marriage. On May 5<sup>th</sup> that all changed. Glen sobered up, confessed his sins, got help from AA and our pastor and began true healing in his heart by returning his life to Jesus. Like the men in Psalm 126, I had felt my life was a horrible dream. I know Glen had felt it too. But God redeemed our past, restored our marriage and, while I had sown "in tears" I was now and am today reaping "with songs of joy."

*I would encourage you* to do a word study on "joy." Look up and take note of what leads up to the moments of joy you find. I promise, you'll never read that "this or that" person was happy and then they had joy, you'll not see how great everything was going and then – Joy! No, you'll find that joy comes in God's word over and over again after deep sorrow, heavy loss, total exile. Whether you are in a season of exile and longing or you are in a joyful season of restoration you can point your attention to Zion and the God of deliverance for whom it says, "The Lord has done great things **for us**, and **we** are filled with joy."

11. Read Psalm 122 again. Write every word or phrase that refers to more than one person.

Example: *vs 1- "I rejoiced with THOSE who said...Let US go..."*

*I found at least 7 references to plural pronouns and people.*

12. Now skim through chapters 123-132 and see how many other references you can find that relate to "us" going through trials, God delivering "us", God doing good to "those" who are upright, etc. Write a few phrases here from the ones that stood out to you:

13. Read Psalm 133 According to this chapter, what is good and pleasant? (NIV)

14. What does this say to you in light of going through trials?

I'm not sure what it is about going through heartache and trial, but many of us are better at being there for others than we are at asking for others to be there for us. And yet, over and over and over again in these psalms we see the blessing of "us." It is GOOD and PLEASANT for us to dwell together in unity. To be there for one another, to be with one another.

15. Re-Read Psalm 133:3 Where does the LORD bestow blessing?

*Our Father* echoed this model in Jesus Christ who did not complete His ministry alone but as soon as He was baptized began calling disciples. He taught us to pray "our Father", "give us our daily bread." In His final hours he wanted to pray together WITH his disciples, upon His return, He met up with His disciples to break bread and fellowship with them and Heaven itself is pictured as the great Zion (Jerusalem) where he will gather us all together and we'll truly be in unity!

*Are you aching today?* Are you faltering on your journey to Jerusalem? Are you in a season of wrestling with your faith, your hope, even your love? Maybe your eyes are on Jesus but you need a hand to hold along the way. Sister, reach out to others. This was never meant to be a solo journey. You may feel alone, but you have at least one friend - besides the Lord - who wants to walk alongside you – me! As I am writing these very words I am praying for you. As you are reading these words know that you can reach out and connect with me for prayer. You may feel alone and like there is no one you trust to share your heart with today, but you can cry out to your Abba Father and you can reach out to me. I will pray with you and listen and walk with you. What a blessing to be in unity. I hope you will reach out and walk with someone today.

*We have read* over and over again of the faithfulness of our God in our study. From the resurrection to the relationship to these days of wrestling, He is faithful. Do not lose heart. You might not ever see the reason or understand the difficulties you are facing that is why we are called to "walk by faith and not by sight." Our hope is not in what is seen or perceived. We hope in God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth.

Until we meet again, know that you are loved and prayed for and

*"may the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth, bless you from Zion."*

(Ps 134:3)

Your sister in Christ,

*Jennifer*

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p.s. This is one of my favorite songs. It has given me comfort when my heart felt the weight of the trials I was going through. "He Will Carry You" by the Gaithers

*There is no problem too big  
God cannot solve it  
There is no mountain too tall  
God cannot move it  
There is no storm too dark  
God cannot calm it  
There is no sorrow too deep  
He cannot soothe it  
Oh, if He carried the weight of the world upon His shoulders  
I know my brother that He will carry you  
Oh, if He carried the weight of the world upon His shoulders  
I know my sister that He will carry you*

You can listen to it [here](#) or by searching YouTube for "He Will Carry You"

## *Discussion Questions*

### ~ Looking Back on Lesson Three ~

- 1) From Psalm 33 we read about where our hope and trust should be. Daily we can be challenged to actually live like we place our trust in God. How did you respond on page 108 and how has reading through these Psalms encouraged you to be more steadfast in your hope?
- 2) As a group, read aloud Psalm 33:20-22. What do you think it means that God's love/mercy/lovingkindness rests on us?
- 3) Have you ever heard someone say that they couldn't be a Christian because "Christians are just a bunch of hypocrites?" Maybe you've even felt that way yourself. In light of your answers on page 113, how would taking God at His word and making God's word a priority in your life change this perception? Do you think it would? Why or why not?
- 4) What verse or verses did you commit to memory from Psalm 119? If you didn't memorize a verse, which verse from this Psalm spoke to your heart the most? Refer to page 115 in your study.
- 5) On page 119, I shared the story of the woman who thought that the bad things happening in her life were because God was punishing her. Maybe you relate? What did you read from Psalm 25 that encouraged you or that you could share with a discouraged friend? (I'm soooooo excited for our upcoming study in Job!! We're reeeeeally going to break down this whole misconception about suffering and punishment! When you get back to the big room in a few minutes, I'll give you a little preview...but seriously, I'm soooooo excited to do Job with you!) 😊
- 6) The Songs of Ascent...did you love these? I really enjoyed writing these study days for us! The beginning of this section I really just wanted you to write, write, write God's words. Which verse from pages 123 – 125 most spoke to your heart and what you're going through right now?
- 7) On pages 126-127 I shared about my husband's recovery from alcoholism and abusive behavior. He had been a "church husband" and a "home husband." In deliverance we have both found so much joy. Which phrases stood out to you from chapters 123-132 that you wrote down on page 127?

## "My Hope is Built on Nothing Less"

by Edward Mote, 1797-1874

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace;  
In every high and stormy gale  
My anchor holds within the veil.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, His covenant, and blood  
Support me in the whelming flood;  
When every earthly prop gives way,  
He then is all my Hope and Stay.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,  
Oh, may I then in Him be found,  
Clothed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne!  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.



# Hope Study Teaching Notes

Chapter Three Review: A Study in the Psalms: Wrestling and our Hope





# ~ Lesson Four Introduction ~

Scripture Focus: Job

*Can I be honest with you?* The book of Job has always troubled me. I've heard it told and read it many times over my years as a Christian. I've heard sermons about it, read books about it, listened to college professors teach about it but, the thought that God allowed Satan to torment Job to this degree has not settled well with me. As someone who takes God at His Word and who believes that this account is an historic truth, I have always ached trying to come to terms with its content. In addition, it is one of the most hotly contested books in the Bible. From Jewish sages over three millennia to Protestant, Catholic and even secular scholars, debates have carried on about the historical evidence of Job, the Hebrew language used, when it was written, by whom, etc. It's not an easy book to work through both from a basic understanding as well as an academic approach. So, I've tried to avoid it. There. I said it.

*And as I prepared this study on hope,* I was tempted to continue to ignore this book and simply find other Scripture to work through that would point us to hope. But my studies kept bringing me back to Job. I realized I couldn't be intellectually or spiritually or even emotionally honest if I couldn't dig into this story and really face it. It's the most devastating story I've ever read. I really wanted to be able to learn about God's truth about hope without having to grapple with Job and what Satan, with God's permission was allowed to do. I didn't want to deal with Job's "miserable comforters" and their flawed advice. Sigh.

*But I kept having to come back* to Job and ultimately I realized that if I wanted to be able to pastor and teach other women, I needed to be honest with my own issues here and face this tough book. You can call me the "reluctant pastor" now because I reeeeeeally wanted to ignore Job. But the more I ignored it the more I felt God calling me into it. And so, I obeyed. I read Job cover to cover a dozen times prepping for this portion of our study and here we are. Here you are. This is not a scholarly approach. I'm not well-versed enough in textual criticism to even attempt that. And besides, you want a Bible study, not university level exegesis and analysis, right? Phew. Me too.

*I know that God* wants us to dig in here and really be willing – or sort of willing as in my case – to face hard truths in His word. I'm not smiling as I am writing this. I'm actually crying. This was not an easy book to go through. In the next several days we won't be able to plumb the depths of what we have to learn, but we'll dip in and get started. It is my fervent prayer that you will, as I now have, honestly see God and realize truths about hope that you could never have known were it not for Job and what his testimony shows us about God and life and our own hearts.

*The life of Job offers* some of the most quoted sayings in human history – right up there with Shakespeare but about 3,000 earlier! This book gives us an understanding to the problem of pain and explores some of life's biggest questions: Why does God let bad things happen to good people? Can what feels like random pain have meaning? Can I trust that God is just in this unfair world? Will God finally show up? If so, when? We'll read and study and pray together to answer these and other questions. I believe you'll find new and deeper hope in our Savior through life's most difficult seasons.

**You'll need a couple of things ready in order to effectively read this book:**

- 1) Your Bible – Remember, no paraphrases. Please use a good translation like the New International (NIV), English Standard Version (ESV). The New Living Translation and The Message are both paraphrases so please do not read from them for this day’s study time. Also, you might consider using a basic Bible instead of a study Bible. A study Bible has notes and commentary with each chapter, but for the purpose of our study and growing our own skills, I recommend you get a basic Bible. You can even print the book of Job from [Biblegateway.com](http://Biblegateway.com). Another tip is to get the International Inductive Study Bible. It has lots of margin space to write your own notes but no commentary from other writers. So, you’ll be free to think and reason on your own.
- 2) Your own note paper or the included note taking pages from this study.
- 3) Highlighters or colored pencils (blue, green, orange)
- 4) Hint: I have found it helpful to listen to the Bible with my YouVersion Bible app. I like the ESV audio version the best because his voice is easy to listen to.
  - I have read the book aloud and posted it on the Dwelling Richly podcast. The link is here: [www.DwellingRichly.podbean.com](http://www.DwellingRichly.podbean.com) You can listen along as I read it with you.

*I encourage* you not to be intimidated to take notes while you read. When I’m reading I just jot some thoughts as they occur to me. I’m not trying to connect the dots while I read, make a new theological discovery, or try to come up with an insight no one has ever thought of, just me and the Word and my thoughts. So, as you read, take a few notes and mark them by the verse that the thought or question occurred to you. Also, be mindful as you read to note what that passage says about the character, behavior, approach of:

1. God - mark those in blue
2. Satan – make those in orange
3. Job – mark those in green

Consider what the passage says about:

1. The relationship between man and God
2. Sin and righteousness
3. How to respond to or comfort those in pain

This is a big, beautiful, and bold book of faith, and it is more than we could possibly cover together in two weeks – even in two months or the whole year. Our purpose here is not to plumb the depths of this book and come to a full and complete understanding of its truths. Our purpose is to continue to grow in our understanding of hope and what hope looks like in light of God’s Word. If we are to be women of the Word then let us be true students of its message. Over the next days of our study you’ll need to do just that – study.

I am praying that you will embrace the process and enjoy immersing yourself in Scripture. God has great insights ahead for those who enter in to this study. Let’s honor Him with our time and devotion. Prayerfully begin each day of study – not only for yourself and your understanding, but for your sisters in Christ. Let’s cover one another in love and prayer over the next two weeks. I’m there with you!

You are loved and prayed for,

*Jennifer*

# ~ Lesson Four – Day One ~

## Job chapters 1-3

*I had a few “ah-ha” moments* in college that helped me become a grown-up – two in particular. The first was learning that not everyone has the same point of view in life. The second was that just because something’s in print doesn’t make it true. Simple enough, but we’re not born with that information. We “gots to get edumacated” in those things along the way. Do you relate? We’re all grown-ups here, so I’m making the assumption that you’ve realized by now that not everyone sees the world from the same point of view as you do. You may have simply come to that realization, but for me it came in two distinct moments:

*My first alert* to one of these pretty obvious realities came the morning that I innocently asked my new roommate if I could borrow her roll-on deodorant. It was my freshman year in college when I was living in the dorms at Westmont, a Christian college in the beautiful hills above Santa Barbara. Looking back, I can totally get why she cringed and said, “Um, ew. No.” She was polite, but had a look on her face that made me realize that she must have thought I was kidding to even ask. But I was completely serious. I had grown up with sisters and well, “miyo es tuyo” – What’s mine is yours, right? Oh my, no! A scarf, maybe. Deodorant, no way no how! Lesson learned.

*The next ah-ha moment* on this came with Parent’s Weekend. Even though my parents lived only a couple hours down the coast, I was so happy to have them up for the weekend! I couldn’t wait to hug them, show them my room, introduce them to my professors and show them that their little girl was doing well and loving college life. But, as the weekend approached, I noticed that while I was happily talking about what I’d be doing when my parents came, several of my suite-mates were either dreading the visit or happy that their parents lived too far to come. I was so sad for them. As the semester moved along I heard girls on the hallway payphone yelling and crying on phone calls with their parents. I listened as my new friends shared how hard their relationships were with their families. It was a heart opening season for me as I grew in empathy for the life stories of these other young women. I don’t know how successful my seventeen year-old self was at being empathetic, but when I look back I know those experiences had a lasting impact on my life and have helped me to this day to not only appreciate the blessing and rich heritage I have coming from a god-fearing and loving family but to be aware that many, many do not come from happy childhoods and loving families. As flawed as our family was, my parents truly loved and honored God and that is a treasure to me in ways I’m still discovering.

*The account in Job* calls to mind this same idea, that we all come at life from the perspective we are given. We can gather perspective from the lives of others if we care to notice, but we only get to peek at what’s happening based on what we have seen or can imagine. The story of Job is an opportunity for us to view life as Job experienced it, but more than that, because of the way the account has been recorded, we can gain perspective from the responses of his wife, his friends (three in particular), Satan, and even God. As it relates to hope and our ability to hold on to it, Job is either the most devastating account or the most hope-filled.

*Our study* will only dip into the well of wisdom, understanding, and hope that Job's life story provides, but it will dip deeply. My prayer is that you will see a culminating of our past lessons on hope in the Bible: the essential truth of the resurrection, the reality of the relationship and the challenge of actually wrestling out what hope looks like in our lives.

NOTE: I've divided our first day into a morning and evening session. You can do it all in one sitting, but it's a little longer than most days, so you might want to complete the first half this morning and the second this afternoon. Either way, I'm looking forward to our time studying together!

Are you ready? Let's study!

Please remember two things that are important to Bible study:

- 1) Read from a translation like the NIV, ESV or New King James and not from a paraphrase like The Living Bible, New Living Bible, Message or Voice.)
- 2) Don't use a commentary or the commentary notes in your study Bible. Simply read and just let the Holy Spirit teach you. Be ok to not know the answer or understand fully what's going on there's great learning that comes from the ah-ha moments we get to through the learning process. Don't cheat yourself from that by using someone else's notes and ideas.

**MORNING SESSION:**

1. Read Job chapter 1. What is Job's first recorded statement after his first "test"? Write it here:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. After his second test what statement was written about how Job responded? (1:22 & 2:10b) Write it here:

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Read 1 Peter 5:8 – How does this compare to Job 1:7 in regards to Satan – what he can do and where he can go?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Satan is not in hell right now, as some people think. Read Revelation 20:10. What does this say about Satan's rule and final judgment?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. From Job 2:13, what did his friends do when they came to see him?

How does this contrast with his wife's statement to him in 2:9?

6. I've been alongside more women than I wish I had as they've been through deep sorrow, pain, loss, and death. It's so hard to know what to say. It never seems to get any easier. What have you found helpful to say to someone going through deep pain? Or, what would you have liked someone to say or not say to you when you were grieving? Write it here:

7. God is referred to as "The Almighty" thirty-one times in Job. This speaks to God's absolute sovereignty in all things. As you read the conversation between God and Satan, think about this: Does God find fault with Job? Write the verse that supports your answer.

Who found fault with Job and why?

**EVENING SESSION:**

8. Is God worthy of our worship? Our loyalty? Our reverence? Or do we just hang on to God because He keeps things going well for us? If God is truly worthy of our worship, we must submit to His full and entire nature and the means by which He operates and allows the world to operate. Read the following and write what they say about how God is at work in our lives and how Satan is permitted to be involved:

**Romans 8:29 -**

**I Corinthians 4:9 –**

**Psalm 8:2** – This is an interesting verse because of its implications. Read it carefully and note why “praise” (NIV) or “strength” (ESV) is coming from the mouths of infants. What does this do to the “foe/enemy and avenger?”

9. In two words, sum up how Job responds at the end of his first round of testing: (Job 1:21)
- 

Are you under trial or testing, my friend? Are you stunned by the loss you’re going through? My heart aches for you. If I could be with you today I would sit with you and just be still and silent and rest with you and weep with you.

I’ve done that before.

When I got word that my dear friend’s daughter had committed suicide I dropped everything and drove to her home. I laid with her... crumbled and sobbing together on the sofa, we just held on and wept and sighed. I poured silent prayers over her broken heart and body as we wept and trembled together. No words. Not a single one. Just tears and silence. We cried and held on until she was ready to look up and together, eye to eye, heart to heart I looked at her and held her wet face in my hands, “I’m so sorry.” That’s all.

In time we could speak. In time she could breathe, and she did. And she began the asking and the grasping – Why? But this amazing, strong, brave woman reminded me more of the righteousness of Job than anyone I’ve ever known. In her despair she looked up through the shroud of pain and confusion, through the dimness of this earth into the light and life of Heaven and she kept her eyes on her Savior. She has been an example of courage and faith like none I’ve ever known.

Perhaps the tragedies that come through our lives are actually weapons of God to “still the enemy and the avenger” like it says in Psalm 8:2. This side of heaven we will likely never know why God allowed loss and pain to happen.

Read Psalm 34 in closing today. Write three truths from this chapter that you can cling to as you experience affliction or come alongside someone who is suffering.

1)

2)

3)

Take a moment to pray that the Father will help you grow in your discernment. That in light of the perplexing and challenging situations you have to deal with in your life you will increase in your ability to respond in a godly way.

Over the next several days, we will have more opportunities to dig through and reflect upon some of the most difficult situations in Scripture. My prayer for you is that you will find hope and deepen your understanding of God, His will, His heart and what that all means for you personally.

I'm praying for you today, sweet sister. If you are aching through the pain of loss and sadness today; if you need someone to just sit and be still with you or wash you with Words of Scripture; if you need counsel and prayer – please do not hesitate to reach out. My heart is to come alongside the weary and tired, the lost or confused, the worried or even angry...and just be a friend who will listen and pray with no judgments or platitudes. You can call me at 562.755.4964 or email me at [Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com](mailto:Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com)

Until we meet again, know that you are loved and prayed for,

*Jennifer*



## ~ Lesson Four – Day Two ~

Scripture Focus: Job chapters 4-10 part 1 of 3

*What kind of religion do you want?* Swiss psychologist Paul Tournier suggested that, “We are nearly always longing for an easy religion, easy to understand and easy to follow; a religion with no mystery, no insoluble problems, no snags; a religion that would allow us to escape from our miserable human condition; a religion in which contact with God spares us all strife, all uncertainty, all suffering and all doubt; in short, a religion without the cross.” (*Reflections*, Harper & Row, 1976, p 142)

*As we move* into today’s study, let’s agree to be honest about our faith and our religion. If I’m going to live out what I say I believe, I must consider the implications and the cost. Christianity is only easy if we don’t really grapple with the hard questions.

*Knowing I was writing* a study on Hope and going through the book of Job, a Christian friend admitted to me that while she read the Bible cover to cover every year, she skips most of Job. “Just about everything his friends say is so bad I just don’t like to waste my time in it.” I get that. But – and this is what I told her – we all have friends like Job’s in our life, and honestly, we all can be just like them. Job’s friends, while having plenty of foolish things to say, also spoke some good and true things. Much of their problem is rooted not just in inaccurate thinking about God – who He is, how He engages, what He expects, etc. – but in a lack of willingness to face the complexities of this God and how life looks when we don’t actually know what the heck is going on. This is why we must take a look at their comments, read with discernment, and tighten up our theology.

*There. I said it. “Theology.”* A Christian friend (not the same one as above) said, “I don’t need theology. I just love people.” Hmmmm. Folks, whether you understand it or not, you. Have. A. Theology. You have an understanding about who you think God is and how you think He interacts with us and what you think He expects – if anything – from us.

*You may have never* thought about your faith in terms of having a theology, but you do. However accurate or inaccurate, you have an understanding about who you believe God is. This is your theology. And as we’ll discover the accuracy of your theology makes a big difference in how you live out your religion. As you move through life, you’re going to encounter your own theology and the theology of those around you will be revealed in how they respond to life. You’ll meet an old *Eliphaz* with a graceless theology, a legalistic *Bildad* who quotes old sayings and proverbs at you, or a young *Zophar* type who speaks in merciless dogmatic quips.

*Flat answers, pithy quotes, dogmatic explanations* – We’ve all known or been the person who responds like this. Reading the answers of these “miserable comforters” will tighten up our theology

and tune up our sensitivity to God's truth. When we hear error we'll be better equipped to respond with truth.

Are you ready? Let's study!

1. "The right word may be effective, but no word was ever as effective as a rightly timed pause."  
~Mark Twain

After pausing (rightly) alongside of their friend, Eliphaz is the first of Job's friends to speak up. He tip-toes into the dialog with a question in verse one, acknowledging Job's position of respect in their circle, and courteously asking to be heard. Eliphaz speaks as the voice of experience. In fact, that might be a good way to remember him: Eliphaz/Experience. Experience, while helpful, is not always used to bless others. In fact, sharing your experience might not only be wasted, but downright annoying. In 4:12-21 Eliphaz tries to strengthen his position with Job by asserting his hair-raising, even creepy vision. What would you do if someone affirmed their position by saying they had a vision?

2. What accurate truths about God did you find in chapters 4-5?

3. Re-read 4:12. From where does Eliphaz get his vision?

4. Does Eliphaz get this vision from God? \_\_\_\_\_ Be careful, my friend, when accepting the words, even powerful words that may have come from someone with a supernatural experience. Just because it's intense doesn't necessarily mean it's from God. Actually, God doesn't sneak up on people and scare them. So, this makes me question the source of this vision.

5. Eliphaz makes an accusation against Job in 4:5-11 which is not only a basic accusation to come from each of his friends and is a common quip even today 3000 or so years after Job! Review these verses and sum up in your own words this accusation:

(Hint: I've actually heard 4:7-8 quoted at someone going through difficulty!)

6. Is it our sin that causes evil in our lives? This is a natural question. We make observations and form our position about life based on what we can see and personally experience. No harm in that – or is there? Are we omniscient (all knowing)? Are we omnipresent (all present

everywhere)? We have a natural inclination to want life to add up. A rude driver swerves recklessly through traffic and a block later you see him pulled over getting a ticket! “Ha! You got what you deserved!” we’re likely to think. But does evil behavior end in punishment, or is perceived punishment the result of evil behavior? Read Psalm 73. What does this say about the wicked and their lot in life?

7. Read John 9:1-3 What does Jesus say about how the world looks at suffering and our assumptions about sin?

8. Eliphaz makes a series of statements, admonitions and assumptions about Job and the state of his heart. Review chapters 4 and 5 and write out any Read 5:17-18 Eliphaz is making an assumption about Job. What is it?

9. Like a bad cop trying to get a confession out of an innocent man, Eliphaz tries to persuade Job to confess and submit to God’s discipline. Re-read Job 1:8. Was Job under God’s discipline?

What did God say of Job? Write it here:

So, no one sinned. This man’s blindness wasn’t the fault of his parents and it wasn’t his fault either. And yet, surely we do “reap what we sow” and “get what we deserve.” God’s Word makes this clear as well. Here’s the challenge: Both are true. Is Job’s situation the norm in light of life’s general experience? No.

Most people do not experience anything near the utter devastation, loss, and personal torture as did Job. This is why he remains - some 3000 years later - a paragon of virtue. Because of his righteousness, his life story is recorded for all to read to this day.

We turn to Job’s account to find answers and insight to life’s most basic questions about God and why bad things happen to good people. Close your time in prayer today, my friend, and ask the Father to give you discernment when you’re facing trials. If you’re in sin, confess. If you’re not, ask for wisdom and the patience and virtue to wait righteously and honor God through it all.

## ~ Lesson Four – Day Three ~

Scripture Focus: Job chapters 4-10 Part 2 of 3

*In the mid-eighties* my husband Glen worked for Focus on the Family – a Christian organization founded by Dr. James Dobson. Focus had and still has a radio ministry that reaches millions of listeners every year with truths and hope for families and relationships that are founded on biblical principles. Glen worked in the department that would reply to letters received from listeners. Listeners wrote in asking for prayer, counseling, resources or all of the above.

*Glen and all the others* in his department were responsible for replying to the hundreds of letters that would come in, but specifically, to reply in a way that reflected the position of Dr. Dobson and Focus on the Family as a Christian ministry. So, instead of just crafting a letter off the top of their heads, they had a huge database of response letters from which to draw. If Sally from Lincoln, Nebraska wrote in for marriage advice, Glen could turn to a response from Dr. Dobson to offer advice and encouragement to her. If Bill from Seattle wrote in for prayer concerning his prodigal son, Glen and the others in the department had Dr. Dobson's own words from which to draw in writing back. Even if an angry, antagonistic person wrote in with hateful words, they had a loving reply ready to go. The response team used Dr. Dobson's wise words, and they were also able to add their own personalized touches as they responded. It was quite a thing to observe this team in action and know that God was using them in this way to minister to hundreds and thousands of Focus listeners.

*Wouldn't that be great* if we had such a database? When confronted with hardship, relationship challenges, illness, angry accusers we could just look up a wise response and be on our way. Guess what? We do! Job is an amazing testimony to us today of the power of truth and absolute trust in the will and ways of God. His relationship with God is clear in his responses. Was he confounded as to why he was suffering? Yes. Confused? Yes. Questioning? Yes, again. But, while not perfect, his theology was largely sound and this bolstered his resolve to remain firm in his assertions that he had not sinned.

*We are reading* Job's account with the advantage of knowing what was playing out in the heavens. We know about God's agreement with Satan. We know how God feels about Job's virtue. But Job doesn't have this advantage. All he has is what he has come to believe about God. Take careful note as we move into his first response and the responses to come. Job didn't have a notebook of pre-written replies from which to answer his friends, or even his own hurting heart, but he did have his relationship with God and basic knowledge of who God was.

The next chapters begin the first of Job's eight responses to his friends who had started off great by simply sitting in silence with their friend upon the ash heap of misery. They soon decided to speak up because, "who can keep from speaking?" (Eliphaz from 4:1). When confronted by a friend whether in casual conversation or in conflict we all have a natural tendency to defend our position and reason for doing or saying what we've done or said. Job is no exception. Let's study his response and see what we can learn from it.

Are you ready? Let's study!

1. Read Job 6:11-14 Job's making an honest and emotional admission here in these verses. In your best words, sum up what he's admitting:

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2. Read Galatians 6:1 – What should we do when we engage with other Christians? How do we respond if we believe they are in sin?

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How are Job's friends doing so far in this regard?

3. Read Job 6:29-30. What is Job's basic appeal to Eliphaz?

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4. Read Job 7:4. Maybe like Job you've had sleepless nights as your mind is full of worries or your body aches from pain. Compare how he feels the sense of time's passing in 7:4 with how he senses time in 7:6-9.

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5. Read Psalm 39. Write a verse or two that resonates with you.

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6. Read Job 7:11-16. What words do you read here that describe Job's emotional state? List them here. Then from the end of verse 16 write what Job asks God to do.

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## ~ Lesson Four – Day Four ~

Scripture Focus: Job chapters 4-10 Part 3 of 3

Honesty. Wrestling and being honest with our emotions. Have you ever been accused of being a bad Christian because you complained about your situation? Shared that you were in anguish? I have. I been scolded for speaking my anger and anguish aloud. I've had people toss Bible verses at me like "I can do all things through Christ." or "God works all things for good." or "The joy of the Lord is my strength." In an attempt to quiet me. While these are all the true, inspired words of God, they were all – every single one – egregiously quoted out of context and used to keep me from feeling the depths of my pain. Ephesians 6 describes our faith as a shield with which we can use to extinguish the "flaming arrows of the Evil One" - and guess what? Our faith can be used to protect us against the ignorant ones as well! People who are ignorant of God's Word can use it poorly. This reveals their shoddy theology and their immature faith. Don't be one of them. Wrestling with hard seasons of life is a not a sin to be confessed. Not a grievance anyone should get scolded for.

Great men of God wrestle honestly with grief, loss, anxiety. We relate well with Job and David because we too have felt dumfounded by what is happening around us and the apparent meaninglessness of the troubles. As you read, be encouraged that you are not alone. You are not a bad Christian for expressing your grief! You are a real person with real emotions seeking answers from a real God who – guess what? – really loves you! Don't misunderstand me here, my friend. If you're whining and complaining, God knows your heart and you'll not be blessed if you keep up a whiny attitude and claim, "Hey, Job did it. So, I can too." Let's hold each other up to the truths of God's Word and not hold each other down by misquoting or misusing it.

7. Read Numbers 11:1-4. Um. Yikes. What does this say about God and how He feels about complainers?

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8. Does God do the same to Job? Is there an inconsistency here in the nature of God? Why or why not? If possible, use Scripture to back up your thoughts here.

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9. Read Job 7:17 and compare Job's rhetorical question (the first three words in particular) to David's in Psalm 144:3 and Psalm 8:4-8. Job is actually making a request while David is making a statement. What do you observe?

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10. Read Job 8:1 – How does Bildad’s tone and approach differ from Eliphaz’s?

11. From Bildad’s speech:

- a. What assumptions make about Job’s character?
- b. What advice does he give Job?
- c. What results does he predict will happen?
- d. Putting Bildad’s assumptions about Job aside, are his words of advice and conclusions about how things could play out accurate in the grand scheme of things? Why or why not?

12. Read Job 9:1 What does Job acknowledge about Bildad’s advice?

*As a freshman in high school* I rededicated my life to Christ and was excitedly absorbed in God’s word, devouring writings and teachings of godly men and women of the faith, and flooding my mind and heart with music that spoke truths of God and ministered to my spirit. My favorite musician was a dynamic former druggie who became a follower of Jesus after leaving the Christian Science cult and subsequent paths from Eastern mysticism to spiritual skepticism. His name was Keith Green. His folkish songs styles sang profound truths in an accessible way, and I listened to the words like a parishioner to a preacher’s sermons. Not only was his message fueling lives of believers like mine, but his message was bringing thousands to Jesus. It was an exciting time to follow Christ.

*My sophomore year,* still on fire and passionately living my faith, I volunteered to be a counselor at a Christian camp for girls through the Pioneer Girls Club I was involved with. That season of spiritual fire was fueled by the high of being literally on a mountaintop and enjoying the blessing of being at this great camp. It was a great week and we were all thrilled to share God’s love with the campers He brought up the mountain that summer of 1982. Then we heard the news....

Keith Green had died.

*Disbelief led to horror* at hearing that he and his two children along with nine others in service to God died in a plane crash. Even though I had never personally met Keith Green, his sudden and seemingly senseless death was the first time I had to personally face the questions: Why? What good could possibly come from the death of this godly servant of the Lord? Why on earth would God take such an influential minister of the gospel? It seemed like such a waste to me.

*Like Job, I was questioning* the waste of a good life. Maybe you've observed what seem like empty and wasted experiences and asked the same of God? Do you want an answer? Do you want God to come close and whisper the reasoning in your ear? Do you want God to send you a vision and spell it all out for you? What if God did that? What if, instead of waiting in anguish, we just dialed a number through the miracle of prayer or some other mystical, spiritual method and got a direct answer to our questions of why straight from the horse's mouth as it were.

13. Read Mark 14:3-9. What did the disciples accuse the woman (Mary, Martha's sister) of doing? And what was Jesus' response?

Did Mary "waste" that expensive perfume? No! Long after the aroma of her sacrifice faded we are reading and learning from her testimony. Not only that, but Jesus was immediately blessed by her act of worship. You've heard it said perhaps, "There are no wasted experiences?" It's true. The challenge, my friend, is waiting for the reason and acknowledging that we may never have an explanation – not on this side of heaven and potentially, not ever.

My friend, I get it. When we're honest, we ache to know why. We ache for purpose and meaning. We desperately want to know that what we've suffered through, what we've lost or what lot we've been given, has a meaning, a purpose, an end-game where all is made right and all the pain accounted for and explained to us.

Along with the disciples, we were privy to the explanation of the perceived "waste" in Mary's anointing of Jesus. However, most experiences don't come with explanations. Most of us will never see the bigger picture. Let's not let this bring us to despair. If God wanted to, He could explain it all. But where would we be with the explanation. If God had said to Job, "Hang in there, buddy. This is going to all work out." Job could have just sat there waiting smugly for it all to pass. Instead, Job had to wait for God and wait he did.

14. Read James 5:11. How do we remember Job?

Here's what I can tell you: the very fact that we ache is evidence that there is a salve. The very existence of our pain is proof that there is a healing. The reality of our sense of loss points to a solution. We would have no sense of the darkness if we weren't wired to live in the light. The skeptic who uses senseless pain



and horrific acts of evil to deny that there is a God is actually proving his own argument to be faulty. The existence of evil doesn't mean there couldn't be good God. On what basis do we say this or that is evil or painful or wasted?

The skeptic leads a truly empty life if she continues to refuse to acknowledge that life indeed has meaning. On the contrary the life of the simpleton, unwilling to question her reality or acknowledge the dissonance is empty as well. Their emptiness may not lead away from God, but that person's life, I assert, will be "not worth living." Harsh? Perhaps.

But I challenge you today, my friend to take seriously this story of Job and to be willing to bring your hard questions to God. Think about your life.

You claim the name of Jesus? You profess to trust in Him?

15. Read Philippians 2:12. What does Paul admonish us to do?

This isn't because we could lose our salvation. It's because we have issues to wrestle with and work through, and it's so worth it!

Something to ponder...

*"My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust? If the whole show was bad and senseless from A to Z, so to speak, funny-photo-man-falling-rain why did I, who was supposed to be part of the show, find myself in such violent reaction against it? A man feels wet when he falls into water, because man is not a water animal: a fish would not feel wet. Of course I could have given up my idea of justice by saying it was nothing but a private idea of my own. But if I did that, then my argument against God collapsed too—for the argument depended on saying that the world was really unjust, not simply that it did not happen to please my fancies. Thus in the very act of trying to prove that God did not exist—in other words, that the whole of reality was senseless—I found I was forced to assume that one part of reality—namely my idea of justice—was full of sense. Consequently, atheism turns out to be too simple. If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning: just as, if there were no light in the universe and therefore no creatures with eyes, we should never know it was dark. Dark would be a word without meaning.*

*C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (1952; Harper Collins: 2001) 38-39.*

As we close today, consider your heart and your willingness to work through hard realities of life in light of who you say you believe in. Pray for wisdom and continue to be a willing and serious student of the Word so that you will "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." (1 Peter 3:5)

Be brave. Be willing to ponder hard questions. Be open to hearing from your own heart and the heart of others searching for truth. I'll be praying specifically for you today, sister, that you will encounter Christ in a truer, realer, more tangible way because you were sincerely seeking for Him even through hard questions. Until we meet again, know that you are loved and prayed for,

*Jennifer*

# ~ Lesson Four - Day Five ~

Scripture Focus: Job chapters 11-19 Part 1 of 2

*In Greek mythology,* Pandora held a jar that contained all the evils of humanity. After she released the evils, the only one left in the box was “hope.” The myth of Pandora and her jar (not a box, by the way) of evils is an attempt of Greek philosophers to explain the problem of evil. If you’ve ever pondered the why’s of this apparently capriciously evil world, you’re in good company. Friedrich Nietzsche, the German philosopher said, “Hope in reality is the worst of all evils because it prolongs the torments of man.” Were they right? Is hope an evil that is best left in a box? Is hope worthless because it torments the hopeful?

*If there is nothing* worth living and pressing on for, then yes. I say, yes! Hope is worthless at best, and actually evil in the end for the atheist or for the one without a saving faith in God. In our first study from Lesson One you may remember that the entire premise of our hope is built on the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If you have not completed that portion of this study, I would urge you to pause here and go back to those first lessons. You’ll want to be grounded in that truth in order to move ahead in today’s studies. Otherwise, carry on, dig in, we are going into some heavy territory! I can’t wait to study this with you today!

Are you ready? Let’s study!

1. Read Job 11 - Zophar must be the youngest of Job’s three friends for he speaks last. When he does, his youth and zeal are not hidden or softened by the courteous words like the ones the elder Eliphaz opened with. He really lets go on Job. Write down three of Zophar’s harshest points:

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Zophar’s logic is about as faulty as Maria’s from “The Sound of Music” when, swirling with the joy of new love for the handsome Captain, she sings:

*Perhaps I had a wicked childhood  
Perhaps I had a miserable youth  
But somewhere in my wicked, miserable past  
There must have been a moment of truth  
For here you are, standing there, loving me  
Whether or not you should  
So, somewhere in my youth or childhood  
I must have done something good*

Where Maria sees her fortune and concludes she must have, in spite of her “wicked childhood”, earned it somehow, Zophar sees Job’s misfortune and concludes he must have earned it because of his unrighteousness. Does our wickedness or goodness necessarily bring us blessing or hardship? We’ll continue to think through that question. For now, read on...

2. Zophar makes three basic accusations against Job. Write them down here:

- a. Job 11:1-4 (about Job personally)
- b. Job 11:5-12 (about Job's understanding of God)
- c. Job 11:13-20 (about hope in general)

Job's reply is equally strong! Reading the next three chapters I found myself simultaneously cheering and having deep compassion for this boil-covered man, "Go get 'em, Job! You poor thing! Hang in there!"

3. Read Job 12-14. Throughout his reply we hear him affirm his views on God and himself. These don't always feel great. But, you gotta love Job's honesty here! Write what Job says in response to Zophar's accusations:
  - a. Job 12:5-6 and Job 13:13-17 (about himself and his intent)
  - b. Job 12:12-25 (about God)
  - c. Job 14:6; 14:13-14 (about the current state of his hope)

## ~ Lesson Four – Day Six ~

Scripture Focus: Job chapters 11-19 Part 2 of 2

Reading on, Eliphaz chimes in again and then Bildad and Zophar. But pause a minute to read Job's comment in 16:2.

*"I have heard many things like these; miserable comforters are you all."*

HA!!!

Looooooooove it!

I cannot tell you how much I love this verse! Job, oh, Job, you tell it like it is, and your honesty is refreshing!

*We're all just doing the best we can.* I'm an optimist. I believe that most people are trying.

But, oy! The cluelessness of some people. Sometimes we can look past it and give them the benefit of the doubt. Sometimes we can call them out. Sometimes it stings, and we're too hurt to even know how to respond.

*From* 1999-2001 I was the director of the MOPS – Mothers of Preschoolers – program at our church.

With over 100 women in the MOPS group we had an amazing group of leaders to help with all the crafts, small groups, and childcare. It was a wonderful gathering of godly women who, to this day, I still count as my dearest of friends. So hear my heart when I share this next moment:

*At a leadership council meeting* we were going around the table sharing prayer requests.

“My mother has been ill. We’re so tired from caring for her and for our infant and toddlers as well.”

Then from another, “I have to go to the doctor this week to get results of a test.”

But then another said: “I’m pregnant.” One of the table leaders tearfully shared what would normally be happy news of a pregnancy, but she was visibly distraught. Her voice broke as she continued, “I know I should be happy, but I’m so tired raising the two I already have. How will I handle this one?”

*Those sitting next to her* reached out a hand and comforted her. Everyone paused to embrace her sadness and give her a moment to breathe. But I sat there with my own grief. For seven years I had prayed and prayed that God would open my womb and let my husband and I have a child. As the years wore on, test after inconclusive test gave us no hope. We were simply infertile.

Until.

June 14, 1995, after six years of trying, I found out I was pregnant. I will share the details of that day another time, for now, remember this: Proverbs 15:12 says, “Hope deferred make a heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.” That little blue line on that little plastic home pregnancy test was my “longing fulfilled” and to hear the doctor confirm my pregnancy was the end of my deferred hope. I. Was. Pregnant.

*Little did I know* that this would be our one and only pregnancy. In spite of prayers and longings, the Father never opened my womb again and our Jonathan David would be our only child.

Hearing this sweet friend cry and ask for prayer because of a third pregnancy when I was struggling to deal with the sadness of yet but one and the longing for so many more, left my heart parched. I feigned compassion for her that day around our prayer circle. We prayed, and after the meeting I walked to my car with Jonathan in tow and my heart sagging somewhere behind.

*When I called a friend later* that afternoon to share my heart, she couldn’t have known how broken I was, and she surely had no idea that the words she would offer from her sweet, honest heart would sting as much as they did, but in her attempt to comfort me she said, “At least you have one.”  
Stab.

Yes. I do have one child. But, I why should she be mourning that she is having a third child when I just want another so desperately?

Yes, I should be happy, but my hope was for something else. I wanted a good thing. I wanted a “full quiver.” I wanted three or four! Why, after so many years do I get only one and someone else gets three?

“Miserable comforter” she was. But she was offering what she felt she could.

*As we continue through Job,* consider the “comfort” Job’s friend offer. Consider how we’re all just doing our best to offer hope in what seems to be a hopeless world. We’re all attempting to make sense of the events happening to us.

4. Consider Job’s replies in chapters 16-17. What statement of Job’s ring most true to you? I’ll be honest, I found his tone very funny. His words are dripping with impatience and sarcasm. Write the statement(s) here that you think you might have said if you were in his place:

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5. Read Job 16:18-21. Job describes that he relates with God in at least four ways (NIV). Write them here:

How does this compare with who we read about in Revelation 12:10?

God is our \_\_\_\_\_

Satan is our \_\_\_\_\_

6. As you read these chapters note that while Job's friends speak truth, their truth is misplaced or lacks discernment. Remember: Just because a tomato is technically a fruit doesn't mean it belongs in a fruit salad, right? When my friend tried to comfort me she said, "At least you have one." True. But not comforting and not helpful at that moment. List a couple of "truths" cited by one of Job's friends that are misplaced:

7. Read Job 19:25, "I know that my Redeemer live and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. and after my skin has been destroyed yet in my flesh I will see God." We'll be really unpacking this statement when we meet together next time, but for now, write your own thoughts here about what this means to you and any insights or questions you have:

Did Job know of Jesus? Did he realize the depths of the truth he was boldly stating? No, Job was not referring to Jesus – the Jesus you and I know – he knew God well enough to realize that God would be his redeemer. God would make it right.

Melody Green, Keith Green's wife, wrote a beautiful song that Keith made famous. It captures this truth of Jesus as our Redeemer:

*There is a redeemer, Jesus God's own son  
Precious lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One  
When I stand in Glory, I will see His face  
And there I'll serve my King forever  
In that Holy Place, Thank, O my Father  
For giving us Your son, And leaving Your Spirit  
The work on earth is done*

~You can find this song on YouTube by searching, "There is a Redeemer Keith Green"

Job's friends have been attempting to break him down, to get him to come to their version of truth to see what they see "as in a mirror dimly."

This is the same thing the Devil does in our lives and exactly what he was attempting to do when he first approached God. "Slay him! Remove your 'hedge of protection', God, and Job will curse you!"

But no. Job is holding fast. He has lost everything; his life is splayed open; his anguish is obvious. He may have said he wanted to die, but he was not speaking of annihilation. He was speaking of a death that would end his troubles because he knew he would rise again.

8. Read Philippians 1:21 and write it here:

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Job didn't know that the name of the who would one day stand to be the redeemer of all mankind was Jesus, God's own son. But what Job did know was the essential truth of the resurrection and redemption plan of God.

And like Jesus responding to the Accuser Satan on the mount during his temptation in the wilderness, Job sits in an ash heap and responds with truth – firm and sure – just the same.

In our previous study from Lesson Three we went through various Psalms and how they speak of the hope we have even through wrestling. In Psalm 119 I asked you to consider where your hope could be found and asked that you be prepared to recite with sureness, "I have put my hope in your word!" (Psalm 119:114)

As we conclude today's study here we are again. Finding that it is in the truth of God's word that we find hope. Like Job, you can answer the accusers, doubters, and "miserable comforters" of your life with the truth of God's word...

If.

You.

Know.

The Word!

So, today, before you close your Bible take a moment to ask the Father to reveal to you how you can better use His words and His truth in your life. Memorizing Scripture might not be something you've ever done, or perhaps it's been since grade school and getting a sticker on a memory verse chart in Sunday School since you've memorized God's Word. But, I urge you to do it.

Pick any verse from our study thus far and commit it to memory. Write it out here then meditate on it and bring it with you ready to share and encourage others at our next get together. Call or message one of the women in your study group and share the verse you're working on. Don't have her number handy? No problem! Here's mine!

**562.755.4964**

Text me right after you write your verse down here and let me know which verse you're memorizing! I can't wait to hear from you!

Until then, know that you are loved and prayed for!

*Jennifer*

*~ My Memory Verse ~*

# ~ Lesson Four – Day Seven ~

Scripture Focus: Job chapters 20-25 Part 1 of 2

Remember that camp song where you'd sing the same silly lyrics over and over but in between choruses you'd sing, "Same song, second verse, robot voice and a little bit worse..." then "third verse, opera voice..." then "fourth verse, baby voice..."

Well, at this point I'm reading Zophar's words but in a robot voice. Zophar chimes in again and is beating the same drum as he did back in chapter eleven. Eliphaz, same words, opera voice ('cuz he's the old guy) and then to sum up, Bildad – in a baby voice – you know, 'cuz he's the whipper snapper of the trio. Read on...

1. Read Job 20:1-3. How would you describe Zophar's tone in his direct retort to Job's closing words from 19:28-29

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2. Read through chapter 20 and sum up Zophar's position regarding the fate of the wicked:

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3. Read Job 21:7-15. In contrast to the wicked and their ways as described by Zophar, Job has a different take. How does he paint the wicked in these verses?

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4. Read Job 21:16. What does Job say about the wicked and how he sees them?

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5. While Job speaks of his personal experience he also speaks of many of ours as well. Does God see the righteous? If so, does He care? Write your thoughts here:

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Read Psalm 139:7-10. What does David say about God's presence?



7. Read Psalm 42:1-2 How does David describe what he wants to do in these verses?

8. Read Psalm 42: 9 and 43:2 Now how does David feel toward God?

Is it possible to have one mind and one heart but think and feel two things that seem mutually exclusive? Can we speak in the morning with confidence that God sees and after the day is over question if He really does? Can we be that fickle? That unsure? Take a moment to reflect on that. And write below your thoughts on the matter. When we meet next week for our small group time we may have time to share our thoughts on this – we may not. Either way, if you struggle with this, please know that I will listen to you any time if you'd like to talk about this. Write your thoughts here:

In case you weren't sure, let me assure you...the answer to the questions above is yes. Yes, you can think one thing and say another. Yes, you can feel confident and yet worried. Is this the best position to remain in? Nope. Is it human? Yep.

My friend, if you are a child of God – you've surrendered your life to Him and call Him Lord and Savior – then you are saved. You are redeemed. You have been justified (made right and cleared of the punishment of sin in God's righteous judgment.) And while that is a sure thing and a completed act, you are now in the process of being sanctified. Sanctification is the ongoing process of being made holy.

Let our lives reflect the heart of the father who son was demon possessed:

*Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."  
Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (from Mark 9)*

And Jesus healed the boy. Belief and unbelief – keep your eyes on Jesus to continue to make you holy and increase your belief...Pray and seek God today for this.

## ~ Lesson Four – Day Eight ~

Scripture Focus: Job chapters 20-25 Part 2 of 2

*One crisp autumn day,* I sat in my office with a woman who wanted to meet with me for pastoral counseling. After some warm small-talk, she grew quiet, drew in a deep breath and looking down on her lap into her nervously clasped hands she brought herself to say what she had come in to say, “I don’t think God really sees me.”

*A big tear slowly rolled* down her pale cheek. She sighed and sniffed. Her eyes quivered. Her shoulders slumped. Her words had slipped past her lips from the deepest part of what was clearly a broken and tired heart. I reached and handed her a Kleenex as she continued, grasping the tissue in one hand and massaging the gold cross charm hanging from the end of her necklace in the other. “For fourteen years I’ve prayed for my husband to come to know the Lord. He’s an atheist. He doesn’t care that I go to church, but he really hates the idea of me believing in God. He poisons our children against my faith. He mocks me and I just don’t even know how to respond. After all these years of me praying, reading the Bible, trying to do things the way God would have me – I live a virtuous life – he’s still so far away. I’m patient and kind and don’t nag him...” sniff. . . “I just try to love him. But he is angry and distant about it all and now he’s angry and distant even more with me. I think I’m done. I’m too tired to keep on. If God were there, I think He would have answered me by now. I don’t think He’s there. I think all this – my faith - is like my husband says, ‘a crutch for the weak-minded.’”

*My heart broke for her* in all the pain and hopelessness she was feeling. I didn’t have any easy answers for her. I put my hand on her knee, leaned in and reassured her that God was real and that while she was weary, she could have faith in God still. While she felt invisible to and unheard by God, He did indeed hear and see. I reassured her with truths from God’s word about His mercies that are new every morning, about His timing that may appear slow to us but is perfectly paced on His eternal schedule, about His compassion for the broken-hearted and strength for the weary. We prayed and hugged and she left lifted again to a place of trust in her God and confidence, albeit a little shaky, that God would be there for her even in this very difficult season.

How different Job’s experience would have been had his friends comforted him with sound encouragement from God’s words. And yet, in spite of all the words these miserable comforters used to justify their own self-righteous positions, Job maintains his innocence before God. He might have questioned and gnashed and cried out in confusion at the injustice of his plight, but he is merely stating what appears to him to be obvious.

9. Read Job 23:8-14. What does Job say here about God? Contrast this with David’s experience in Psalm 139:7-10 as you answered above:

|

10. Read Job 23:15-16 and Proverbs 1:7 – How do these verses relate to Job and his statements about God?

|

Is it possible for someone who knows nothing about God to speak of Him as if they do? Can someone speak generalities about God without really knowing Him? If you're unsure, read on. Bildad will clear things up. In the shortest chapter of Job, Bildad in six verses speaks truths about God.

11. Read Job 25 and list three truths Bildad speaks about God:

|

And yet, in the end, God calls out all of Job's friends. They may have spoken factual truths, but they did not do so with the wisdom and justice and compassion or love of God and so, nope. "Close, fellas, but no cigar" as my grandpa would say.

12. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-3. What does Paul remind us here about the weight of love over everything else? What does this say to you today as you engage with those the Father brings into your life? What about the opportunities you'll have to speak truth into their lives? What can you take away from this lesson?

|

Wisdom without love is \_\_\_\_\_

Truth without love is \_\_\_\_\_

Knowledge without love is \_\_\_\_\_

Close your study time today and pray that you would grow in wisdom, truth, knowledge and most of all – love.

# ~ Lesson Four – Day Nine ~

## Review Job chapters 26-33 Part 1 of 2

Surely the greatest writers from Socrates to Shakespeare, Twain to Churchill have been inspired through the ages by Job’s sarcastic wit and humor at some point. The brilliance of Job’s biting sarcasm throughout this book makes me smile every time. In the heaviness, don’t lose sight of what Job didn’t: humor.

Humor, as Mark Twain said, “Genuine humor is replete with wisdom.”

- quoted in Mark Twain and I, Opie Read

1. Read Job 26:6-14 After opening this portion with a soliloquy of sarcastic praise that reveals Job’s contempt for Bildad, if not all his “comforters” – Job speaks beautifully of God. After reading these verses, rewrite v6-14 in your own words:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Chapter 28 contains a beautiful poem where Job uses the analogy of mining precious metals. While there is much debate as to the dating of the book of Job, many place its story before the time of Moses during the era of the patriarchs. Surely the writers to follow found inspiration in the analogies he uses in this chapter. How do the following verses compare to the analogy of chapter 28?

Psalm 19:10

Psalm 73:25

Psalm 21:3

3. Have you ever caught yourself saying something like what Job said in Job 29? Longing for the “good ‘ol days?” I have. Who could blame Job though? Make a list here of how Job saw himself before God allowed Satan to test him. Remember, unlike you and I who might exaggerate the goodness of the days gone by, God was on Job’s side in acknowledging his righteousness. The good ‘ol days really were good.

4. Can you feel Job’s utter weariness in these verses? Read Job 2:10 again. Write it here in BIG BOLD LETTERS:

Compare that with Job 29:2 “Oh, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me. My heart really broke for Job here. C.H. Spurgeon said, “Too many people write their blessings in the sand but engrave their sorrows in marble.” Job, of all believers at least remembered that he was blessed. Do you? Or do you have a goldfish memory for blessings and an elephant’s for trials? Take a moment before going on and pray that God would help you remember

5. In sharp contrast to Job 29, Job 30 begins with “...but now they...” Things have changed a reversal of fortune such as has never been heard of since. Contrast 29:20 and 30:11. What metaphor does Job use to visualize how he feels? \_\_\_\_\_
6. In Job 28:28, Job quotes God saying: “The fear of the LORD – that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.” Job continues in chapter 31 to not only defend his righteousness before his accusers, but to spell out a list of evils he has shunned. This is Job’s final defense. Chapter 31 concludes with, “The words of Job are ended.” Read through Job 31 and summarize in a word or two the sins that Job is asserting he has never committed. Use the following verse breaks as a guide. I’ve completed the first one for you:

31:1-4 -- *Lust*

31:5-8

31:9-12

31:13-15

31:16-23

31:24-25

31:26-28

31:29-30

31:31-32

31:33-37

31:38-40

At this, Job is done. He has spoken his mind. He has no more to say. Deep sigh for Job and all he has endured.

## ~ Lesson Four - Day Ten ~

Review Job chapters 26-33 Part 2 of 2

7. A new voice! Up till now we've only heard from Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Now: Elihu. In Job 32-37 Who's this guy? Where did he come from? The drama continues and we meet young Elihu. Read 32:1-6. Write some basic observations about who Elihu is:

Son of \_\_\_\_\_

From the land of \_\_\_\_\_

From the family of \_\_\_\_\_

Feeling quite \_\_\_\_\_

Because Job is so \_\_\_\_\_

And the other three friends were so \_\_\_\_\_

Age in relation to the others: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Read Job 33:19-24 As you read through Elihu's speech you'll see a difference in his approach. The other three men argued that Job's suffering must have been because God was punishing him **for** his sins. But Elihu takes a different approach. What is he saying about why God allows suffering?

But again, recall that even this explanation in Job's case is not correct. The whole premise for this entire account is that God knows that Job is blameless. Does suffering come from God?

Reckless driver causes an accident...is that from God?

Over-eating gets you sick...is that from God?

9. Read Hebrews 11:25 – What does this say about sin?

It's pleasurable...but it can cause what? \_\_\_\_\_

This is called "natural consequences." Do you think this means that God is actively punishing that person? Why or why not?

10. Read Hebrews 12:1-11 In *The Problem of Pain*, C.S. Lewis says, "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world." What do these verses say about our relationship to God and hardships in our life?

How might you use these verses to encourage a friend dealing with hardship?

11. Read Job 33:23-33 Keep in mind that Elihu has no idea that there is a heavenly council fully aware of the entire situation Job has been allowed to endure. In Job 33:23, what does Elihu suggest could happen on Job's behalf?

12. Read Job 9:33 What did Job ask for here? \_\_\_\_\_  
 And now, Elihu is also suggesting a mediator...an "angel on his side."  
 Who does this remind you of?  
 Not sure? Read on...
13. Read 1 Timothy 2:5-6 (NIV)  
 We have "one God" and one \_\_\_\_\_ between God and men, the  
 man \_\_\_\_\_ who gave himself as a \_\_\_\_\_  
 for all men.

In Lesson Three of this Hope study we reviewed several Psalms. As we close today, re-read Psalm 25:1-3. These verses are a fitting reminder for the heart of Job here in the closing chapters of this account. Elihu is suggesting that Job is being kept from sin by God's punishments and Job's other three friends asserted that Job was being punished **because** of his sins. What none of them knew was that Job truly was blameless. Perhaps David was thinking about Job's account when he wrote the opening to Psalm 25.

14. Read Psalm 25:1-3. Think of these words in light of what Job has been enduring. How do David's words relate to what Job is going through?

Four friends.  
 Four series of speeches.  
 Four wise, well-spoken, men....not a one had the full picture.  
 For all their truths and insights, they only had a slice of the story.  
 As you face your own pain and suffering, your own seasons of "why?" you'll likely hear from well-meaning friends who'll offer their thoughts and advice.  
 What insights have you gained so far that might help you better think through your own hardships or might help you in supporting a friend through theirs?  
 Write your thoughts here and be ready to share them with your group when we meet in a few days.



# ~ Lesson Four – Day Eleven ~

## Job chapters 34-42

Finally, God speaks.

Finally, after all this time, after all the suffering and loss and questioning, Job gets his audience with God.

Every religion of the world attempts to answer life's basic questions:

How'd we get here?

Who, if anyone, put us here?

How do we live while we're here?

Why is there suffering here?

Where do we go after here?

But Job really only wants one of these questions answered. Why? Why have I suffered like this?

He knows the answer to the other questions. He has affirmed God and acknowledged how we should live and where we'll go when we die...he just wants that one big question answered. And perhaps you do as well.

I have a few "why's" I'd like answered still too. In 1989, my friend Lisa Bebout was killed in a horrific car accident while en route to Ensenada, Mexico from Westmont College in Santa Barbara. She was part of a missionary outreach team from Westmont that we had served on together over the past three years. We would travel from Santa Barbara and minister with hundreds of other students to the very rural communities sharing the gospel in villages and orphanages in the outskirts of Ensenada as well as reaching people in the inner city. Lisa was devout and vibrant in her faith and committed to serving God. She was two months from graduating when she died. Losing Lisa, a precious friend and godly example to so many, left me gasping in pain and grasping for answers, "Why?!" The senselessness of it all...I still cannot reconcile the loss in my heart of Lisa's death, but I have learned as I've grown in my faith that while the unanswered "why" might hover in my consciousness, it is not the most important question to get answered. As we'll see in these final chapters, the biggest questions to answer don't come from us, they come from God.

1. Read Job 38-41. How many questions does God ask? \_\_\_\_\_
2. These are all rhetorical questions, right? I mean, God surely knows there is not definitive answer a mere man could offer in response. What do you think was God's point in asking all these questions?

3. Read Job 40:3-5. How does Job answer the questions?

4. Does God ever give Job a reason for his suffering? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Read Job 38:1. Who answers Job? Write the name EXACTLY as you read it in your Bible:

I'm hoping that from our previous studies you recognize this name for God. This is the yod-hey-vav-hey name, "Jehovah" God. It is unique in that you see it spelled out in all capital letters, and except for Job 12:9, it is the ONLY time in the book of Job this name for God is used. The friends all refer to God as Elohim (creator God) or El Shaddai (God Almighty) but Job alone refers to God as the "I Am", the self-existent one – the God of the personal relationship.

I have in this study deliberately avoided delving into the dating and authorship of the book of Job. I'll be addressing this in some detail when we meet together, but for now, you might find it interesting to consider this address for God (LORD) a clue as to where in the timeline of biblical history the book of Job could have been written and when did Job actually live. I'll leave it at that for now.

6. Read Job 42:1-6 (Job's final recorded words) What key character trait does Job demonstrate in his words here?

7. Read 1 Peter 5:6 and James 4:10 How do these verses speak of Job's ultimate response to God?

8. Read James 5:11. What does James say of Job and of the character also of God?

9. Write Job 42:2 here:

This is not only Job looking back and acknowledging truths of what God can do because of what he's seen already, but this is a statement for himself and for us today about what God can do for all time: no plan of God's can be thwarted. It's best that we be on God's side then, yes?

10. Read Job 42:7-9. What does God have to say to Job's friends?

11. Read Job 42:10 and Matthew 5:44 What precedes Job's final prosperity?  
Does that seem odd to you? Why or why not?

12. Read Job 42:11-16. Verse eleven says (NIV) "They comforted and consoled him ..." Can you just imagine the table conversation that night and for months, even years to come? We don't know how much his brothers and sisters and "everyone who had known him before" were aware of the details of the drama, the conversations and speeches. I can only imagine what Job might have said! List below all the blessings and restorations that Job received from the LORD and everyone:

And so, the book of Job concludes. Obviously, Job didn't write this book, since his death is noted at the end by the author (Moses?). There are many unanswered questions from this book – who wrote it? When was it written? When did Job live? There's even to this day disagreements amongst biblical scholars about whole sections, phrases and words in this account. But the unanswered questions are trivial in light of the biggest question of all: "How then shall I live?"

Were you expecting me to suggest that the biggest question to answer is "Why does God allow suffering?" or "Why is there evil in this world?" or [fill in your question]?

If you recall from the final chapters, even God Himself offers no firm answer to these kinds of questions and Job himself is humble enough to be satisfied without the final answer. He never is even told about the challenge of Satan and the agreement in the heavens with God or that God had stood up for him and defended his righteousness. Job is never privy to any of these behind-the-scenes dealings, but you and I are.

If Job, with his limited awareness of the cosmic drama surrounding his life and no clear answer to the probing question of why, could die at peace, then how much more can you and I with the full story be content to simply say, "I know that you can do all things: no plan of yours can be thwarted." And ultimately be willing to so totally submit to the Father that we can say, "Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him" for "I know that my Redeemer lives and that in the end he will stand upon the earth." This is the most important answer to the most essential question.

My prayer for you today, is that you will find peace and confidence in fully putting all your hope in Him.

I look forward to seeing you soon. Until then, know that you are loved and prayed for,

*Jennifer*

## A Story of Hope from Courtney Ceballos



*I'd like to share with you ladies a testimony of hope. I know it seems oxymoron to mention hope with our status as believers but it's a truth we need to be encouraged in. Hebrews 6:15 says "this hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil..."*

*Our hope is embodied in Christ himself who has entered into God's presence in the heavenly most holy place on our behalf.*

*Isn't that an encouraging verse from the bible to let us know that we have Christ as an intercessor on our behalf.*

*Romans 8:34 says Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.*

*How powerful that the LORD of LORDS & King of Kings loves us so much that He takes our prayers to God.*

*When I got married I was "saved" but backslidden so I didn't wait for the man God wanted for me. I chose the man who said he loved me, who said he was a Christian & that he'd take care of me. Well that was good enough for me, so I picked the man, planned, the wedding & all the while left God out of it. So you can imagine after the fun day of the wedding the reality check of actual marriage. I soon came to realize I started this marriage without God but I couldn't be in it without Him. My prayers of hope for my marriage isn't please change my husband but help me LORD to love & respect my husband the way that is pleasing to you. There's a beautiful song by Natalie Grant that says "I try to take life back right out of the hands of the King of the world, how could I make you so small when you're the one who holds it all. When did I forget that you've always been the king of the world" Did you forget? Do you have prayers that need answering? what we have so powerfully within us is a life of prayer.*

*Do you have a troubled marriage? wayward children? self control issues?*

*We all have our struggles.*

*My prayers are for my marriage because it's hard work & I find that is the ministry I struggle in. Psalm 22:5 says "to You they cried out and were delivered; In You they trusted and were not disappointed". Do you realize you have a high priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses says Hebrews 4:15? That we through Jesus can get through our trials. Don't think pleasing God is perfection cuz it's not. We all have struggles. What he desires is obedience.*



You are loved  
**AND**  
prayed for.

Lesson Five

Ruth

~ Hope and Happy Endings ~

Lesson 5 of 6

hope.  
WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

La Mirada Christian Church

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## *Discussion Questions*

### ~ Looking Back on Lesson Four ~

1. Have you ever done a study on Job before? Did you learn anything new or surprising in this study?
2. Share your answer to question #8 from the Psalm 8:2 at the top of page 142.
3. What truths about God did you find in Job chapters 4-5 (question #2 page 145)
4. On page 149 we read about some really honest struggles and the way Job and David responded. What did you observe in these verses?
5. Did you think Bildad's words of advice and conclusions about how things could play out accurate? Why or why not? (pg 150 question 11.d.)
6. What insights or thoughts did you have from Job's statement "I know that my Redeemer lives..." from your answer on page 156 #7?
7. What verse did you select to memorize and why? (page 157-158)
8. Have you experienced the apparent double-mindedness that we saw in Job's words? How did you respond after question #8 on page 160?
9. Have a group member read Hebrews 12:1-11 C.S. Lewis wrote: "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world." How did you respond to this quote on page 166 #11
10. How did you respond to the final prompt on page 167? Share your answers with the group.

## "My Hope is Built on Nothing Less"

by Edward Mote, 1797-1874

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace;  
In every high and stormy gale  
My anchor holds within the veil.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, His covenant, and blood  
Support me in the whelming flood;  
When every earthly prop gives way,  
He then is all my Hope and Stay.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,  
Oh, may I then in Him be found,  
Clothed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne!  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.



# Hope Study Teaching Notes

Chapter Four Review: Our Hope Through Suffering

# ~ Lesson Five Introduction ~

## Scripture Focus: Ruth

Welcome to this study through the wonderful book of Ruth. Ruth's story is beautiful and unique in the body of Scripture:

- There are only two books in the Bible that are named after women and Ruth is one of them.
- There are only five books in the Bible which are read in their entirety on Jewish holy days and Ruth is one of them
- There are only five women named in the genealogy of Christ, and guess what? Ruth is one of them!

Ruth is a rare women of great impact and worth in the Bible and worthy of our time to understand and appreciate as her story directly connects to us as followers of Jesus. Ruth is a gentile (not a Jew) and not only that, but she was a Moabitess – a cursed and hated nation. She is known for her kindness, loyalty and faith. Her story weaves together God's plan to continually "bless those who bless Him" and brings us moving reminders of where our hope lies.

The story of Ruth will remind you that your heavenly heritage trumps your earthly heritage. Her story will remind you of how deeply God values kindness and loyalty. You'll find joy and hope in recalling the power of redemption and sacrifice.

In addition, I trust that through this study you'll see the exciting story of love and hope woven through the genealogy of Jesus. Yes. The genealogy. You know, that part of the chapter we tend to skip? That list of hard-to-pronounce-names we stumble though? Those never-ending "begats" that we'd like to ignore? You will love them! At least I hope you will.

In writing this study I actually found myself giddy as I connected so-and-so's name through the generations and realized that his descendants eventually begat someone so pivotal. It's really quite thrilling to see!

We're going to kick off Ruth's story with the end. And the end is really just another beginning.

1. Read Matthew 1:1-17 After reading verse seventeen, stand up and shout, "Tah-Dah!" Just kidding, but actually, I do feel like that after reading this! Now go back and read re-read the genealogy and underline in the names of the women listed then write their names here:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ (v3)
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ (v5a)
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ (v5b)
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ (v6 not by name but by implication)
- e. \_\_\_\_\_ (v16)

The genealogy mentions five women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba ("her that had been the wife of Urias"), and Mary. Not only is this unusual in a Jewish genealogy, but all of them had a tarnished reputation in some way or another. Tamar had her children by acting as a prostitute. Rahab was a prostitute before she joined the Israelites. Ruth was of Moab, a hated people in scripture. Bathsheba

had an adulterous affair with David. Mary, though pure, was with child out of wedlock. Rahab and Ruth were also Gentiles; something a Jew would not expect in the line of the Messiah. Certainly, the grace of God is displayed in this record and is a reminder that His grace is for all.

Do you ever struggle with doubting that God could use you, bless you, fix you after all you feel you have done wrong in your life? Do you know someone who struggles with this? Satan, as we have seen over and over again throughout this “Lessons in Hope” study, is dedicated to keeping you in this mindset. But God wants us to renew our mind and have the mind of Christ. He wants us to be daughters of Truth and Light not children of lies and darkness.

Like we learned from Job’s story (Lesson Four in this Hope study) we may never know the reasons for our hardship, our struggle, but we can be assured of this: the course of history is truly “His story.” Our plans and our trials are small in comparison to His grand Plan. “He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.” (Ecc 3:11)

Let our time together in this study affirm in your heart this truth. Let this study equip you to offer words of encouragement and wisdom from God’s Word to those He brings into your life. (“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” Prov 25:11)

## ~ Lesson Five – Day One ~

### The Book of Ruth

There are only two books in the Bible that are named for women: Ruth and Esther. The story of Ruth’s life is one of the most touching reminders of God’s grace in entire Bible. It’s only four chapters long, and because it reads so easily as a story we’re going to take our first day to simply read through the book. This will give you the big picture for this story as well as alert you to details you may not see if we just began by digging in verse by verse. As you read you’ll take notes also. Write a few notes for each chapter. Here’s a guide to the kind of notes that will be helpful when we begin our study tomorrow:

- 1) The names of God used throughout the story.
- 2) What does the passage reveal about who God is?
- 3) Where is this passage taking place and with whom? Noting the “who/what/when/where/why” of a passage is a simple way to keep things organized as you read.

You can read from your Bible and take notes in your journal or on notebook pages. But, if possible, print the text of Ruth with wide margins so you can read and take notes while you read. Ruth is an easy read and should take you about 25 minutes at a relaxed pace to read through. Have your notes handy as you meet with your discussion group. Highlight at least four questions, comments or observations you made in your read-through and be prepared to share these with your group.



# ~ Lesson Five – Day Two ~

## Ruth 1:1-4 Part 1 of 2

If I told you that my relative kept her child in a closet and only let him see the light of day through a small opening in a locked window, that she fed him scraps of food, and never let him speak above a whisper, you would be horrified. But if I told you that my relative was a Jew living in 1934 during the reign of Hitler and she was hiding to save her child and herself from concentration camps, you'd shift your thoughts. Understanding the times surrounding a person's story will give you a greater insight. Let's begin with that kind of openness to understanding Ruth's story. We'll need to go back a ways to grasp what's going on...

Are you ready? Let's study!

1. Read Ruth 1:1-2 then read the helpful verses with each question to give you the big picture. Bring out your Bible map and find the locations mentioned as well.
  - Read Judges 3:7, 3:12, 4:1, 6:1, 10:6, 13:1 and 21:25 -- Who is ruling the land and what was life like during this time period?

From Ruth 1:1-2 what was happening in the land?

---

Where were the people mentioned living?

---

*Interesting Note: Bethlehem is "beit+lechem" in Hebrew which means "house of bread." Therefore this verse is a pun since it says there was a "famine" in the "house of bread." Later in Scripture, this town is also referred to as the "City of David." We'll see the reason for this at the very last chapter, verse and word in this book. (no peeking... just kidding, you should have already read the whole book!)*

What were their names? (The man, wife and sons' names)

Man: \_\_\_\_\_ means "my God is king"

Wife: \_\_\_\_\_ means "pleasant"

Son #1: \_\_\_\_\_ means "sickness/weakling"

Son #2: \_\_\_\_\_ means "consumptive/destruction"

They traveled from where to where?

\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

You noted above that this was during a time when God's people were ruled by Judges – not kings. A quick overview of Old Testament periods takes us from the time of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob plus Joshua through Moses) to the period of Judges when the Jews didn't honor God then to the time of

the Kings (Saul, David, Solomon) and divided kingdom (Rehoboam/Jeroboam through Zedekiah/Hoshea). Ruth is set during the time of the Judges and again, to fully understand the power of this story – which we know ends not only happily, but triumphantly since from Ruth our own savior, Jesus, is born – we need to understand the background. That’s going to take us even further back...

From the opening two verses of the book of Ruth the entire story is set, but you’ll miss the drama if you miss the background. Famine...husband leaves to find food for his family...travels to another country. He’s just looking out for his family, right?

2. Read Genesis 19:30-38 (not a nice story) Summarize basically what happens in this account:

|

So, the Moabite people come from the disgusting and incestuous relations of Lot and his daughters. The descendants of this evil union become bitter enemies of Abraham. They are cursed by God.

3. Read Deuteronomy 23:3-6 The Ammonites and Moabites continued to be enemies of God and His people, so what does God declare against them in this passage?

|

4. THIS IS IMPORTANT...DON’T SKIP THIS ANSWER! Take note from Deuteronomy the length of time God says the Moabites will be forbidden. How many generations is the curse?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. According to Deut 23:4, for what two reasons did God curse the Moabites? (Also, super duper important! Don’t skip this one!)

| 1)

| 2)

- 3) Read Ruth 1:1-3 (especially verse 3) Elimelech (“el-ee-meh-leck” or “ee-lim-el-eck”) takes his wife and sons out of the famine-stricken land – the Promised Land – and journeys to Moab. A cursed land of a cursed people. Why is this a cursed land? Read the following and note why God cursed Moab:

| Numbers 22:1-12

| Numbers 25:1-3

6. Deut 23:6 – God admonishes the Israelites not to do what with the Ammonites or Moabites?

|

And yet, if you do your studies, something exciting is revealed. We read a turn in the stories that reminds us not only of God’s sovereignty, but ultimately that **true hope is found in Him!** Hang in there, we’ll get to that part soon!

# ~ Lesson Five – Day Three ~

## Ruth 1:1-4 Part 2 of 2

(Continued from Day Two)

In addition, the Moabites worshiped the god Chemosh to whom they offered live child sacrifices. This was an evil disgusting people whose ways were condemned over and over again by God.

And yet, Elimelech leaves his homeland the “house of bread” and travels to this accursed land of the people who had refused his ancestors bread and water (Deut 23:4-5). Would a man who truly believes that His God is King abandon his people at the time of famine?

7. Do you think he was leaving from faith or fear? Why or why not?

Remember Elimelech’s name meant “my God is King” and yet, was he acting as though he believed this? In the Jewish commentaries the rabbis translate his name to mean: “kingship is due to me.” He is leaving the blessed land and taking his family to the cursed land. Currently his homeland is under judgment through the famine, but why leave? Why not trust God to bless and deliver right there in the midst of the trial? There seems to be a disconnect between his name and his behavior, but perhaps he had a sense of entitlement instead of submission and humility before God. Which explains why he departs the blessed land and dies in the cursed.

When God called and set apart His people, He described exactly how He expected them to live. The essentials are outlined in the Ten Commandments and the details are recorded throughout Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

8. Read Leviticus 26:3-4 Who causes famine? \_\_\_\_\_

9. If you’re under judgment (famine) from God what should you do?

But Elimelech doesn’t, does he? Instead of staying and repenting through God’s judgment, Elimelech “sojourns” or “went to live for a while” in Moab. Interesting to note that the Hebrew phrase for where Elimelech goes is not “land of Moab” but “field of Moab.” Implying that he was intending to set up for a while and grow crops. This isn’t a short visit, is it?

10. Read Ruth 1:4 What do Elimelech's sons do? And with whom?

Now, you and I have an advantage here. Just like in our reading through of the book of Job, we know the end of the story. We can see the big picture. But for a moment let’s just read without that knowledge and see the situation as these characters would have seen it. These sons marry women from a cursed land in direct violation against God’s law. Don’t marry those evil people. They’ll keep your heart from me.

While Solomon - a direct descendant of Ruth - lived well after this time period, his story is a vivid reminder of why God said "No" to marrying women from this idolatrous nation:

11. Read 1 Kings 11:1-9 What does Solomon do and what was the consequence/punishment from God?

12. Read Ruth 1:4-5

How long had they lived in Moab? \_\_\_\_\_

Then what happens?

Foodless...Fatherless...Familyless – Naomi has been through a famine, the death of her husband and father to her sons and now, without sons she has no prospects for a family to continue. Hard enough in our culture today for a woman to suffer such losses, but in Naomi's day she was done. Completely emptied of all that could fill her life with promise and blessing, by man's standards it's over for her.

The consequences of Elimelech's unbelief are severe. Naomi is left with three graves, two daughters-in-law, and no way to provide for herself or these Moabite women. And yet, we know that God indeed will provide, and His provision will be a most tender and gracious kind. For now, however, we'll close today's study here. Let's pause to reflect on two points:

- 1) God has set restrictions on our behavior for our benefit and blessing.
- 2) When we break His laws He still provides a way for our redemption.

Where are you today in your walk with God? Is God calling you to repent? Take time today and do what Elimelech should have done: reflect on your situation and if you are under discipline from God, repent! Don't run from God's hand of discipline. Take shelter in Him and ask Him to forgive your sins and to bless you as you are willing to live for Him.



# ~ Lesson Five – Day Four ~

## Ruth 1:6-22 Part 1 of 2

Naomi is of God's chosen people and yet she and her husband chose to reject His discipline seeking instead to find a way even in the most forbidden of places. Like a prodigal child running away from the protection and responsibilities of life with the father, the Elimelech family had attempted to run from God. Tragedy strikes and we see God's hand of judgment against the family. But the story begins to turn and the turning is as a result of the kindness and loyalty of the most unlikely of people: A Moabite.

1. Read Ruth 1:6a – What news comes to Naomi's ears?

This is the first time the name of God is mentioned. Note that it is the YHVH name of God – The "I Am" name given to Moses from the burning bush when Moses asked God, "Who should I say is sending me to Pharaoh?" This is the personal name of God that reminds us of His desire to be in relationship with us.

As you read, it is interesting to understand what is recorded and what is done. Interesting also though, is what is NOT said or done. For example, Naomi hears that the Lord had "given them food" back home.

2. What does this indicate that Naomi is interested in?

Food or Faithfulness to God? FOOD. She wants to return to the land for food not for fellowship with God. Again, her priorities, like her deceased husband's are off. Am I being harsh on Naomi?

3. Read Isaiah 55:7 – What is the plea of the prophet here?

We're asked to return to a "Who" not a "what." Return to God, THEN you get the blessing of food, land, peace, etc. Naomi's decision to go back home was the right one. But her focus is wrong. I don't think this is a harsh assessment of Naomi. If she had had right motives the book of the Bible might have been named "Naomi" instead of Ruth. But Ruth is the one who rises above and does the ultimate act. Naomi should have known better. Naomi was from the land of Promise and of the people of Promise. She should have acted accordingly.

4. Read Ruth 1:67 – Hope for Naomi! After hearing of the food she prepares to do what and with whom?

Good job, Naomi! THEY prepare to return "home" from Moab. She's bringing her daughters-in-law to the Promised Land!

5. Read Ruth 1:8-9 A Shift. A second thought? What does Naomi tell her daughters-in-law to do?

Remember, where is Naomi heading? Home, and not just any home, the home of the Promised land and to the people of the Promise. Where is she leaving? A cursed land and a cursed people. Why on earth would she insist that these two Moabite women should stay in this land of cursing? Why not keep them with her? Think about possible motivations Naomi might have in saying this. Write your ideas here:

**Be prepared to share your thoughts with your group.**

Naomi is clearly out. Of. Hope. Devastated by the losses she's suffered, she has not kept her eyes on the God of the Promise. While she hears about what the I Am has done for the land (v6) she is not trusting what He could do in her life.

I have shared in our previous studies of my own lack of hope that used to define my life. In a broken marriage to an abusive alcoholic husband, infertile and lonely, I had all but lost hope for me on a personal level in my own life. I knew of hope – God's hope – in the big picture, but for me personally in the smallness of my little life I was on the edge of despair.

I will say this for Naomi, at least she's on the right road.

6. Re-read Ruth 1:7 On road is she heading? (Not a specific name, just the general idea.)

The journey from Moab to Judah was about 60 miles – a two, maybe three-day journey. At least she was heading in the right direction albeit for wrong motives.

Our "Lessons in Hope" study began with an encounter on a road. Do you remember? In Lesson One we read of the two disciples and their walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus and the encounter they had on that road. God intervened and turned their hearts back to the place of promise where they would declare their remarkable meeting with the resurrected Lord. Naomi is about to embark on a road that will take her from the land and experiences of despair to a land that will ultimately bring complete restoration. But she still needs an encounter and little does she know, but she's trying to let go of the very person who will be an instrument of restoration in her life.

7. Read Ruth 1:11-15 Summarize what takes place in these verses:

8. Review Ruth 1:8, and 11-12 How many times does Naomi urge Orpah and Ruth to return?

Does this number seem significant to you? Where else in Scripture do we read of three urgings for the wrong thing? (Hint: Matthew 26:69-75)

There is no direct correlation in the text to connect the account of Peter's three denials to Naomi's three urgings, however I found it interesting! In fact, re-read Matt 26:75 and note the word used to describe Peter's weeping: \_\_\_\_\_

Keep that word in mind as we read on. So interesting!

## ~ Lesson Five – Day Five ~

Ruth 1:6-22 Part 2 of 2

(Continued from Day Four)

In verses 11-13 of chapter one, Naomi paints a ridiculous scenario as she tries to spell out how futile the future is for her daughters-in-law. I've often thought that if criminals were to spend the same amount of mental energy they use in plotting their schemes and apply that energy to getting a legitimate job then they'd be millionaires! Do you see that same mindset here with Naomi? God promises so much good and abundance and blessing and promise to His people. Why not spend our energies in attempting to fathom the potential of God's blessing than in spinning a crazy scenario of ridiculousness?

9. Read Ephesians 3:20 - Our God is the same yesterday, today and forever and while these words were written about Him many centuries after Naomi lived, they were true of Him in her lifetime as well as in yours. Write Ephesians 3:20 here:

10. Re-read Ruth 1:14-15  
What does Orpah do?

What does Ruth do?

A kiss and a cling. Another interesting parallel to the New Testament.

11. Read Matthew 26:47-49 – Summarize this passage:

While not a kiss of betrayal, Orpah still kisses Naomi goodbye, in effect betraying her own future. Rather than embracing the potential future in the land of Promise she returns to “her people and her gods.” Ouch. Her gods? Horrid. Her gods were the child-sacrifice demanding disgusting gods known for their vile requirements. Orpah misses the out on the promise of God as she shows her preference for the practices of her gods. What about you? Perhaps you feel horror at Orpah’s choice, and yet are you prone to abandon the unknown for the known even though the known is not God’s best?

Ruth on the other hand, clings to Naomi. Where else do we find this word “cling” in the Bible?

12. Read Genesis 2:24 Write the verse here:

\_\_\_\_\_

Depending on your translation you have the word “be united” or “cling.” In Hebrew, this word is **וַיִּדְבַק** (weh-day-back) meaning “and shall cleave” and is a beautiful word picture of full and complete connection with the provision of God and His desire to establish “home.” The letter **ב** means house and is in the word for cleave! Do you see it there? So cool!

So Ruth clings to Naomi and in so doing says in effect, “I’m going to make my house with you.” Maybe she even knows that the place to where they’re returning is indeed the “house of bread” Beth(house)lehem(bread). Whether or not she knows, she is surely leaving the known for the unknown, the fields of the familiar for the road of risk.

But it gets better. Ruth speaks the rich and famous words that have stood through the millennia to represent the truest of devotion and the paragon of godliness:

13. Read Ruth 1:16-17 Write Ruth’s beautiful covenant promise here:

\_\_\_\_\_

List the promises she makes:

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Has Ruth become a believer in YHVH – The Lord? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not do you think?

“Church is just a place where a bunch of hypocrites go to make themselves feel better.” Someone once said to me. “I can’t stand Christians. They’re so fake. They say one thing and do another.” The reality is – she’s right to some degree. Identifying myself as a follower of Christ – a Christian – isn’t a statement about myself and my worthiness as much as it is a statement about God and His. Christians are not unique in their hypocrisy. All faiths have their hypocrites. Judaism is no exception. Case and point: Naomi.

She was actually a weak and hypocritical example of her faith. She was hardly a testimony of faithfulness much less a missionary for her Jewish faith in allowing her sons to marry Moabites or in urging her now widowed daughters-in-law to stay in a pagan land or in her lack of faith in YHVH to provide for her upon her return. Perhaps, however, in the decade that Ruth lived with Naomi she heard Naomi recite the Shema? The Shema is the daily Scripture recited by observant Jews. It is so called because the first word, “Hear” is the Hebrew word Shema which means to hear, listen, and do.

15. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-5 What could Ruth have gleaned from the daily recitation of this Scripture?

Perhaps she observed the feasts as ordained by God? Perhaps she had the outward signs of faith even though when her life is marked with tragedy, she shows a lack of depth. I hope this is a reminder for each of us that in spite of our lack of faith, the world is still seeking and God still will be found. We don’t have to be a perfect testimony to point people to Jesus! Never forget this....and don’t let Satan speak otherwise to you. Naomi was imperfect, and yet God used her. Wait for it...we’ll get there.

16. Read Ruth 1:18-22 Summarize the passage here:

“I went away full...I’ve returned empty.” Naomi and her husband had left Bethlehem a decade ago with the false hope that Moab would be the land of prospering.

17. Read Deuteronomy 30:19-20 After outlining His expectations for living as children of God, the LORD says what to His people (sum up from these verses):

Naomi wants to be called Mara - “bitter” now instead of Naomi - “pleasant.”

Oh, Naomi -er, “Mara.” So melodramatic! You’re alive. You’ve made the journey from Moab to Bethlehem. You have a beautiful and loyal daughter-in-law. And yet still you cling to your past and your

bitterness and your loss. Not only that, but you want to be defined by it. Contrast her story with that of Job's! Job gets assaulted by Satan and literally loses everything and still he says, "Yet He slay me still I will trust in Him!"

Naomi has yet to acknowledge what God has actually done. Her husband abandoned God and God's people, her sons married pagans, and she is now returning widowed and childless – but. She. Is. Returning! Instead of wanting to be called "bitter" why not be called "God is providing for me in spite of myself because I have this wonderful daughter-in-law and I'm home in the place where God can surely bless me because I'm willing to repent and serve Him." That's kind of long, I admit, but I'm sure there's a Hebrew word that she could have chosen! But no. Naomi's heart is still far from God. She is home in body only – not in heart.

*Sister, where are you today?* Are you heading back to Moab? Or are you embracing Bethlehem? Is your life being defined by a willingness to totally and completely cling to God and His ways even if you honestly have no idea what is on the road ahead? Or are you defined by your loss and grief and your need for the familiar ways from your past? Take a moment as we close today to seek the Father in this. Ask Him to search your heart and reveal to you any tendency you may have to deny Him and avoid the road ahead He may have for you.

I'm praying today that you and I will become women defined by our desire to dwell in the house of the Lord and feast on His bread of life...no matter the cost.

p.s. Chapter one concludes with words of "emptiness", "affliction", "misfortune" and "bitterness." Not a very happy scene. And yet....

18. Read Ruth 1:1 and Ruth 1:22 Note what events are in stark contrast in the opening of this story and in the closing of this chapter...

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

We'll pick up here in our next lesson.

## ~ Lesson Five – Day Six ~

### Ruth chapter 2 part 1 of 2

The book of Ruth is set right after the book of Judges in our Christian Bible. However, in the Jewish Bible, Ruth is set among four other books which are called the Megillot (Scrolls) and are a part of the third section of the Jewish Bible called the Kethuvim. The books of the Megillot are (in this order): Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther. They are set apart because they are each read aloud on the occasion of the feast days in the annual cycle. Yawn?

Well, this tradition is actually helpful to our understanding as we read the next chapters in Ruth which take place during the barley harvest. Why is Ruth read aloud on this special feast day?

We're going to need to do a little background digging so we can reeeeeeally grasp the super amazing provision of God here in this sweet story of love and devotion.

When calling out His people, God tells them how he wants them to behave toward others and how He wants them to interact with Him. He sets up "appointed feasts" (mo-a-deem) for Israel to observe. As you read, perhaps your Bible has this passage divided and labeled to make it more clear what these feasts are. There are seven altogether with three appointed feasts in the first month (Aviv/Nissan) one in the third month (Sivan) and three in the seventh month (Tishri).

1. Read Leviticus 23 – Using the following verse guides, write the names of each of these feasts and when they are to be observed:

| NAME OF FEAST                            | WHEN OBSERVED                                                              |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| v5: _____                                | _____                                                                      |
| v6: _____                                | _____                                                                      |
| v10: <u>FirstFruits or Wave Offering</u> | <u>The day after the Sabbath following Passover</u>                        |
| v15: <u>Feast of Weeks</u>               | <u>After counting off seven weeks after the Sabbath following Passover</u> |
| v23: _____                               | _____                                                                      |
| v28: _____                               | v27: _____                                                                 |
| v34: _____                               | _____                                                                      |

2. Read Ruth 1:22 During which feast season have Naomi and Ruth arrived?

Now are you seeing the specialness?

3. Read Ruth 2:1 What words/phrases are used to describe this man?

➤ From the clan of? \_\_\_\_\_

➤ A man of? \_\_\_\_\_

*In the Hebrew this word is "chayil" and means valor, strength, wealth, capability  
Proverbs 31:10 "A wife of noble character who can find? – Guess what the Hebrew word is here for "wife of noble character?" – eshet chayil. Boaz is uplifted as an ultimate man in a similar way that the Proverbs 31 Woman is lifted up as the ultimate woman.*

➤ Whose name was? \_\_\_\_\_ - His name means: "in him is strength"

4. Read Ruth 2:2 What does Ruth ask to do?

Read Leviticus 23:22 and Deuteronomy 24:19 What did God's law instruct landowners to do?

For whom are they to do this?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you think Ruth was aware of this law? Why or why not?

6. What does this law say about God's:

➤ Character:

➤ Priorities:

➤ Expectations for us:

*I have heard many describe* the difference between the Old Testament and the New

Testament as "God is mean and harsh in the Old" but the God of the New they describe as gentle and kind. Actually, in reading the Law I find this to be a fallacy and a sad one that causes us to distance ourselves from God. If God is the same "yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8) then there is no difference in the character of the God from 3000 years ago and now.

*In fact, loving kindness is* a central characteristic of God and He outlined how His people

would be defined by kindness from the very moments He called and set them apart. Think of this law we've just read about from Leviticus.

In harvesting the fields God makes special provision for the "least of these" by instructing His people to leave to the poor the corners of the field and the grains that fall from the harvesting.

That is a good God - a kind God.

7. What is your view of God? Have you ever thought that the God of the Old Testament was a mean God? The Strict One. The Harsh God? If so, how has this study impacted your view of God?



8. What examples from Scripture could you use to redirect someone who you hear speak wrongly about God?

What benefit is there to you having a wrong view of God? None. Unless you're Satan! Satan wants us to think as many incorrect things about God's character as he can! Pray as you close your study time the words of Psalm 119:104 and write them here:

## Lesson Five – Day Seven ~

Ruth chapter 2 part 2 of 3

(continued from Day Six)

In the sixth grade I was once again the new kid in my school. Because of my dad's work I had moved six times since kindergarten and now, as a 6<sup>th</sup> grader, I was starting over again. As out-going and friendly as I was – and I really was! – I still felt timid and shy and worried. Sixth graders can be a mean, petty bunch and starting again was making me feel unsure and weak and tired of it all. I wanted to blend in, keep my head down and just come and go unnoticed – and yet, I wanted to belong. I wanted to connect, have a friend and be a friend in return. But starting out in a school where most of these kids had been together since kindergarten was not easy and to make it worse, I didn't get to start school on the first day. I started a week late. I walked down the echoing hallway into room 23 with a transfer slip from the office that may as well have read: "This is Jana Garrett\*. She's the new kid. Be sure to have all the kids stare at her and snicker and give her mean glares if she wants to sit near them." Sigh.

I made it to room 23. Mr. Garber read the note, seated me in a wobbly, lift-top desk near the front, and I slumped trying to will the powers of invisibility to come over me even as I felt the stares of the students behind me. Soon enough the recess bell rang and I took my time so I'd leave the room last behind the pushing swarm of giggling 12 year-olds.

I slipped out and stood by the classroom door surveying the playground. Kids bolting for the handball courts, running for the monkey bars, and already untangling ropes to jump in trios scattered across the blacktop. I walked slowly out from under the shade and covering of the hallway awning and made my way to the blue fiberglass-topped tables to eat my snack.

As I sat down and reached into my brown lunch sack, I felt the table shudder as a big girl sat down next to me. So much for disappearing. "Hey," she said looking right into my face.

"Hey," I said weakly looking up and then back to my apple.

“You’re new. My name is Noelle. I saw you come in today. I was in the back. But I saw you and you looked a little freaked out so I figured I’d say hey and let you know it’s ok. Stick with me. We can be friends. I was new last year. It’s a good school. There’s some mean kids – there always are. But there’s a lot of good ones too and well, anyway, if you want, we can be friends.”

I don’t think I have to tell you what relief and peace came over me that day at the lunch tables of Weathersfield Elementary School. But the openness that Noelle showed me that day led to a year of friendship that helped me grow in kindness and strength that year. I gain a best friend and a lifelong appreciation for the blessings that come from reaching out in kindness to others. Perhaps you have experienced a kind act like this? Perhaps you’ve reached out in kindness to someone? Our story of Ruth is one of loyalty and faith but is marked significantly by kindness.

The Hebrew word translated “kindness” is “chehsed.” It is found explicitly three times – in the beginning, middle and end of the book - and implied throughout the story. As we continue, make note of the acts of kindness mentioned in the book and perhaps highlight them in your Bible as you read.

9. Read Ruth 2:3 How does this verse characterize Ruth’s ending up in the field of her clansmen?

Are there any accidents with God? That Ruth “happens” to “find herself” working in the field of none other than her relative through Naomi is a confirmation of God’s hand of blessing on her life! It only gets better from here! Read on...

10. Read Ruth 2:4 Note the start contrast of this greeting and the greeting of Naomi by the women back in Ruth 1:19-20 What differences do you see?

11. Read Ruth 2:5-7 With this brief report, Boaz’ foreman give him the basics of who Ruth is. Based on his statement, how does he characterize Ruth?

12. Read Ruth 2:8-9 Summarize these words of Boaz:

13. Read Isaiah 55:1-7 What is God’s call to those who will follow Him? What similarities to you read in this prophecy and Boaz’s words to Ruth?

Boaz is a “type of Christ.” He is pictured throughout the story in this way and this is just the beginning. Remember the setting – they time period in which the story of Ruth takes place? It is during the period of time when God’s people were constantly cycling around and around from obedience to rebellion to punishment and discipline to repentance and back to obedience. Boaz stands as a man of strength and consistency in this time. Even as he implies that the other men in the field might do her harm, he assures her of her place and safety in his field.

14. We’ll read more of how Boaz is a type of Christ, but for now, what Christ-like characteristics are you already noticing in Boaz? List at least three here:

1)

2)

3)

## ~ Lesson Five – Day Eight ~

Ruth chapter 2 part 3 of 3

(continued from Day Seven)

15. Read Ruth 2:10 How would you characterize Ruth’s response to Boaz’s kindness?

How does she still identify herself? As a \_\_\_\_\_

She’s still the “new kid” and yet as exemplified by Boaz, and prophesied by Isaiah: “Ho everyone that thirsteth...” Everyone is welcome in God’s family. Everyone.

16. Read Ruth 2:11-12 Boaz has heard of Ruth and what she had done. What does he hope will happen to her as result of she has done (v12)?

17. Look again at 2:12 – This verse is perhaps the summary of the theme of the entire story! What does Boaz state that Ruth has done?

Read Psalm 46 and note the similarities in Ruth’s behavior:

18. Read Ruth 2:2 and Ruth 2:13 What had she hoped for in v2 and what has she found (v13)?

19. Read Ruth 2:14-16 List examples of the extraordinary care and kindness of Boaz in what he does and in the instructions he gives his workers:

20. Read Luke 6:36-42 What principle does Jesus speak of that is exemplified by Ruth and what she is now receiving?

21. Read Ruth 2:17-23 Ruth returns home and relates the day's amazing events to her. Summarize the events here:

22. What does Naomi say of Boaz in verse 20?

"he is one of our \_\_\_\_\_

23. From which harvests was Ruth able to glean?

(v23) \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

24. If you recall from your notes about the Appointed Feasts (Moadim) in Leviticus 23, how many

“full weeks” was it from barley to wheat harvest? \_\_\_\_\_ (Lev 23:15)

In the New Testament (Acts 2:1), this Feast of Weeks is known as Pentecost (penta = 50) – because there were 50 days to be counted during this time. This gives us a timeline for the story. Ruth gleaned seven weeks.

*Over and over again* we are encountering evidence of God’s kindness in establishing laws that would protect the weakest and most vulnerable in a society – from the very books that so many today use to try to justify their bad view of God as a brute out to kill and destroy those who don’t bend to His will.

*My hope* in our focus on the kindness of God is to equip you as you encounter people in your life who have a prejudice against the God of the Bible. And now, as we move into chapter three we’ll see even more evidence of God’s loving-kindness.

## ~ Lesson Five – Day Nine ~

### Ruth chapter 3

What a change we’re now reading in the demeanor of Naomi! From emptied to being filled...She is a changed woman whose heart of bitterness is warming by the kindling of kindnesses...Ruth’s and now Boaz’s. And the realization that Boaz isn’t any ordinary landowner but providentially, THE best of landowners, a relative who is her kinsmen-redeemer.

A kinsmen-redeemer is not a concept we’re familiar with in the West. We need to understand what this means though in order to appreciate not just the grace of God in Naomi’s and Ruth’s immediate circumstances but the sovereignty of God through this relationship and what it means to you and me! Yes, you and I are directly benefitting from this story! It’s quite exciting! Let’s read on...

1. Read the following and answer: What responsibility did a kinsman-redeemer have according to these laws set by God?

Deuteronomy 25:5-10

Leviticus 25:25-28

Leviticus 25:47-49

Numbers 35:19-21

As we continue in reading through Ruth remember that this is not just a history of Ruth's life but it points to a bigger plan and reminds us of the picture of Christ and our relationship with Him. In the following verses note the steps that Ruth takes to come into a deeper relationship with Boaz and note how this parallels the steps we must take as we draw to Christ.

Note that unlike Naomi returning to her homeland for bread we must desire Christ not for what we can get from Him (bread/sustenance) but we must desire Christ. Period.

2. Read Ruth 3:1-5 Ruth prepares herself in five ways for Boaz. It may seem odd because it is not part of our culture, but set your western mindset aside and embrace the culture of Ruth's day. Naomi is telling Ruth to prepare herself as a bride. The imagery of a bride is used throughout the Bible to compare the church (the bride) to becoming ready for the return of Christ (the bridegroom)

List the five ways you read Ruth preparing herself and the corresponding way we should prepare ourselves for Christ:

1) Ruth 3:3a and 2 Corinthians 7:1

2) Ruth 3:3b and 1 John 2:20, 27

3) Ruth 3:3c, Isaiah 61:1-3 and 2 Corinthians 5:21

4) Ruth 3:3-4 and Hebrews 10:19-25 and John 4:24 (relates to our literal and spiritual position)

5) Ruth 3:5 and John 7:17 (speaks to her willingness to do what?)

3. And now it begins! Ruth is fully informed of what she needs to do in this culture to make this happen. And she sets out to do it. Do you feel the tension? The excitement and perhaps the doubt in Ruth's heart as she "approached quietly" to carry out this plan in the fields of Boaz?

Read Ruth 3:7-15 She does it all! How does Boaz respond? What ways does he demonstrate his integrity and honor toward Ruth?

4. In verse 10 we read once again that beautiful word: “kindness” And Boaz remarks that this kindness of Ruth’s is what in comparison to all the other acts of kindness she has previously shown... \_\_\_\_\_
5. In submitting to Boaz in this way Ruth’s action is counted as a kindness. Does that surprise you? Why or why not?

6. Read 3:15 again...What does Boaz give Ruth? \_\_\_\_\_  
As a type of Christ again we see that Boaz goes above the requirements of the law. There is a traditional Jewish song called the “Dayenu.” At the Passover meal, called a Seder, Jewish families sing this song joyfully as they recount the many ways God has been more than enough in their lives. Boaz exemplifies this right here in verse 15 but all throughout the story! What-a-guy! Here’s the lyrics to the Dayenu:

Ilu hotzianu mi-mitzrayim (if He had taken us out of Egypt...)  
Ilu natan lanu et ha-shabat (if He had given us the Sabbath...)  
Ilu natan lanu eta ha-torah (if He had given us the Torah...)  
Dai-yenu, dai-yenu, dayeinu!  
Dai-yenu, dai-yenu!  
It would have been enough! It would have been enough!

The concept of the song that is 15+ stanzas long and recounts the many, many abundant ways God has provided for Israel, is to be thankful for God’s kindness and to recognize that He has gone over and above all that we could ask or imagine.

*You can find the Dayenu song on YouTube here: <https://youtu.be/VtLKOcFwct4>  
Or search YouTube for “Dayenu – Israeli Passover Songs”*

Ruth and Naomi would have arrived back in Bethlehem not long after the Passover feast would have been observed. Recall that in Ruth 1:22 they arrived “as the barley harvest was beginning.” The barley harvest begins around two days after Passover.

It was a joyous occasion and a time of singing and preparations for the harvest. Boaz continues the spirit of happiness and rejoicing as we saw through his happy greeting of his men in 2:4, in his thoughtful attention to Ruth in 2:14 and now here in 3:15, Boaz is again a model of generosity and kindness.

As we close today think of ways God has been abundant in His kindness to you. Make a list here of at least 5 ways God has shown His grace and goodness to you. (Five is the number of grace and goodness in the Bible!)

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Why not share this and encourage others? Take a photo of your list and share it on Facebook or Instagram. Tag me in your post! I can't wait to see it!

Not on social media? Send your photo to me at 562.755.4964 or [Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com](mailto:Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com)



# ~ Lesson Five – Day Ten ~

## Ruth chapter 4

Remember that this story is set during a time when “Israel had no king, and everyone did as he saw fit” (Judges 21:25). More often than not this meant NOT obeying God’s laws and not honoring God’s ways. This is why the period of time recorded in Judges is filled with the many times God’s people were under discipline. But Boaz and Ruth stand as shining examples of the rewards and lasting blessings that come when we are honorable in our ways toward God.

1. Read Ruth 4:1-12 In contrast to the times, instead of doing what was right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25) Boaz does what is right in God’s eyes. He’s careful to get his all right and do it legally. Review the following verses and note what specific actions he took:

4:1a He went to the \_\_\_\_\_ (this is where legal transactions took place.)

4:1b Ruth’s \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ comes by and Boaz gets the man to join him by the gate

4:2 Boaz took \_\_\_\_\_ of the elders to the gate also. Ten elders were required for a full court to make any legal proceedings official.

4:3-10 (What does Boaz do here in front of the witnesses?) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4:11 How do the witnesses respond? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Note especially the phrase in verse 11 – “may you be...famous in Bethlehem. Through the offspring the Lord gives you...” Indeed!

2. Read Ruth 4:13-22 The book of Ruth is well-known not only as a beautiful love story but as an amazing balanced work of fine literature. The story is balanced from the first through the final chapter in theme as well as words. In the Hebrew, the opening verses have the same number of words as the closing verses you just read. Take a moment to note any parallels from Ruth 1:1-5 to Ruth 4:13-22 Think about the who, when, where, details mentioned.

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3. Read Ruth 4:13 "...and the LORD enabled her to conceive..." What does this verse remind us of in terms of God's sovereignty?

*What if Ruth had conceived from her first husband? Do you think Ruth was sad and worried about the thought of being childless? She was ten years without an heir, without hope and even in her move back to Bethlehem, she had no promise of marriage or children. And yet, God, in His time provided for her. What area of your life are you waiting on God to provide? After reading Ruth's story are you more willing to trust in God's plan and timing?*

4. Read Psalm 37 and select a verse that will help you when your mind and heart fret about God's timing. Write your verse here:

5. Read Ruth 4:14 Which two people are mentioned in the story that they would become "famous?"

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Do they? How so?

6. Re-Read Ruth 4:1 What is the name of the man who was first in line to be Ruth's Kinsman-Redeemer? Hint: This is sort of a trick question. ;-)

7. What reason did this un-named man give for not wanting to be her kinsman-redeemer? Hint: Read 4:5-6 Write his exact words here:

\*We're going to come back to this question in a minute! (So exciting!!!) ☺

8. Read Ruth 4:15 Naomi's friends say what about Ruth to Naomi?

In a culture that whose mark of prosperity was defined by sons and land this is a powerful statement!

9. What did Ruth and Boaz name their son? \_\_\_\_\_  
His name means "servant" or more fully: "servant of the Lord"

10. Read Matthew 1:2-6 Highlight any names in the genealogy that also appear in Ruth 4:18-22

11. Read Deuteronomy 23:3-4 What is the prohibition the LORD spoke against the Ammonites and Moabites in verse three?

12. There are ten generations of names listed from Perez to David. How many generations were the Ammonites prohibited? \_\_\_\_\_ Guess what? Ruth is of the eleventh generation!  
The next time you are tempted to skip a genealogy, remember this! Genealogies are helpful in seeing the amazing provision of God!

In Day Six of the study I asked you to outline the Feasts that the Lord ordained. These were described in Leviticus chapter twenty-three. The feasts were given by God to His people to commemorate miraculous deliverance (Passover), grateful Harvest (First-Fruits), the giving of the Law at Sinai and the blessing of harvest (Shavuot/Weeks), etc.. Every year the book of Ruth is read in to this day among observant Jews around the world during the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot in Hebrew and Pentacost in Greek). But why? Why read the book of Ruth?

13. Read Ruth 1:22 Does this give you a hint? Why do you think the book of Ruth is read on the first day of the Feast of Weeks?

14. Ok, I promised earlier that we'd come back to Ruth 4:6 - the statement of Mr. Not-So-Kinsman-Redeemer (NSKR for short). He was unwilling to redeem Ruth because he did not want to do what? (I know you probably already wrote it down earlier...but do it again here. I promise, this is really important!

15. Mr. NSKR didn't see the value in Ruth, didn't see a future in Ruth, didn't see a need for Ruth in his life, did he? What, by implication then, did he value? Hint: starts with "e" and ends with "state" (Ruth 4:6)

His \_\_\_\_\_ and by extension, his name.

The interesting thing to note is that by looking out for his estate and name he missed out on the greatest Estate and the legacy of having the greatest Name above all names descend from his line. In his shortsightedness this man, trying to protect his name gains the distinction of being unnamed. Mr. NSKR is never named in a chapter that repeatedly honors the names of the men who stepped up – even calling on God to make their names famous!

*Dear Sister,*

this is what I want you to grasp today:

This world,  
that man,  
that person may not treasure you,  
may not see the hope in you, may not grasp your value,  
but you have a Kinsman-Redeemer who does....

Jesus Christ.

Like Boaz who saw the beauty and future in Ruth, Jesus sees the beauty and future in you. Like Boaz who treasured and protected Ruth, Jesus – your kinsman-redeemer – treasures and protects you!

The book of Ruth begins with loss and emptiness.  
No future. No hope.  
But the story of Ruth ends with gain and fullness  
It ends not only with a future but the ultimate future  
the Ultimate Hope as it concludes with the name of David  
the king who was a man after God's own heart and from whom  
descends the Hope of the Nations –  
all nations.

Like Ruth, you were bought with a price and your name cannot be blotted out from the Book of Life when you surrender fully to the Name that is above all names – Jesus Christ.

I am praying for you today that you will renew your love for Jesus, deepen your trust in His plan, and grow ever more faithful in surrendering to the one who knows you by name.

Until we meet again, know that you are loved and prayed for – by name.

*Jennifer*

# A Story of Hope from Cathy Wells



I grew up without hope. I was born into a religious sect that did not put an emphasis on hope, but rules. I had heard of Jesus and even attended Sunday school, but by the time I finished high school I became an agnostic. I didn't care one way or the other. I knew deep in my heart that there was no God in heaven who was going to help someone like me. I was in so much pain. If there were a God, I would be happier because He wouldn't have all these bad things happening to me. I would have a better relationship with my mother. My father would not have left. My boyfriend wouldn't be abusing me. I wouldn't be addicted to various things to numb my pain.

I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior in August 2012. One month later I was introduced to a recovery ministry at my new church I started attending. Part of

this recovery ministry was that everyone broke up into small groups, called Open Share Groups. These groups are similar to what one would find at Alcoholics Anonymous, but the program I was in was a Christ-centered 12-step program. I was terrified to share. I wasn't what you would call a people person. I just didn't want anyone else knowing my problems, what's the point? Nobody would understand. But eventually I did. I started opening up and sharing with other believers in my Open Share Groups things that I was going through, things that were troubling me, things that were on my heart. Instead of receiving judgment, I received prayer. It didn't make the things that I was going through go away. But it gave me a feeling of joy – that other people took the time to listen to me and pray for me and direct me to God for answers. It gave me a resolve to hang in there, to hold on for another day, to never give up, and to stick to it. The feeling that eventually, everything is going to be okay if I let God be in control of my life and I answer and report directly to Him. The feeling of unexplained and unspeakable joy regardless of what I may be going through. That to me is hope – my very first experience with hope.

These verses mean so much to me and have helped me through a lot of tough, dark times: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." Romans 5:1-5

You are loved  
**AND**  
prayed for.