

Giving Hope

*"I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry.
He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay;
and He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm."*

Ps. 40:1,2 NASB

The purposes in this study are to equip you, as the discipler, to understand the significance of giving hope to a disciple. You will be given specific concepts to convey to your disciple which will encourage hope.

- I. People can exist without many things, but the **loss of hope** is the most devastating to emotional and spiritual well-being.
 - A. Your disciple may be in the grip of hopelessness.
 - B. You are to convey hope through your testimony and the Scriptures, which are designed by God to give hope to the hopeless.

"Hope deferred makes the heart sick"
Prov. 13:12a

- II. The following are **causes** for loss of hope:
 - A. Losing control of circumstances and people in his life
 - B. Having expectations which have continually failed
 - C. Fearing the future
 - D. Being overwhelmed by life's problems
 - E. Having no solutions for problems
 - F. Failing to trust and believe God will care for him and work in his behalf
 - G. Running out of resources because of reliance upon fleshly and worldly resources
 - H. Seeking idols/false identities, which no longer satisfy (1 Sam. 12:21)
 - I. Refusing to repent
 - J. Being extremely self-focused, self-absorbed
- III. The following are **results** of losing hope:
 - A. Chronic depression
 - B. Lack of perseverance; giving up
 - C. Immobilization
 - D. Anger toward God and others; blaming others
 - E. Intensified forms of control
 - F. Suicidal thoughts; suicide attempts; suicide
 - G. Retreat into fantasy and/or excessive behaviors to escape painful realities
 - H. Withdrawal from relationships
 - I. Escapes into sinful pursuits; irresponsibility

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IV. The person without hope is not rightly related to God.

A. The **unbeliever** is without hope because he stands condemned by God.

1. He may or may not be aware of his hopeless state before God.
2. You, as the discipler, need to explain his true condition before God and offer him hope through the Gospel message.
3. The message of hope is that only God can redeem him from the pit.
(Ps. 40:1-3; 103:4)

B. The **believer**, who is in despair and thinks there is no way out of his hopeless condition, exhibits some of the following problems:

1. He does not trust in the Lord to fill his voids and satisfy his desires.
2. He may be ignorant of God's life-changing commands and promises.
3. He may know God's Word but does not know how to apply it. Therefore, he trusts in his own resources and thinking.
 - a. He may be devastated by **knowing** what God's Word commands, while not knowing **how** to apply God's truths to his life.
 - b. He may be trapped in a cycle of sin>>guilt>>sin>>guilt.
4. He may become entrenched in sinful attitudes and behaviors.
 - a. He may become hostile, lashing out in frustration at not being able to control his circumstances.
 - b. He may become passive, ignoring his problems and/or giving up.
 - c. He is frightened by loss of control of his world and his inability to regain control.
 - d. He moves into self-protective attitudes and behaviors.
5. He *wants* to persist in his sin and therefore, purposes to ignore God and continue in rebellion.
6. He views God's way as so radically different from his own way that he has difficulty grasping that biblical solutions will bring satisfaction and fulfillment.
7. He has been to counselors whose methods failed, perhaps even those who claim to be Christian, but who use psychological approaches or "watered down" scriptural approaches.
 - a. When so-called Christian counseling methods fail, greater despair may result than when secular methods fail.
 - b. When so-called Christian counseling fails because it is not solidly scriptural, the disciple may believe that even God does not have answers to his problems.
8. He may believe he is destined to live in emotional pain the remainder of his life because that is all he has experienced.

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9. He may be resistant to giving up his sinful emotional survival plan because it is familiar. From his vantage point, it is far more frightening to do things God's way, which means launching into the unknown.

V. God's Word imparts foundational concepts concerning hope.

- A. Hope in God is commanded in Scripture. (Ps. 42:11; 43:5)

*"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God..."*
Ps. 42:5

- B. God is the source of hope.

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him,
so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*
Rom. 15:13

- C. The Bible gives *certain* hope based on God's infallible words.

*"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us,
so that through endurance and the encouragement
of the Scriptures we might have hope."*
Rom. 15:4

1. God is incapable of lying. (Titus 1:2; Num. 23:19)
2. The Word of God is truth and is fully trustworthy. (John 17:17; Ps. 119:138)
3. The character of God is worthy of our trust.

*"For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all.
Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have,
we wait for it patiently."*
Rom. 8:24,25

*"Hope, in the Bible, is directed toward a certainty;
it is based on God's unfailing promises.
What makes it hope, as explained in Romans 8:24, 25,
is simply the fact it has not yet been realized."*
Jay E. Adams

- D. Hope, founded on the character of God and the promises of Scripture, will bring present contentment as the disciple looks to future circumstances.

1. **"...hope (in God) does not disappoint..." (Rom. 5:5)**
2. Hope causes the believer to be joyful. (Rom. 12:12a)
3. Hope is fixed on eternal life. (Titus 3:7)
4. Hope is in the living God. (1 Tim. 4:10)
5. Hope draws the disciple near to God. (Heb. 7:19)
6. Hope is sure and steadfast, firm and secure. (Heb. 6:19)

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7. Hope is a refuge. (Heb. 6:18b)
8. Hope is the anchor of the soul. (Heb. 6:19a)
9. Hope is one of the evidences of a real relationship with Christ.
10. Hope is one of three essentials needed to be equipped to live the Christian life.

“But now abide faith, hope, love, these three...”

1 Cor. 13:13a NASB

- E. God's commands in the Bible teach that hope is to be placed in God alone, rather than in circumstances or in people. (Ps. 62:5)

“But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you.”

Ps. 39:7

1. Our hope lies in God equipping believers to handle *any* situation He ordains for our lives. (1 Cor. 10:13)
2. Our hope lies in our eternally satisfying relationship with Him.

- VI. The *primary goal* of the first meeting with your disciple is to give the hope that God has solutions to his problems or will give him His power to live victoriously in unchanged situations.

- A. Encourage your disciple by explaining the *Four Approaches to a Problem* diagram, *CTO*, during the first or second session.
- B. Give hope that God's way will bring change from the *Facing Emotional Pain* diagram.
- C. Impart hope that Christ's power will be sufficient to bring change in your disciple. (Phil. 4:13; 2 Cor. 12:7-10)
- D. Give your disciple hope by explaining the *various aspects* of 1 Corinthians 10:13.

“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

1 Cor. 10:13

1. Others have gone through similar trials. Your disciple is not the “only one.”
2. God is not giving him more than he can bear, with His grace.
3. God is faithful. He will always be there and will always supply the power to endure, if the disciple obeys. (Jas. 4:6; Phil. 4:13; Heb.13:5)
4. God will provide “a way of escape” or “way out” through
 - a. obeying His commands.
 - b. relying on His promises.
 - c. choosing to believe in His goodness and love. (Rom 8:35-39)
 - d. choosing to believe that God will work all things for his benefit or good. (Rom. 8:28)
5. Grace will be given to *endure* the trial if God does not remove the difficulty.

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VII. The following are ways to impart hope through being a role model:

- A. Demonstrate a genuine *confidence* in God's character, abilities, promises and commands and convey this to the disciple.
- B. Apply the same scriptural principles in your own life that you are teaching your disciple, so you can share from your own experience how God's way works. (Phil. 4:9)
- C. Avoid being judgmental, realizing the ground is level at the foot of the cross. Your disciple's sin is no worse than yours. (Jas. 2:10)

VIII. The following are ways to impart hope through being an admonisher:

- A. Share the Gospel with the unsaved.
- B. Don't minimize either the problem or the underlying sin, but remember that God is greater than both and possesses the power to change the disciple.
- C. Confront the disciple's sin. Christ and the apostles consistently confronted sin.
 1. Admonish the disciple about his responsibility to live a godly life. His hope lies in dealing with his sin!
 2. Show him his accountability before God, speaking the truth in love. (Gal. 6:1; Eph. 4:15; Col. 1:28)
 3. Don't permit blameshifting, rationalizing, excusing, denying.
 4. Don't permit the disciple to repeatedly focus on another's sin. Lead him through forgiving. (Matt. 7:1-5; Mark 11:25)
- D. Be a good listener. Show sympathy without promoting self-pity in the disciple.
- E. Give examples of hope through appropriate illustrations.
 1. By sharing how God's way has worked in your own life and in lives of others
 2. By giving examples from Scripture

IX. The following are ways to impart hope that God and His Word have the power to change the disciple:

- A. Teach that sinful habits are *learned* and godly replacement habits can also be *learned* if the disciple is willing to change.
- B. Show how the Bible presents the *tools* for change.

***"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching,
rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,
so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."***
2 Tim 3:16,17

- C. Teach that hope lies in the Holy Spirit as the facilitator of change, rather than the disciple relying on his own inner resources. God causes spiritual growth.
 1. Teach that God lives inside the believer in the person of the Holy Spirit. Since God's resources are endless, He is able to supply the believer with limitless resources in order to obey. (Phil. 4:13; Eph. 1:3)

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2. Realize that all *true* spiritual growth is generated by the Holy Spirit on *His* timetable. (1 Cor. 3:6,7)
 - a. Be patient.
 - b. Realize some disciples will grow quickly; others will grow more slowly.
3. Convey to the disciple that the Holy Spirit is to become the source of his strength and sufficiency. (Jas. 4:6; Phil 2:13; 4:13)
4. Encourage the renewing of his mind by changing his thinking and speaking patterns. For example:
 - a. Do not accept “I can’t” as a valid excuse for disobedience.
 - b. Teach the disciple to say, “**I choose not to obey.**” rather than “I can’t.”

“I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.”

Phil. 4:13

- c. Intervene to correct a wrong speech pattern, when he demands, “I need _____.” Instead reinforce a new focus, teaching the disciple to think and say, “I desire _____ and my desires can be released to the Lord.”
- D. Offer willingness to help the disciple and encourage him on an involved, ongoing basis.
1. To love him – Biblical love is giving to another in a framework of commitment, which includes imparting your life to him.

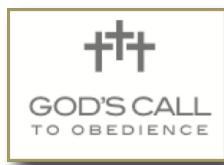
“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.”

1 Thess. 2:8
 2. To pray for him.
- X. Hope is instilled through truly understanding, from a scriptural basis, how God is sovereign over *all* of his circumstances.
- A. Explain the biblical perspective that he is called to suffer. (Phil. 1:29)
 - B. Explain that God has great purposes for his suffering. See Study 3, *Who’s in Charge?*
 1. Suffering *without* purpose or meaning creates despair and makes life meaningless.
 2. Suffering *with* purpose creates hope and gives life meaning, especially when he learns to view it from an eternal perspective.
 - C. Tell him that his heavenly Father has ordained his difficulties out of love and will use them for his benefit. (Rom. 8:28)
- D. Instill hope by teaching that God can use difficult circumstances to
1. know Him more intimately. (Phil 3:10)
 2. know himself more fully. (Deut. 8:2)
 3. help others. (2 Cor. 1:3-7)
 4. bring restoration. (Joel 2:25-28)

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- E. Realize the disciple's understanding of God's sovereignty is absolutely foundational to successful discipling.
 - 1. Assign *Who's In Charge?* as homework, one lesson given weekly, usually beginning with the first session.
 - 2. Remind the disciple frequently to think about how each trial relates to God's sovereign control and purpose.
- XI. Hope is given by assigning homework that encourages the disciple to begin to work on his problems in a consistent way.
 - A. By reading, studying and meditating on biblical teaching that relates to God's perspective on his life
 - B. By memorizing appropriate Scriptures; thus, creating a focus on God and His Word
 - C. By renewing his mind with God's truths, even when they are contrary to his feelings. Help him to say to himself, "This is truth and I *choose* to believe God, even if my feelings do not confirm that."
 - D. By learning concrete ways to implement scriptural commands, so he begins to *experience* God's grace and power ~ That's why it is so *important* for the discipler to hold the disciple accountable for acts of obedience!

***“...If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.
Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”***
John 8:31,32



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Disciples often begin their discipling process with little to no hope for their present or future lives. They have usually established patterns of trying to solve problems and to deal with life's difficulties through their own ingenuity and resources. Though they may give verbal allegiance to God and His Word, there is little evidence of a meaningful, trusting walk with Christ. Often the fruit of such endeavors is hopelessness. This study encourages you to lace your entire discipling process with ways to impart hope.

SECTION ONE : THE NEED FOR HOPE

Some disciples are fully aware that they have lost hope and are able to verbalize their condition. But others may be devoid of hope and yet, have little to no awareness of what is driving their attitudes and behaviors. This section is designed to help you discern how loss of hope may manifest itself, as well as presenting God's Word concerning hope. It also details the reasons why hope is so vital to the believer's well-being.

1. If possible, share a time when you were without hope. What descriptions given in this section relate to your own experience?
 2. Explain the major differences of how you approach the issue of giving hope to the believer and to the unbeliever.
 3. Why is it important that you are anchored in biblical hope when you disciple others?

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4. In what ways can you continue to nurture biblical hope in your own life?

5. If your disciple becomes discouraged, in what ways can you try to encourage him to hope in God and His Word?

SECTION TWO: SPECIFIC WAYS TO OFFER HOPE

1. If your disciple is placing his hope in God changing his circumstances rather than God giving him the power and resources to endure his difficulties, how can you encourage him to change his focus? Be specific.

2. Why is it important to frequently remind your disciple to persevere in renewing his mind?

3. Why is it important that you help your disciple replace erroneous statements with true statements?