

The Weekly Connection Group Handout

A handout is provided to every Connection Group Leader by their coaches. The handout is produced by Melissa Freeman, one of our group leaders, as she is provided the lesson from Pastor Cole.



CONNECTION GROUP GUIDE

Hold Fast – Week 1

Hope is Alive

SERMON OVERVIEW

- 1. My Identity is Settled** (1 Peter 1:1–2)
 - Chosen by the Father, set apart by the Spirit, and covered by the blood of Jesus
 - Our identity is not defined by circumstances, our past, or others' opinions
 - Though we may feel like exiles, we belong to God
- 2. My Hope is Alive** (1 Peter 1:3–5)
 - Living hope comes through God's mercy, new birth, and Jesus' resurrection
 - Our inheritance is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading
 - Hope is alive because Jesus is alive
- 3. My Faith is Refined** (1 Peter 1:6–9)
 - Trials reveal and refine genuine faith
 - We can rejoice and grieve at the same time
 - Suffering does not mean God has abandoned us
- 4. My Life is Different** (1 Peter 1:13–25)
 - Living hope produces holy living and deep love
 - Set your hope on grace
 - Pursue holiness
 - Love one another deeply

ICEBREAKER

When you hear the word "hope," what's the first thing that comes to mind? How would you describe the difference between wishful thinking and true hope?

POWER VERSE

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

1 Peter 1:3

TALK IT OUT

- Where do you tend to get your identity from? (Performance, approval, past experiences, politics, pain, etc.)
- Read 1 Peter 1:1–2. What does it mean to be chosen, set apart, and covered by the blood of Jesus? How should that shape your identity?
- Share a time when you felt like an outsider. How can knowing you belong to God change that experience?
- What's the difference between a dead hope and a living hope? Are there any dead hopes you've been holding onto?
- Peter says our inheritance can never perish, spoil, or fade. What temporary things do we often chase, and why are they so attractive?
- How does the resurrection of Jesus give you hope in your current circumstances?
- Peter says we can rejoice even while suffering grief. Have you experienced joy and grief at the same time? What was that like?
- What trials are currently refining your faith? What might God be revealing or removing through this season?
- How can we support one another through trials without minimizing suffering or offering shallow answers?
- Of Peter's four responses—set hope on grace, be holy, live with reverent fear, and love deeply—which feels most challenging right now? Why?
- What does it look like to love one another deeply from the heart in our group and church community?
- How could your hope in Christ change your actions this week?

REFLECTION

Living hope can survive a hard world because Jesus is alive.

Take 2–3 minutes for personal reflection:

- What is one thing God impressed on you tonight?
- What is one step you will take this week in response?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for the living hope we have through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Forgive us for placing our hope in things that cannot save or satisfy. Strengthen those walking through trials, and use every hardship to refine their faith and draw them closer to You. Help us love one another deeply. Open the hearts of those who do not yet know Jesus, and help us live differently this week because of the hope we have in Christ.

In Jesus' name, amen.

On the one side is the lesson for the group meeting, featuring among other things:

- a summary of the previous week's sermon;
- an icebreaker question to get things started;
- the Power Verse for the week; and
- Discussion Questions for the group meeting.



CONNECTION GROUP GUIDE

Hold Fast – Week 1: In Practice

Hope is Alive

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 My identity is settled in Christ.
- 2 Living hope comes through Jesus' resurrection.
- 3 Our inheritance is secure and eternal.
- 4 Trials refine genuine faith.
- 5 Suffering does not mean God has abandoned us.
- 6 Living hope produces holy living and deep love.

POWER VERSE

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

1 Peter 1:3

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Choose One

- Option 1: Identity Audit**
 - Write down the top 3–5 things that define you (career, relationships, achievements, struggles, etc.)
 - Compare that list to what God says about you in 1 Peter 1:1–2
 - Pray daily, asking God to help you see yourself through His eyes
- Option 2: Hope Inventory**
 - Identify one area where you've been placing "dead hope" (money, relationship, comfort, success)
 - Journal about what "living hope" would look like in that area
 - Memorize 1 Peter 1:3
- Option 3: Deep Love**
 - Identify one person in your church community who needs encouragement
 - Reach out with a specific, meaningful act of love (meal, visit, phone call, handwritten note)
 - Don't just be polite—love deeply, from the heart
- Option 4: Refined Faith**
 - If you're in a trial, write down what God might be revealing or refining in you
 - Share this with one trusted friend or group member and ask them to pray with you
 - Look for one way God's presence has been near in the difficulty

FOR NEXT WEEK

- Read 1 Peter 2:1–12
- Continue practicing your chosen application
- Be prepared to share how God worked in your life this week

The other side of the handout focuses on applying the lesson in the week to follow, featuring among other things:

- Key take-aways from the lesson;
- Possible challenges for the week ahead; and
- Announcements about upcoming events.

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS



PARENT & CHILD DEDICATION

Publicly dedicate your child and commit to raising them according to God's Word and God's ways.

Child Dedication: Sunday, June 21, 2026

Information Class: Sunday, June 14, 2026

REGISTER HERE!





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FREE for kids ages 6–11!

Sports, music, snacks, and engaging biblical teaching in a fun environment where kids connect with God and others.

June 15–18, 2026
5:30–8:30PM

424 Broadway St





1613 MEN'S CONFERENCE

Hard-earned truth grounded in Scripture to help men lead with faith, honor God, and leave an eternal legacy.

July 17–18, 2026

Buda Campus

\$35 Adults | \$15 Students (age 12 and up)

REGISTER TODAY!



These are provided to our Group Leaders as both pdf files (for printing handouts) or as jpeg files, to text to group members so they might access them on their phones.