



The Testimony of Our Hope

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WHEN HAVE YOU COMPLAINED ABOUT FAIRNESS?

The
POINT ➤

Our hope in Christ points others to Him.

➤ 1 PETER 2:4-15

⁴ As you come to him, a living stone—rejected by people but chosen and honored by God— ⁵ you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture: See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and honored cornerstone, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame. ⁷ So honor will come to you who believe; but for the unbelieving, The stone that the builders rejected—this one has become the cornerstone, ⁸ and A stone to stumble over, and a rock to trip over. They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined for this. ⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called

you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you as strangers and exiles to abstain from sinful desires that wage war against the soul. ¹² Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits. ¹³ Submit to every human authority because of the Lord, whether to the emperor as the supreme authority ¹⁴ or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do what is evil and to praise those who do what is good. ¹⁵ For it is God's will that you silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

People are often tempted to complain about relatively small issues, but research shows that complaining rarely solves any issues. Instead, it makes us very unhappy.¹



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // GOD

God relates to His people according to His covenant promises, and even though we aren't always faithful to Him, God keeps His promises and always has and always will be faithful to us.

When things don't go as planned, many people may be tempted to blame God or question His love. Recently, I had the opportunity to hear from a young lady who'd lived through some of the toughest experiences imaginable. When I met her, she'd dropped out of high school and had moved in with her abusive boyfriend. Now, there was a baby on the way and she had no idea how she was going to take care of the baby—she couldn't even take care of herself!

When I shared with her that there was hope in what she perceived to be a hopeless situation—that God loved her enough to send Jesus to take on our sins so we could be restored—she responded as so many do. She asked, “If God loved me, why did He let me end up here?”

However, her critical and defensive disposition melted away when she visited our church. Immediately, she felt warmly welcomed—something she didn't expect. And in the coming days, our people went above and beyond to meet this young girl's needs and provide encouragement that she could make it through the coming challenges.

Best of all, she would soon come to believe the hope available to those who surrender their lives to Christ. Her life was changed because the church lived out what we're called to do. God will use us the same ways when we share of our hope in Him.

1 PETER 2:4-6

1 What are some foundations people build their lives upon?

2 What are the implications of Jesus Christ being the cornerstone of the church?

1 PETER 2:7-10

3 How do people struggle with some of Jesus' teachings today?

4 How does your life demonstrate that you've been changed, made holy, and set apart by God?

5 How does it make you feel to know that God chose you to be a part of His family? Why?

1 PETER 2:11-15

6 What do these verses teach us about our responsibilities as Christ-followers?

7 Why is doing good an effective testimony to the world for hope in Christ?

8 What opportunities do we have to express our hope to those who need to hear it?



*Others may reject Christ, but believers stand confidently because Jesus in our cornerstone—our solid foundation.
#BSFLHope*



LIVE IT OUT



GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY
& WORLD

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // GOD

God relates to His people according to His covenant promises, and even though we aren't always faithful to Him, God keeps His promises and always has and always will be faithful to us.

From the very beginning, God promised to bless the world through His people. He blessed Adam and Eve and called them to fill the earth with people who would reflect God's goodness. He gave Noah the same blessing and calling. With Abraham, God promised to produce through him innumerable offspring through whom the world would be blessed. And today, this blessing applies to us. Even though we're not perfectly faithful, God has promised—and will fulfill the promise—to bless the world through the church as we follow Christ in the ways we live.

> CHRIST

Hope in Christ means that because we know God will follow through on His promises, we can expect good things in the future—even when they seem tough in the here-and-now.

9 When have you complained about your circumstances in a way that ignored the hope found in Jesus? Confess these to God.

10 What do the following verses say about our hope for eternity? Read these each day and take time to pray that God would help you to live with this kind of hope.

> Romans 8:24-25

> Psalm 43:5

> 1 Corinthians 15:19-22

> COMMUNITY

We're called to share of our hope in Jesus both individually and corporately.

11 How will you work together with Christian friends to reach those who need to know of the hope Jesus offers?

- > To get started, call or message friends—or even discuss in this group—and work on a plan to engage lost people in your school or community.



> CULTURE

The world is continually watching people who claim to be Christians and looking for ways to discredit our witness and further support their worldly perspectives.

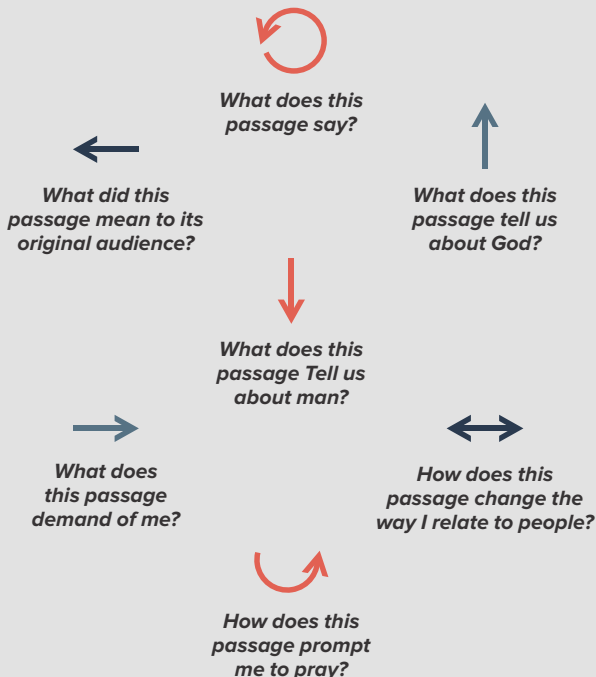
12 In what ways have you seen Christians turn non-believers away from Jesus?

13 How will you do just the opposite this week? How will you help your non-Christian friends see that our only hope is Jesus and He has changed your life?

DAILY DEVOTIONS



The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Day One JOHN 14:1-2

Jesus spoke these words in the upper room after enjoying the Last Supper with His disciples. Following supper, He shared some important final thoughts with them before He would be crucified, and Jesus said not only that Judas would betray Him, but also that Peter would deny Him. The air was likely heavy in the room, but Jesus wanted the disciples to know there was hope beyond the things He'd just shared. He would leave them very soon, but He was going away for a specific purpose. Jesus would leave the earth and go to the Father's side in order to prepare a home for all God's children. When we face the struggles of this life, we're often tempted to think that things are hopeless. But Jesus calls us to look beyond our present difficulties and to the future blessings that await God's people in eternity. This is the essence of hope, and it affects us in real ways, even today.

- **When have your everyday struggles kept you from focusing on Jesus' promises?**
- **Why is it so important that we learn to focus on eternity?**

Day Two

JOHN 14:3-4



People were created from the beginning to live in relationship with God and others. But when we chose sin over obedience, we brought disruption to the intimacy God desires for us. Instead, we chose selfishness, which leads to separation, isolation, and loneliness. The disciples had followed Jesus for three years, and they experienced love like they'd never seen before. Jesus was kind and generous, He continually went out of His way to serve others, and Jesus patiently taught them, even when they totally blew it. But now He was leaving, and they were devastated. But Jesus' leaving wasn't the end of the story. He promised that, if He left, they could be certain He would return for them. This promise applies to us, as well, and knowing this changes everything.

➤ **When have you felt like Jesus was abandoning you?**

➤ **How do these promises speak to that concern?**

Day Three

JOHN 14:5

Jesus had just told His disciples that He'd soon leave them, but that He would not leave them alone and would return for them. Surely there was a sense of distress at His leaving, but comfort in His return. What Jesus said next, however, may have caught the disciples off guard—"You know the way." Thomas, ever the optimist (sarcasm alert: there's a reason we call him "Doubting Thomas.") chimed in—*Uhh, Jesus ... we have no clue where you're going.* There are times when Jesus calls us to things we simply don't understand. In those moments, we have the choice to respond like Thomas, with doubt and questioning or even arguments. Or we can live by faith trusting that, even though I may not understand all that Jesus has communicated, I can trust His plan is good and that more details will be revealed to me when Jesus is ready.

➤ **When have you struggled to understand something Jesus communicated?**

➤ **How can you learn to trust God even when you don't understand all the details?**

Day Four

JOHN 14:6

When you want to get to school in the morning, you don't need directions—you've been to school many times before, so you know exactly how to get there. However, when we go to a new city for the first time and we don't know the way to the fun lunch place we want to try, we need a little help. One option is to follow a map or GPS. An even better way is to follow a friend who knows the way. Jesus told His disciples that, even though they'd never walked the path to the place they'd soon go, they knew "the way." To be a Christian is to follow Christ, walking the very same path He's walked before us. When we follow Him, though we may not know the physical directions to God's eternal dwelling, as if it's a restaurant in a new city, we can have confidence that we'll make it there as we follow Jesus.

- **When have you needed to follow someone to make it to a new place?**
- **How can we know that following Christ will lead us into God's eternal kingdom?**

Day Five

JOHN 14:7



Many people today want to know God, and many believe there are multiple ways to live in a relationship with Him. Some think a relationship with God is based on our being "a good person." Others believe prayer is the key to knowing God. Some believe that all religions lead to the same God. But Jesus made it very clear—He is the only way to God. The world may claim that there are many sources of truth and many ways to experience eternal life, but Jesus taught very clearly that the only way to know the Father is through Jesus. Today, if you haven't surrendered to Jesus as the only way to God, surrender to Him.

- **Why do you think people claim there are many ways to God?**
- **Why is it necessary for us to follow Jesus in order to know God?**