



# Week 1: The Importance of Hope

**FACILITATOR’S NOTE:**

**Regarding COVID:** While stress from the COVID-19 pandemic is still high, be sure to check in with group members with what has come to be known as **CPR** (Care, Prayer, Remember):

- **Care** refers to loving and supporting each other, from helping one another with tangible needs, rejoicing in celebrations together, and supporting personal struggles with encouragement and empathy
- **Prayer** refers to bringing our worries and needs before God and depending on him for the answers as we pray for each other, our community, and the world
- **Remember** refers to reflecting on God for who He is, what He has done in our lives, and what He is capable of doing

For more resources on care and prayer, check out the Slack channels.

**Using the Discussion Questions:**

- ✓ Start your group discussion with the “Check-in” question to help your members reflect back on their week and follow up on last week’s application challenge.
- ✓ Review the “Big Idea” to help you gain clarity around the heart of this week’s message.
- ✓ Read this week’s scripture passages together and guide your group through the “Discuss” questions to initiate meaningful dialogue around key concepts or insights from this week’s message.
- ✓ Move your group discussion to a deeper level by leading them through questions in “Apply”. Use discernment to customize these application questions to meet the needs & dynamics of your group.

**NOTE:** You do not have to cover all the “Discuss” or “Apply” questions.

- ✓ Connect with God together as a group through this week’s “prayer practice”, which can be in the form of a prayer exercise or some guidance on what to pray for in relation to the message or application.

<b>CHECK-IN</b>	What’s the difference between a hopeful person versus a hope-filled person? Which one are you?
<b>BIG IDEA</b>	<p>The key to surviving any challenge or crisis is “hope”, a critical element of our faith. When our hope is rooted in the faithfulness of God, we can trust in his plans for us and rest in the knowledge that he loves us and desires the best for us.</p> <p>Some people think that hope is an emotion (i.e., “I’m feeling hopeful”), but true hope is a discipline, a determination to believe in God’s reality and power, even when the world seems to be crashing down around you. That is the genius and the power of hope.</p>

<p><b>DISCUSS</b></p>	<p><b>Read: Psalm 42:5, Hebrews 6:9-12, Romans 4:18-22</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What in the sermon spoke to you, challenged you, or was a new revelation?</li> <li>2. When expressing hope, do you tend to come from a place of uncertainty or confident expectation?</li> <li>3. How do you distinguish between hope and faith?</li> </ol>
<p><b>APPLY</b> How do we respond to God's teaching in meaningful ways? What might God ask of us in mind, spirit, or actions?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Share about a time when the power of hope impacted or transformed your life.</li> <li>2. If you were to see hope as a discipline, rather than an emotion or feeling, how would that shift your relationship with hope?</li> <li>3. How can we begin to root our hope in the faithfulness of God instead of basing it on our own logic, feeling, or current circumstance?</li> </ol>
<p><b>PRAYER PRACTICE</b> (15 minutes)</p>	<p>At its core, <b>fasting</b> is choosing to temporarily set aside something in order to draw closer to God. But these days, what you give up isn't restricted to food, entertainment, or pleasure. This month our spiritual practice will be <b>'fasting'</b> with a different focus each week. Remember - God is interested in who we're becoming.</p> <p><i>Approaching a fresh endeavor can be both energizing and stressful. New is inspiring. New is enlightening. And new is, oddly enough, a reminder of what is now old. When fresh beginnings are stalked by the memories of stale endings, a sickly substance can steal our strength: regret. Regret empties anticipation, flattens dreams, and suffocates hope, because regret is a form of self-punishment. Whereas hindsight helps us learn from the past, regret beats us up with the past.</i></p> <p><i>So for one entire day (or go for forty), I invite you to fast regret. Do not feed it. Do not give it space. Let it go: God's mercies are "new every morning" (Lamentations 3:23). And meditate on Jesus's glorious promise from Revelation 21:5: "I am making everything new!"</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>- Alicia Britt Chole</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">This week, fast <b>regrets</b>.</p> <p><b>GROUP SPIRITUAL PRACTICE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take 2 minutes in silence to uncover any regrets that may be suffocating your hope. "If only..." Ask for God's help to reveal this.</li> <li>• Then ask yourself, "How will I fast this regret when it appears again? How will I let this go?" Allow 5 minutes of silence to do this. Again, ask for God's help to reveal this.</li> <li>• As led by the Holy Spirit, share what you are hearing, first by typing into the chat of your virtual meeting so members can read and process silently, and then verbally.</li> </ul> <p>Throughout the weeks leading up to Easter, continue sharing what you are experiencing with this fast through chat, emails, texts, etc.</p> <p>(Adapted from 40 Days of Decrease: A Different Kind of Hunger. A Different Kind of Fast, Alicia Britt Chole).</p>