CORNERSTONE

DISCIPLESHIP

GROUPS

A LIVING HOPE
PASTOR JONATHAN BURNS
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2026

NEWS & EVENTS

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- October - Pastor Appreciation Month
- November4 & 15 - Communion
- November 7-8 - Guest Speaker, Chad Gonzales
- November 15 Operation Christmas Child Collection
- November 21 - SERVE: One Gen Away
- November 25 - No Service; Happy Thanksgiving!
- December 5 - Ladies Christmas Event

OVERVIEW

The Hope That Anchors the Soul

Core Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 13:13; Romans 5:1-5; Romans 8:18-25; Hebrews 6:13-20

Overview

This guide is designed to help your group explore the biblical concept of hope — not as a vague wish, but as a confident expectation of a future outcome rooted in the promises of God. Pastor Jonathan draws from 1 Corinthians 13, Romans 5 and 8, Hebrews 6, Titus 2, and other passages to show that hope is not incidental to the Christian life. It is part and parcel to salvation itself, and it was never meant to be separated from it.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Biblical hope is not wishful thinking.** The Greek word for hope used throughout the New Testament means a confident expectation of a future outcome or event. It is grounded in the unchangeable character and promises of God.
2. **Our hope has one object.** According to Ephesians 4, there is one hope that belongs to every believer. That hope is fixed on the person of Jesus Christ and the completion of God's redemptive plan — including his return and the glorification of his people.
3. **Hope was given to you at salvation.** Romans 8:24 indicates that believers were saved in hope. It is not something you manufacture. It originates with God and is inspired by the indwelling Holy Spirit. You already have it.
4. **Hope can and should be cultivated.** Though hope is a gift, believers are instructed to set it, hold fast to it, confess it, and even boast in it. It grows through trial, endurance, and character — as described in Romans 5:3-4.
5. **Hope serves a purpose in the believer's life.** Pastor Jonathan identifies seven God-ordained effects of hope: strength through trial, direction and courage, stability, ever-increasing growth, the strength to do good work, confidence in God's deliverance, and a draw toward holiness and nearness to God.
6. **No believer should be without hope.** Hopelessness in the life of a Christian is often the result of fixing one's focus entirely on present circumstances rather than on the Lord and the guaranteed future he has promised.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening Question

Before today, how would you have defined hope? How does the biblical definition — a confident expectation of a future outcome — differ from how you typically use the word in everyday life?

Hope's Foundation — Anchored in God's Promises

Romans 8 describes all of creation groaning and longing to be freed from its bondage to corruption. What does it mean to you that God himself looked forward in hope to the restoration of creation? How does that change the way you think about hope as a concept?

Hebrews 6 describes hope as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul. In what season of your life have you most needed an anchor? Looking back, how did your focus — or lack of focus — on God's promises affect how you weathered that time?

Hope's Growth — Through Suffering to Character

Romans 5:3-4 describes a progression: suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope. Can you identify a time in your own life when this progression played out? What did you gain on the other side of a difficult season?

Pastor Jonathan put it plainly: "Every single time that I have experienced hopelessness, it's because 100 percent of my focus was on right now and none of my focus was on the Lord." Do you find that to be true in your own experience? What are the habits or disciplines that help you keep your focus rightly oriented?

Hope's Voice — Confessing and Defending

Hebrews 10:23 instructs believers to hold fast to the confession of their hope without wavering, because the one who promised is faithful. What does it look like practically to confess your hope? Is this something you currently do? If not, what would have to change?

First Peter 3:15 calls believers to be ready to defend the reason for the hope that is in them. How would you articulate your hope to someone who asked you about it? What would you say?

Hope's Horizon — The Return of Christ

Pastor Jonathan shared a personal moment when it became suddenly real to him that Jesus was coming back — and his first reaction was that he hoped it was not tomorrow. Have you ever had a similar reaction? What does that reveal about where our focus tends to drift?

He also argued that the church has largely divorced its teaching from a robust understanding of hope, and that this has had a real cost. Do you agree? What do you think is lost when believers stop thinking seriously about the return of Christ and the completion of their redemption?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. **Write it down.** In your own words, write out what your biblical hope is — what you are confidently expecting God to complete in you and for you. Keep it somewhere visible as a daily reminder.
2. **Confess it out loud.** As Pastor Jonathan pointed out, you cannot confess something you cannot articulate. Practice saying your hope out loud, either in personal prayer or with a trusted friend or family member.
3. **Locate yourself in the progression.** Reflect honestly on Romans 5:3–4. Are you currently in a season of suffering, endurance, or character development? Talk with your group about where you are and what you sense God may be building in you.
4. **Study the connections.** Look up several passages in the New Testament where faith, hope, and love appear together. Note what each contributes and how they support one another. Come back to your group with one observation that stood out to you.
5. **Prepare your defense.** Using 1 Peter 3:15 as your prompt, prepare a brief, clear explanation of the reason for the hope that is in you. Practice sharing it with gentleness and respect, as the verse instructs.

CLOSING

Close your time together by praying specifically over hope. Ask God to make the reality of Christ's return and the completion of your salvation more vivid and present in the daily lives of each group member. Pray for anyone in the group who is currently in a season where hopelessness feels close, and ask the Holy Spirit — who is the source of this hope — to fan it into flame.

Scriptures referenced in this guide: 1 Corinthians 13:4–13; Romans 5:1–5; Romans 8:18–25; Titus 2:11–14; Ephesians 4:1–6; Hebrews 6:13–20; Hebrews 10:21–23; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 Peter 1:13; 1 Peter 3:15; Galatians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:8–10; 2 Corinthians 3:12; 1 Timothy 4:10; Hebrews 3:6; Hebrews 7:19