

Small Group Guide: Living with Hope in Uncertain Times

Based on 1 Peter 1:3-9

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by thanking God for His living hope and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and application.

Icebreaker Question

What's one uncertain situation in your life right now (big or small)? How do you typically respond to uncertainty?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Through Jesus, we find the hope, strength, and courage to face life's challenges**
2. **We have a future in heaven** - an inheritance that will never perish, spoil, or fade
3. **We have a fortress in God's power** - shielded by faith through trials
4. **We have faith of priceless worth** - refined like gold through trials
5. **We have fellowship with God** - a deep relationship with our Creator
6. **We have forgiveness of sins** - rescued from darkness into His kingdom

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text (1 Peter 1:3-9)

1. **Read 1 Peter 1:3-5.** What specific words does Peter use to describe our inheritance in heaven? Why do you think he emphasizes that it "can never perish, spoil, or fade"?
2. **In verse 6, Peter says "in all this you greatly rejoice."** What is the "all this" referring to? How is it possible to rejoice while suffering?
3. **What does Peter mean when he says our faith is "of greater worth than gold" (v. 7)?** How does fire refine both gold and faith?

Applying to Our Lives

4. **The sermon mentioned Y2K and other historical moments of uncertainty.** What are the "uncertain things" people worry about today? How do these compare to what early Christians faced?
5. **Lee said, "God is not protecting you from hard times."** How does this challenge common Christian thinking? Why is this actually good news?
6. **Read Lee's statement: "We're just foreigners. This is not your home. Where is your home? With heaven, with God."** How would your daily decisions change if you truly lived as a foreigner here?
7. **The sermon mentions several types of suffering:**
 - Persecution for faith
 - Life circumstances (disease, natural disasters, economic trouble)
 - Relational heartbreak
8. Which of these do you find hardest to trust God through? Why?

Going Deeper

8. **Lee shared about the early Christians during the Black Plague running toward suffering rather than away from it.** What made them able to do this? What would it take for us to have that same courage?
9. **1 Peter 1:8 says we love Jesus "though you have not seen him."** How do we develop and maintain love for someone we can't see? What practices help you in this?
10. **The sermon emphasized that trials prove the "genuineness of your faith."** Can you share a time when a trial actually strengthened your faith? What did you learn about God through it?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge (Choose 1-2)

Individual Practices:

- **Perspective Shift:** Each day this week, when you face a challenge, ask: "How might God be using this for His glory or to reach someone else?"
- **Gratitude in Trials:** Write down one trial you're facing and list 3 things you can thank God for related to it

- **Hope Meditation:** Spend 5 minutes daily reading and meditating on the heavenly inheritance described in 1 Peter 1:3-5

Relational Practices:

- **Share Your Hope:** Identify one person going through difficulty and share with them what gives you hope
- **Model Joy:** Let someone see you respond to a trial with faith rather than fear, then explain why you can have peace].

Group Practice:

- **Prayer Partners:** Pair up and commit to praying for each other's specific trials this week, asking God to refine your faith through them

Reflection Questions for Personal Journaling

1. What trial am I currently facing that God might be using to prove the genuineness of my faith?
2. In what areas am I living as if this world is my home rather than as a foreigner passing through?
3. What would change in my life if I truly believed that "God is my prize" rather than the blessings He gives?
4. Who in my life needs to see hope in me during my trials? How can I point them to Jesus?

Memory Verse

1 Peter 1:6-7 "In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

Closing Discussion

Final Question: Based on today's discussion, what is one specific way you will live differently this week in light of the living hope we have in Christ?

Closing Prayer Focus:

- Thank God for the living hope we have through Christ's resurrection

- Pray for those in the group facing specific trials
- Ask for courage to live as foreigners with our hope set on heaven
- Pray for opportunities to share this hope with others

Leader Notes

- **Be Sensitive:** Some group members may be in the midst of significant suffering. Create space for honest emotions while pointing people to hope.
- **Avoid Platitudes:** Don't minimize real pain with Christian clichés. Acknowledge that trials hurt while affirming God's purposes.
- **Share Authentically:** As a leader, be willing to share your own struggles and how you're learning to trust God through them.
- **Focus on Jesus:** Keep bringing the conversation back to Christ's resurrection as the source of our hope, not just positive thinking.