

BIG IDEA

True hope cannot be contained.

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO KNOW?

Share a story about a time where you found hope in an unexpected place. What did you learn?

Read 1 Peter 3:15-17. What assumption(s) is Peter making about believers in this passage?

When Peter instructs believers to **always** be prepared to give a reason for the hope they have, he is assuming at least two things. 1) That believers have hope. 2) That people will notice and ask about it! Further down in the text, Peter seems to assume that people will speak maliciously about believers. So, he is also expecting that his audience will have hope, even when people slander them.

Read Ephesians 1:18-20. Compare and contrast this passage with **1 Peter 3:15-17**. What similarities do you see? What differences?

Both passages frame hope as essential to believers. In Ephesians 1:18-20, Paul highlights the need for the eyes of our hearts to be opened in order to truly understand the power of hope in our lives. Peter expects believers not only to understand hope, but to be able to explain their hope to others who need it.

Read Romans 4:16-22. How does Abraham model hope for modern believers? What would this kind of hope look like in your context?

Abraham is called the father of faith for good reason! As Paul points out, Abraham believed in the promise that God gave him against all odds (although those who are familiar with his story know that he had a few hang-ups along the way). Abraham chose to see hope in the midst of a hopeless situation and God came through in a mighty way.

WHAT IS MY INITIAL REACTION?

Do you have an “uncontainable hope”? How can you tell?

In what situations are you good at seeing hope? When is it most difficult for you to find hope?

In the message this week, Jeremy said:

“You have the ability to speak hope into the lives of the people around you.”

How comfortable are you with this statement? Explain.



WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?

How often do people ask you “to give the reason for the hope that you have”? Based on your answer, what conclusions can you draw about your hope filter?

Hope is apparent to others because it influences the way we think, see, and speak about our world. If no one has ever asked us about the hope we have, we can be pretty sure that we have been filtering out hope in significant ways.

Read 1 Peter 5:6-7. Which hope-blocker do you struggle with more? Pride or anxiety? What would it look like for you to humble yourself? To cast your cares on Jesus?

Can you pinpoint a moment in your life when hope died? What is God teaching you about this circumstance?

Sometimes, hope can die in specific situations. Someone may be hopeful about one area of their life and lacking hope about another area. Our experiences can shape our ability to see hope in difficult circumstances. Christ is able to show us the truth about the moments when hope dies because he is the God of resurrection.

As a group, create a definition of “hope” based on the above passages. How is this definition different than how you have previously thought about hope?

This activity may be challenging for your group, and that is okay! Your main role with this task is not to do the creating, but to help your group members identify the important characteristics of hope within these passages (power, present in the midst of suffering, observable by others, etc.). Make sure to seek input from the quieter members of your group. Introverts can really help your group to refine their thoughts!

Pray the lyrics from *O Holy Night* aloud as you close. Share your insights with the group. **The lyrics from *O Holy Night* are very powerful. There are many ways that you can facilitate this prayer experience. You may want to read them aloud as your group listens. You could also choose to have each member of your group read a few lines. However you choose to pray, make sure to build in some time to process after. Some members of your group may have never really heard these lyrics before, even if they have listened to the song thousands of times.**





LIFE GROUPS

LEADER GUIDE

O Holy Night!

O Holy Night! The stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Saviour's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining.
Till He appeared and the Spirit felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.
Fall on your knees! Oh, hear the angel voices!
O night divine, the night when Christ was born;
O night, O Holy Night, O night divine!
O night, O Holy Night, O night divine!

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand.
O'er the world a star is sweetly gleaming,
Now come the wisemen from out of the Orient land.
The King of kings lay thus lowly manger;
In all our trials born to be our friends.
He knows our need, our weakness is no stranger,
Behold your King! Before him lowly bend!
Behold your King! Before him lowly bend!

Truly He taught us to love one another,
His law is love and His gospel is peace.
Chains he shall break, for the slave is our brother.
And in his name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
With all our hearts we praise His holy name.
Christ is the Lord! Then ever, ever praise we,
His power and glory ever more proclaim!
His power and glory ever more proclaim!

