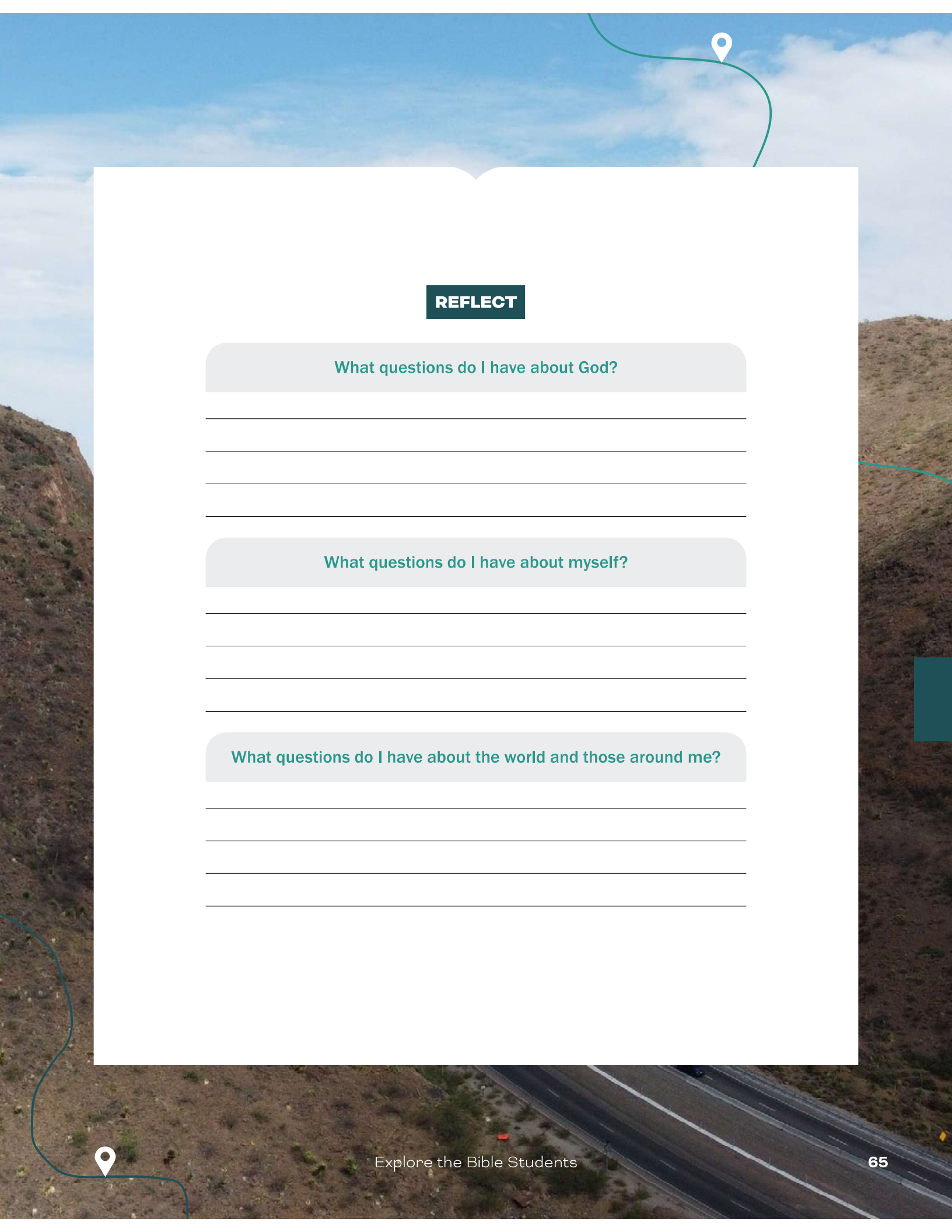


Session 08

Don't Lose **HOPE**

CENTRAL TRUTH | We can grieve sin and tragedy without losing hope in God's justice.

There are times when we feel overwhelmed, but the problem often lies in our attitude or our outlook. In those times, checking our faith and our focus can put things in the proper perspective. But there are also times when it's not an outlook or attitude problem: Sometimes, we're really in a terrible situation. In those moments, it's hard to have faith and hope, or even to look to God because we cannot imagine there's any way out of our situation. Such circumstances bring us to a crisis of faith: What do we believe about God and what do we believe about the future? Today's psalm of lament will help us learn how to grieve genuine sin and tragedy without losing hope in God's justice.



REFLECT

What questions do I have about God?

What questions do I have about myself?

What questions do I have about the world and those around me?

PSALM 137:1-3

¹ By the rivers of Babylon — there we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion.

² There we hung up our lyres on the poplar

trees, ³ for our captors there asked us for songs, and our tormentors, for rejoicing: “Sing us one of the songs of Zion.”

PSALM 137:4-6

⁴ How can we sing the LORD’s song on foreign soil? ⁵ If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill. ⁶ May my tongue stick to

the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not exalt Jerusalem as my greatest joy!

PSALM 137:7-9

⁷ Remember, LORD, what the Edomites said that day at Jerusalem: “Destroy it! Destroy it down to its foundations!” ⁸ Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is the one who

pays you back what you have done to us. ⁹ Happy is he who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rocks.

Day01

PSALM 137:1-3



Refer to page 5 for a description of the 7 Arrows of Bible Reading.

📍 READ & RESPOND

In 586 BC, Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians conquered Judah, destroying Jerusalem and the temple. Many of the citizens were captured and exiled to Babylonian lands, never to see the promised land again. In the first few verses of this psalm, the heartbroken psalmist is overwhelmed by grief. To make matters worse, their captors started to taunt them, pouring salt in their wounds when they asked for a song of Zion, essentially asking, “Where is your God now?” The Israelites were in this position because they had dishonored and disobeyed God, and they were right to grieve. When we sin, we should mourn over our sin, but as we’ll come to see in the rest of this psalm, our hope (and theirs) is in the Lord.

← Why was being forced to remember their old home (Zion) so painful for the Israelites?

↑ What does the intense sorrow of the Israelites reveal about how important God’s presence and city were to them?

→ What is one good memory of God’s faithfulness you need to remember the next time you feel far from Him or alone?

📍 MEMORIZE

On a piece of paper, write down **Psalms 34:18** five times. Doing this makes all the different parts of your brain turn on at the same time, which forces you to think about the information in a much deeper way.

📍 PRAY

Lord, You are my Comforter when I am sad or grieving. When difficult times come, help me find relief in Your presence.

Day02

PSALM 137:4-6

📍 READ & RESPOND

The Israelites' captors demanded they sing "one of the songs of Zion" (v. 3), but their hearts were too broken and their grief too deep over their forced exile. The psalmist vowed he would rather lose the use of his right hand or the ability to speak than forget God and His holy city, Jerusalem. The Israelites were deeply committed to remembering the tragedy and the sin that caused it. Their greatest hope wasn't for comfort but for justice and restoration. When we sin, we shouldn't just regret the consequences, but we should grieve over the sin itself.

← Why did the psalmist want to remember Jerusalem? What do you know about its importance to the Israelites' relationship with God?

↑ What does this passage teach you about honest grief in worship? What can we learn about worship in our grief?

← How can you respond when a friend is going through a tough time and says they feel like they "can't even pray" or worship?

📍 MEMORIZE

Using your phone, tablet, or computer, write out **Psalms 34:18** in a notes app using emojis. Be creative! Send the emojis to a few friends or family members and see if they can decipher the verse.

📍 PRAY

Father, Your lovingkindness comforts me, even when I do not deserve it. Help me to remember the cost of my sin and to choose Your ways above my own desires.

Day 03

PSALM 137:7-9

📍 READ & RESPOND

Psalm 137 ends with a harsh prayer for justice against two groups: the Edomites and the Babylonians. The Edomites were close relatives (descendants of Esau) who cheered on the Babylonians when they destroyed Jerusalem. The Babylonians were the cruel enemy who dragged the Israelites into captivity. In verses 7-9, the psalmist cries out, asking God to remember their enemies' actions and bring them the same destruction they caused. This prayer shows that even in the deepest grief over their sin and tragedy, the Israelites had unshakable hope that God would act as the ultimate Judge. We can trust that even when life is unfair, God sees all injustice, and His promised justice and restoration will prevail.

🔄 Why did the Israelites feel such intense hatred and want revenge?

↑ What does this passage teach us about how honest we can be with God about our pain and anger?

→ How does this passage teach you to trust God's plan for justice instead of trying to get revenge yourself?

📍 MEMORIZE

Let's map out this week's verse. Write out **Psalm 34:18**. Underline the important nouns in the verse. Circle the important verbs. Put an appropriate symbol next to any word that might be important.

📍 PRAY

God, there is so much injustice in this world, but I am confident that You will bring restoration and justice. Help me remember in my pain and hurt that You are the ultimate Judge and You will restore all things.

Day04

PSALM 5:1-8

📍 READ & RESPOND

David wrote Psalm 5 likely during the time his son, Absalom, was rebelling against him. He was facing a personal tragedy caused by wickedness and was deeply hurt. But instead of taking revenge, David brought his pain to God. This psalm is a powerful prayer asking God to listen to his groaning and hear his cry for help. David knew God hates sin and would not let wicked people stay in His presence. When we're at the receiving end of hurt and loss, we can grieve without losing hope in God's perfect justice. Like David, we can trust that God, who is perfectly holy, will always lead us on the right path.

🔄 In verses 4-6, what does this passage teach us about how God feels about wickedness?

↑ Why should we also “watch expectantly” when we pray? Do you trust God to act on your behalf when you pray? Why or why not?

← How does this passage remind us to stay focused on the Lord and leave justice to Him?

📍 MEMORIZE

Go for a walk! Recite **Psalm 34:18** aloud while walking. Assign one phrase to a set number of steps (for instance, walk five steps while saying the first phrase).

📍 PRAY

Lord, Your faithful love never fails me. Like David, I ask You to “make your way straight before me.” Help me to watch expectantly for You.

Day**05**

1 PETER 5:6-7

📍 READ & RESPOND

Life can feel overwhelming when we face sadness or tragedy. It can feel heavy from the consequences of sin or things we can't control. Peter tells us to humble ourselves under God's powerful hand (see v. 6). Being humble means we admit we can't handle these heavy burdens on our own. Instead, we "[cast] all [our] cares on him, because he cares about [us]." (v. 7). This means we trust the heavy grief and worry to God. When we hand our burdens—even the pain of sin and tragedy—to Him, we find hope. We can trust that He sees everything, cares for us personally, and will bring justice and restoration in His perfect time.

↻ What two things does this passage tell us to do under God's mighty hand?

↑ What word from verse 7 supports that God is not too busy to pay attention to your feelings and worries?

→ What is something you are worrying about right now that you need to intentionally "cast on" (give to) God?

📍 MEMORIZE

Once you know **Psalms 34:18**, teach it to someone else—a sibling, a parent, or a friend. Explain what it means and why it's important.

📍 PRAY

Mighty God, I humble myself before You and cast every worry and every anxiety onto You right now. I trust in Your powerful hand because I know You care for me.