

Study Series: Pray Big

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 Lesson Title: “Pray for Focus and Hope” (pp. 19-30)

Session 2

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The main point of this lesson is: The believer’s prayer for oneself and others should seek clear focus on what Christians have been given in Jesus, include their certain hope.

**Focus on this goal:** To help adults gain clear sight on all that Christians have been given in Jesus, not the least of which is a certain hope for eternity

**Key Bible Passage:** Ephesians 1:3,11-18; 2:1-12

Before the Session

1. Bring a pair of binoculars to class. (Step 1)

2. Provide words to the first verse of “Amazing Grace.” (Step 2)

3. Enlist a learner or two to research the Christian sense of hope. (Step 5)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

**Display** the binoculars and **ask** participants why someone might use binoculars.

**State** that in the Christian life it is easy to focus on the present, what is right before us that we can see without any visual aids. However, in Paul’s payers, we are reminded to keep our focus on the eternal—to look into the distance—and our certain hope for eternity.

Step 2. Pray for Focus, Part 1

**Explain** that before anyone becomes a Christian, that person is spiritually blind. **Lead** participants to sing the first verse of “Amazing Grace,” **providing** the words for participants who might need them.

Invite volunteers to retell the story of Saul’s conversion in their own words, with each person telling a small part of the story and the next person picking up on the story until a stopping point you designate (Day One, activity 2, p. 20).

After the retelling of the story, call on a volunteer to read Acts 9:1-19. Ask: Why do you think God caused Saul to become temporarily blind on the road to Damascus? How did this experience of temporary blindness impact Paul from that day forward?

Step 3. Pray for Focus, Part 2

Call on a learner to read Ephesians 1:17-18. Ask learners to identify the focus of Paul’s prayer. Explain that this particular prayer is for believers. Christians’ eyes are opened spiritually when they profess faith in Christ, but the Christians’ eyes need to be enlightened further to all God has done for them.

Organize the class into small groups and assign each group a portion of Scripture from Ephesians 1:3-14. Direct each group to identify at least one spiritual blessing given to Christians and to prepare to explain that blessing in an easy-to-understand way.

After a few minutes, call on each group to report. List these blessings on a large writing surface as they are being discussed.

Call on learners to share how their eyes have become more enlightened to who Jesus is and what He has done (Day Two, activity 2, p. 22).

Step 4. Pray for Focus, Part 3

Ask this rhetorical question: When someone asks you if you know a certain person, do you ever respond, “I know who that person is, but I don’t really know him or her”? Then ask: How would you respond if someone were to ask you if you know God?

Explain that Paul wrote about the knowledge of God in Ephesians 1:17. Briefly discuss what it means to know God.

Challenge learners to identify additional blessings from God not included in Paul’s list (Day Three, activity 2, p. 24). Ask: How does recognizing what God has done for us help us to know Him better?

Step 5. Pray for Hope, Part 1

Direct learners to look back in their Bibles at Ephesians 1:17-18. Ask: What is the first thing Paul prayed for as Christians’ eyes are enlightened?

Explain that Paul prayed Christians would know the hope to which God has called Christians. Lead learners to discuss a biblical definition of hope (Day Four, activity 1, p. 25).

Call on the learners enlisted earlier to share what they have learned through their research into the Christian meaning of hope. Supplement or clarify the discussion as necessary.

Ask for volunteers to read two additional Scriptures about hope: Romans 15:13 and Hebrews 11:1.

Step 6. Pray for Hope, Part 2

Ask: How does knowing God’s hope help us to live—and die—in a manner that honors Him? Invite learners who are willing to do so to share their honest answers regarding their thoughts about dying (Day Five, activity 1, p. 27).

Call on a volunteer to read John 14:1-3. State that Jesus has called us to a hope of an eternity with Him. Stress that even when our world seems hopeless, Christians can know, as the author states (p. 28), “Our best days are ahead.”

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Summarize this lesson by saying that Christians can know God better by focusing on what He has done for us, including our hope for eternity. God’s blessings, including a certain hope, are great news that we can share with others.

Pray, thanking God for His many blessings and the hope that He offers for an eternity with Him.

After the Session

Contact individuals who have missed a few sessions and tell them about the study on prayer. If you know someone who is facing death (their own or that of a loved one), contact that person and offer encouragement that God has promised an eternity with Him for those who believe. Use A Step of Faith on the inside front cover to help lead to faith any who are not believers.

