

Study Series: Mere Hope

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Lesson Title: “Look Up: Mere Hope’s Focus” (pp. 157-168)

Session 13

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The main point of this lesson is: The believer’s hope focuses the adequacy of the gospel of Jesus Christ in all situations.

Focus on this goal: To help adults focus on the gospel of Jesus whatever their circumstances

Key Bible Passage: 2 Timothy 1:7-12

Before the Session

1. Gather one or more empty paper towel, wax paper, or wrapping paper rolls. (Step 1)

2. Prepare to use the drawing you began in Session 11 (p. 143). (Step 2)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Direct attention to one wall in your room and ask: What do you see? After a few have answered, hand out the empty rolls for learners to look through at the same wall. Ask: Now what do you see?

Explain that, when we focus our attention on one particular element, our perspective changes. Say: Today, we’re going to talk about the focus of our hope and how it needs to remain constant regardless of our circumstances.

Step 2. Keep Calm and Carry On?

Direct attention to the stick man drawing begun in Session 11; point to the concepts of “Look Down,” “Look In,” and “Look Out” and the focus of each of those (foundation, fountain, flourishing, respectively). Say: Today’s lesson on the focus of our hope helps us remember to look up. Add dots to the drawing showing the stick man’s eyes looking up, and write gospel at the end of the dots.

Use the content for Day One (p. 157) to give a brief history of the slogan “Keep Calm and Carry On.” Explain “Evangelical Stoicism” (pp. 157-158). Say: The hope we have in Christ is far more than simply persevering through a tough situation; it allows us to walk in confident power through any situation.

Step 3. Words of Hope, Part 1

Invite a volunteer to read 2 Timothy 1:7-12 from his or her Bible. Use the content from the opening paragraphs of Day Two (p. 159) to explain where Paul was and why he was writing to Timothy.

Engage learners in considering how they might put themselves in Timothy’s shoes by recalling a similar time in their own lives: losing heart, losing a mentor, or losing confidence.

As a group, use verses 7-8 to look closely at what we should do and should not do in such situations: we should not give in to a spirit of fear or be ashamed; we should find power, love, and sound judgment and share in suffering for the gospel.

Step 4. Words of Hope, Part 2

Reread 2 Timothy 1:8-9, stressing the phrases “share in suffering” (v. 8) and “his own purpose and grace” (v. 9). Read the second Day Three paragraph (pp. 161-162), which encourages Christians to “prepare now to suffer, to expect hardship,” and to stand with those who are already suffering.

Ask: How can our spiritual disciplines—prayer, worship, Bible study, solitude, and more—prepare us for suffering and help us comfort others in their suffering? Help balance that preparation on our part by pointing learners back to the word “grace” (v. 9) reminding them that salvation, power, and comfort are all outpourings from God’s grace. As we work to look to the gospel, His grace will supply all we need.

Step 5. Words of Hope, Part 3

Invite learners to reread 2 Timothy 1:10 in their Bibles and to underline the phrases “abolished death,” “brought life and immortality to light” and “through the gospel” (or the similar phrases in different translations).

Use the content from Day Four (pp. 163-164) to walk through each of these phrases, specifically contrasting the idea of bringing death to death and the light of immortal life. Say: These two phrases are key to the gospel. If we can grasp them fully, we’ll be able to share the gospel with others effectively and powerfully.

Point out that abolishing death and bringing immortality to light are both done by Christ, not us. Say: We can only access this kind of power and grace when we walk with God daily, accessing His love and presence in our lives.

Step 6. God Is Able

Reread 2 Timothy 1:11-12. Ask: What tone do you hear in Paul’s words here? What emotions pour off the page as you imagine where he was and the fervor with which he was writing?

Use the content from the first paragraph of Day Five (p. 165) to explain the word but and the emphasis it brings to the idea of not being ashamed.

Read from the second paragraph of Day Five (p. 165) and engage learners in considering their own life and salvation: do they know Jesus? Do they believe in and trust Him? Point out that only if we know Jesus can we trust Him and find hope in the fact that God is able, now and through eternity.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Remind learners of the opening discussion of “Keep calm and carry on.” Say: We’ve seen this isn’t vibrant, living, faith-led hope; it’s Evangelical Stoicism.

As a group, consider different phrases that speak truth and remind us of today’s lesson in a more biblically-sound, gospel-focused way: “It is well, He is Able” (last paragraph, p. 166); “God can, I believe”; and “He is, He was, He will be” are some possibilities. Challenge learners to grasp this truth, remind themselves of it this week, and share it with someone in need of hope in a changing word.

Close in prayer.

