



LEADER GUIDE
SESSION 2

The Expression of Our Hope

GETTING STARTED

DISCUSS: When have you been fooled by something that didn't live up to its claims?

RECAP (PAGE 15): Fraud. Cheating. Scandal. Millions upon millions of dollars paid to college administrators. The 2019 college admissions bribery scandal uncovered all of this. High-profile celebrities, student athletes, coaches, admissions counselors, and other professionals all were exposed in the largest case of its kind ever prosecuted by the United States Justice Department. The scandal left many scratching their heads wondering why any parent would go to such lengths to get a child into a university.

At the bottom of it all was misplaced hope—misplaced hope in a university, degree, team, or status. All those things can come crumbling down. But it doesn't take a high-profile case to see misplaced hope; we see it when people pursue a bigger house, a better job, or a certain status as if these things truly matter. Hope in such things is never sure; these things can disappear overnight. Is there a firm footing for hope that will never disappoint? Faith and hope in Christ transforms our perspective so that life is no longer about what we can gain but about how we love and serve God and others.

GUIDE: Direct attention to **The Point** on page 16. Invite group members to fill in the blanks.

THE POINT: Our hope in Christ **CHANGES** how we view the **WORLD** and live in it.

STUDY THE BIBLE

GIVE BIBLICAL CONTEXT: Peter most likely wrote his letter in the early 60s AD to believers living in what today is Turkey. These Christians were facing various trials. After encouraging them to remain faithful to Christ, Peter went on to instruct them on how they should demonstrate their confident hope on a daily basis.

RECAP (PAGE 16): The first recipients of Peter's letter were facing persecution, but Peter didn't call on them to take up physical weapons against the Roman Empire. Rather, he understood that Christians fight the true battles in the mind; our battle is over our affections, time, disciplines, anxieties, and priorities.

READ: Ask a group member to read aloud 1 Peter 1:13-16 on page 16.

GUIDE: Direct your group's attention to the following heading on page 16: **Live in grace and HOLINESS rather than conformity to the world.**

RECAP (PAGE 16): As Christ-followers, we're called to remain focused on the hope we have in Christ. Peter gave five admonitions to help us stay aligned with that hope:

- ▶ **Be ready.** "With your minds ready for action" (v. 13). We should be mentally alert as we prepare for Christ's return.
- ▶ **Be alert.** "Be sober-minded" (v. 13). In this context, Peter was referring to the danger of letting our minds be clouded by deceit or our own passions and whims.
- ▶ **Be hopeful.** "Set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (v. 13). This isn't wishful thinking or idly passing time; this is rock-solid, assertive trust. And this hope-setting has an object; it's focused on the grace of Christ!
- ▶ **Be distinct.** "Do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance" (v. 14). The lives of believers should be counter-cultural; we've been radically transformed by the gospel.
- ▶ **Be holy.** "As the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy" (vv. 15-16).

ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): In advance, gather some modeling clay and a large coin (a half-dollar or dollar coin work well). Invite a group member to read verses 14-16, noting that believers are to conform to Christ's image, displaying His character in our lives. Display the modeling clay and the coin to your group, and then press the coin into the modeling clay, making an impression. Pass the impression around until all group members have seen it up close. Draw the group's attention to the fine details visible in the impression. Just as the modeling clay displays the image on the coin, our lives are to display Christ's holiness. Explain that we can't achieve holy living on our own. The Holy Spirit will help us to know and follow God's Word, enabling us to live lives that reflect Christ's holiness.

DISCUSS: What does holiness look like for a person devoted to Jesus? *[ALTERNATE: How would you explain God's grace to someone who doesn't know Jesus?]*

READ: Ask a group member to read aloud 1 Peter 1:17-21 on pages 16-17.

GUIDE: Direct your group's attention to the following heading on page 17: **Live as God's people because you have been REDEEMED.**

RECAP (PAGE 17): Humanity isn't getting better. Life without Christ is futile, empty, and meaningless. Sin snatches the meaning out of life and leaves us searching for direction and purpose. Jesus said He came to give us abundant life (John 10:10). All the silver and gold in the world can't redeem us or change our spiritual condition. The bondage of sin can only be broken with the blood of Christ.

DISCUSS: How does the reality of redemption change the way we see the world and live in it? *[ALTERNATE: How can we live as strangers in this world without being isolated from the people in this world?]*

READ: Ask a group member to read aloud 1 Peter 1:22-25 on page 17.

GUIDE: Direct your group’s attention to the following heading on page 17: **Live according to GOD’S WORD in order to remain pure in this world.**

RECAP (PAGE 17): God’s Word forever stands as the sole authority for how to live in the world, no matter where we are or what difficulties confront us. Peter recognized that because we’ve experienced new life in Christ, our obedience is the means of our purification, and that purity overflows in love for one another. In this passage, Peter wasn’t commanding us to love—he reasoned that our faith meant we are already loving—but he called us to do so “constantly” (v. 22).

DISCUSS: How have you experienced the power of God’s Word? [*ALTERNATE: What tools have you found helpful to know and apply God’s Word?*]

DISCUSS: What are the challenges and benefits of striving to live a holy life?

DO: Instruct group members to complete the activity, **Be Set Apart**, on page 17, on their own. If time allows, invite volunteers to share their responses.

Be Set Apart: Using the acrostic below, record four actions you can take to live a holy life through your hope in Christ. An example has been provided.

Honor God through prayer each day.

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LIVE IT OUT

SAY: “Hope in Christ changes how we view the world and live in it. How will you live out that truth?”

GUIDE: Direct group members to review the three bulleted statements under **Live It Out** on page 18. Call on volunteers to share (1) which of these statements is something they want to pursue further, or (2) ways this study will transform their prayer life this week.

- ▶ **Confess.** Confess to the Lord where you have misplaced your hope. Be honest and open about the people or things that you’ve looked to for hope apart from Christ.
- ▶ **Read.** Commit to read and apply God’s Word to your life every day. It’s through continually reading the Bible that we can develop a lifestyle of obedience and holy living. Use the daily devotional readings on pages 19–22 for your time in God’s Word each day.
- ▶ **Commit.** If there is an area of your life where your hope in Christ isn’t evident through your obedience to God, commit to change that. Surrender that area of life to God and remove all the barriers that stand between you and total obedience.

GUIDE: Invite each person to gather with two or three Christ-followers of the same gender this

week for a deeper discussion, using **Talk It Out** (page 18) to guide their discussion. Encourage group members to spend time each day in God’s Word with the devotions found in the **Daily Study** section (pages 19–22).

PRAY: Close your Bible study time with prayer.

DIG DEEPER

Use the commentary below as you prepare to lead the session.

[VERSE 13]: Peter encouraged his readers to rely fully on their living hope as a direction and motivation for how to live. These Christians had already received salvation through their faith in Jesus (v. 9) by God’s grace (v. 10). However, there was more grace, more blessing to come “at the revelation of Jesus Christ,” when Jesus returns to the earth at His second coming (John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:50-54; 1 John 3:2). Until Jesus returns believers should live in a way that reflects their confidence in their living hope.

[VERSES 14-16]: Before they put their faith in Jesus, Peter’s audience had existed in a state of ignorance. In this former condition, they had allowed themselves to be “conformed to the desires” of their fallen human nature (1 John 2:16). Since Jesus had set them free from slavery to sin (John 8:34-35), these Christians were not to return to the lifestyle of conforming to the world’s values and focusing on sinful appetites (Romans 12:2). In contrast to their former way of life, Peter urged his readers “to be holy” in all they said and did.

[VERSES 17-18]: The Gentile believers’ former way of life before Christ was empty and without hope. They were totally ignorant of the true God and His truth. Their situation was the result of the belief system they had “inherited from” their ancestors. In contrast, the Jewish believers had the Old Testament, which revealed to them the one true God and how He had called and blessed the people of Israel through His covenant with them. However, both groups needed to be redeemed and freed of their bondage to sin by the payment of a ransom. An enormous price was required for their freedom; it was not to be paid “with perishable things like silver and gold.”

[VERSE 19]: The only sufficient payment for sin was “the precious blood of Christ” (see Mark 10:45). The image of a blood sacrifice goes back to the sacrificial system of the Old Testament covenant (Hebrews 9:16-22). However, this system was inadequate as a permanent solution for the guilt and slavery brought by sin. Through the prophet Isaiah, God revealed that one day He would establish a new covenant. God would send His servant (Isaiah 52:13) who would suffer in our place like “an unblemished and spotless lamb.” God would “make him a guilt offering” (Isaiah 53:10). Jesus would be “offered once to bear the sins of many” (Hebrews 9:28). John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and told his followers, “Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

[VERSE 20]: Peter went on to describe Jesus as the one who “was foreknown before the foundation of the world.” The term “foreknown” probably refers to both God’s purpose and Christ’s preexistence. In the beginning of his Gospel, John wrote of Jesus’ preexistence (John 1:1-3). Before God created the universe, He knew that sinful humanity would need a savior. He also knew that Jesus, the Son of God through whom all things were made, would be “the Savior of the world” (4:42).

While Jesus is eternally God as much as the Father and the Holy Spirit, God the Father did not reveal Jesus to the world until the time was right for His plan of redemption. Jesus was not revealed until the time of His Incarnation (John 1:14), when Mary conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit and gave birth to Jesus (Luke 1–2). It was John the Baptist who pointed out Jesus’ true identity at the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry (John 1:29-36).

Christians sometimes talk about “the last days” in reference to the events described in the Book of Revelation. However, the New Testament understanding of “these last times” (which could also be translated “end of the ages”) is that the last days began with Jesus’ birth, ministry, and death on the cross, and will continue until Christ’s second coming.

[VERSE 21]: Jesus’ true glory was revealed after His resurrection. As Peter and other Christians shared the good news about Jesus and His resurrection, the ones to whom Peter was writing had put their faith in Jesus as their Savior and Lord (Romans 10:9-10). The reality of the resurrection is also the reason believers trust God the Father as the only One who offers real, living hope.

[VERSES 22-23]: Peter urged these believers to show “sincere brotherly love” for each other. Sincere means that this love is without any hint of hypocrisy. This kind of love can only come from a pure heart and must be demonstrated constantly.

[VERSES 24-25]: God assured His people that His Word would be fulfilled, contrasting it with the unreliability and brevity of humanity. Though human beings may brag about their own glory, God said human beings are no more enduring than the grass that withers and their glory like the flowers that fall. His Word, on the other hand, “endures forever.”



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