

Hope *in* God

Teacher/Leader/Discipler Guide

SAMPLE PAGES:

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Study Options

Lesson One Guide for:

Foundation Study

Name

Topic

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Study Options

The *Hope in God* course contains three interrelated, yet stand-alone sections:

Foundation Study: *Seven lessons of three parts each which provide biblical insights into depression and related issues.*

Name: *Seven studies on the names of God.*

Topic: *Seven topical studies on subjects related to hope.*

The sections make this course extremely flexible and adaptable to any circumstance, ability, individual or group.

for Bible Study Groups and Discipling

For groups with at least 90 minutes for class discussion:

Five days of homework

Complete the Foundation Study (Parts One through Three), along with the corresponding Name and Topic. For example, the first week's homework would consist of:

- Foundation—Lesson One
(pages 15-24, three days of study)
- Name—Lesson One
(pages 25-28, one day of study)
- Topic—Lesson One
(pages 29-35, one day of study)

Cover the Foundation Study during the first half of class. After a break, discuss the Name and Topic.

(Note: It is best to have at least 45 minutes per half.)

The entire course will be complete after seven weeks of study.

For large classes, groups with less than 90 minutes for class discussion, or groups desiring shorter homework assignments:

Take one week to complete the Foundation Study and the next week to complete the corresponding Name and Topic. For example, the first week's homework would consist of:

- Foundation—Lesson One (pages 15-24)

The second week's homework would consist of:

- Name—Lesson One (pages 25-28)
- Topic—Lesson One (pages 29-35)

The entire course will be complete after fourteen weeks of study.

End-of-Course Meeting: Consider meeting for one week past the end of the study for a short review and to allow class members to encourage one another as they relate how God has used His Word in their lives as they have completed the course. This would also be a good opportunity to discuss and distribute copies of Appendix E to those who desire to disciple others.

for Counseling

For those with mild to moderate depression:

Five days of homework

Each week, have counselees complete the Foundation Study, along with the corresponding Name and Topic. For example, the first week's homework would consist of:

- Foundation—Lesson One
(pages 15-24, three days of study)
- Name—Lesson One
(pages 25-28, one day of study)
- Topic—Lesson One
(pages 29-35, one day of study)


The entire course will be complete after seven weeks of study.

For those with moderate to severe depression, or for use with supplemental assignments:

Three segments of homework

Each week, have counselees complete only the three-part Foundation Study. After completion of these basic studies, have counselees complete the Names of God and the Topics on Hope (along with weekly counseling or as homework for follow-up visits). Tapes, journaling, or related readings may easily be assigned with this option (helpful when also addressing issues such as anxiety, worry, etc.).

For those struggling with deep depression, or anything that limits ability for study:

Each week have counselees complete Part One of the Foundation Study, along with the question marked with a  (located either in Part Two or Three).

After completing this abbreviated course of study, have counselees return to the beginning of the book and complete the questions previously omitted.

Of course, there are other possible options and combinations. Feel free to adapt the study options to your situation.

Foundation Study

Aims

- To increase reliance upon God—and confidence, hope, and trust in His Word.
- To exalt God and call to mind His character, nature and attributes.
- To uncover and promote avoidance of non-biblical responses.
- To discover concrete, biblical ways to respond to feelings of depression.

Conversation Starter and Tie-in

There have been many fads over the years, from pet rocks to poodle skirts to pogs. In which fad have you or someone in your family been most interested or involved?

SAY: “Unlike fads which come and go, depression is an ongoing problem.”

Continue by reading the introduction to Part One (the first two paragraphs on page 17 in your course book).

Leading Students to Discover God's Truth

Cover the homework in order, spending the most time on Part Two. At the end of Part Three, lead students to the awareness that there are things we must refuse to do if we wish to respond biblically to feelings of depression. *(See column three of board layout.)*

Discussion Questions

- *Part 1—#1*

Did you have any reaction to the psalmist's words in Psalm 42?

Did it surprise you to see such an example of depression in Scripture? Why or why not?

Why do you think he is asking himself so many questions? Should we do the same?

- *Part 2—Response #2*

Do you think it is important to verbally express hope in God? Why?

Do you think you should tell yourself what to do? Why?

Is it hypocritical to do something (such as tell yourself to hope in God) when you don't feel like it?

(No. It is obedience, not hypocrisy!)

- *Part 2—Response #4a*

What are two or three things that can make daytime hard to get through? *(Tired, sad memories, other people, etc.)*

What are some things we can see or hear in the daytime that should remind us of God's lovingkindness?

(His Words of promise, nature, kind acts of others, small victories, etc.)

- *Part 2—Response #4b*

What can make nighttime difficult? (*loneliness, fear, mind overactive, lack of sleep, etc.*)

Micah 7:8 and Psalm 18:28 reveal truths about the night. How can a song make God’s presence more real to us at night? (*Be sure to point out that the Psalms are also songs that, especially when memorized, can be particularly helpful at night.*)

- *Part 2—Responses #6 and #7*

The psalmist repeats His questions and reasons with himself again. What might be some reasons that he keeps coming back and re-asking the same questions? (*A troubled heart is seldom peaceful immediately. Despair and depression don’t lift at once. Reasoning helps, but feelings return. Therefore, we must respond with reason over and over again until our feelings come in line with what we know.*)

- *Part 3—#4 and #6*

How would remembering these truths affect feelings of depression?

True biblical hope is a gift that is received at salvation (before salvation, all people are without Christ and without hope— Ephesians 2:12). Do you think most Christians realize that hope is a gift? Why or why not?

Comparing Scripture with Scripture

Psalm 43 is a continuation of Psalm 42. Read Psalm 43:2-4 and note the psalmist’s request to God: send **Your** truth, **Your** light. In times of distress, this needs to be our emphasis—not just any idea or thought, but God’s!

Responding to the Thoughts of Others

“[Hope is] not just encouragement in the midst of distress, but strength to move forward in the battle.”
William MacDonald ³

“...hope may not change your circumstances, but it will change the way you view them.” Nathan Busenitz ⁴

Application Questions

1. Have you responded in faith to the gospel of hope—is Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior? This is the crucial first step for hope in God!
2. Do you go regularly to God’s Word, which is a message and source of hope?
3. If you have not done so in the past, will you commit to respond to feelings of depression with the biblical responses of the psalmist? Like him, will you continue to reason with yourself even when the feelings return over and over?
4. When feelings of doubt begin, will you be like Asaph and remember the works, wonders, deeds and strength of the LORD?

Name One

Aims

To understand the significance of biblical names.

To gain a sense of the immense privilege and comfort it is to have a God who is the awesome LORD of Hosts...and who also cares for individual (and sinful) people.

To have an ever greater desire to hope in and cry out to God.

Introduction to Name

SAY: Knowing God through His names gives stability to life and faith. To illustrate this, picture a table top (your life of faith) that has only one leg in the middle. This is like having a general understanding that God is God (one name). Each additional name (or "leg") reveals more of God's nature, character and attributes, and learning these (adding them to your table) increases the support for your faith. As you come to know Him better, no matter where life moves you or what disturbances come, your faith will be solidly supported by an increasing knowledge of God.

Leading Students to Discover God's Truth

Cover the questions in the order they appear. ***For every lesson, remember to determine ahead of time which questions to leave out (because of time limitation, personal or confidential answers, etc.) and which questions to focus on for extended discussion.***

Discussion Questions

• Name 1—#2

God is also LORD over the host of all animals and the host of evil (demons and Satan). Can you give some examples from Scripture which illustrate each of these? *(for example, Daniel and the lions, Balaam's ass, ravens fed Elijah, Jesus cast out demons, Satan was under God's restrictions with Job, etc.)*

Knowing that God is the Almighty, all-powerful LORD of Hosts, what are our reasonable responses to this? *(worship, fear, praise, obedience, trust, prayer, etc. If you are using a visual aid, record these responses on it.)*

• Name 1—#6

What things or thoughts keep us from recognizing, and resting in, the presence of our God?

Do the truths in these references readily come to your mind in times of depression? If not, why not? *(living by sight and not by faith; mind stays on feelings and circumstances rather than God and His promises/provisions; weak faith; etc.)*

Application Questions

1. Will you respond in worship, praise, adoration and obedience to your God who is the LORD of Hosts? Have you thanked Him for showing His love toward individuals, even in their sin and rebellion?
2. Is there any thought or habit you need to change in order to show that you believe He is a very present help in trouble?

NOTE: *Teaching children the names of God is an excellent way to involve them in your study and help them come to know God. Encourage those in your group to purposefully share this part of their study with their children! If your group provides childcare, consider using the names as the theme of each week's Bible time.*

Topic One

Aims

To understand hope from a biblical perspective.

To see the paradox: Hope is a gift given by God, yet man has responsibilities in this area.

To identify the responsibilities regarding hope that each believer has.

Transition to Topic

SAY: Knowing God's names gives us an increasingly solid understanding of Who He is—and this results in hope that will stabilize our faith even during difficult times. Understanding what God's Word says about hope increases that stability. Let's take a closer look at biblical hope.

Leading Students to Discover God's Truth

Cover the questions in the order in which they appear in your course book, concentrating on boxed answers in #2 and answers to #3 and #4.

Discussion Questions

• Topic 1—#2d

Of the areas of responsibility, which ones are the hardest to fulfill in times of depression?

Is it acceptable not to fulfill our responsibilities in tough times? If not, what should we do?

(No...we should ask God for hope and strength—and expect Him to give it, get help from stronger Christians, study the Old Testament Scriptures that were written for our hope, keep eternity in mind, be in God's Word—for example, complete this study!, etc. NOTE: The way we fulfill our responsibilities may need to change as circumstances change.)

Responding to the Thoughts of Others

“When we hope in God, we fix our eyes on His promises rather than on personal circumstances.”

Nathan Busenitz ⁵

“If [God] doesn't keep His promise, then He has ceased to be God.” Warren Wiersbe ⁶

Application Questions

1. Are you fulfilling your responsibilities in the area of hope?
2. Will you refuse hopeless thoughts and drifting feelings? Will you instead choose to use hope as your helmet and anchor?
3. Will you live by faith and with hope now, knowing that the day will come when faith will be sight and hope will be realized?

NOTE: *The next topic (Topic Two) contains a printing error. Before they study that topic, please notify your students of the correct wording. See leader guide page 28 for further details.*