

HOPE HAS A NAME: WEEK 3: SPIRITUAL PRACTICE **COMMUNITY**

Hope is not a solo activity. Isolation will diminish hope, connection will multiply hope. Hope is a team sport. So, this week (and every week) we need to practice community.

Community is the practice of engaging in common activities (i.e. worship, Bible Study, prayer, confession, serving) to be formed in Christ and help others flourish. Community Groups are a great place to find community. As you practice community, identify your trusted group of friends and let them know you want to share your journey of hope with them this week via phone calls, text or emails.

DAY 1

Meditate on **Romans 15:13** and make it your prayer today. Then, pause to consider the Hope Inventory. Share your answers with your community (a Community Group or trusted group of friends).

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

Hope Inventory

1. What do I hope to have?
2. What do I hope to do?
3. What do I hope to become?

DAY 2

Elijah's hope was almost side-lined by three hope killers: fatigue, isolation and worry (**1 Kings 18-19**). We'll look at fatigue today and the others in the coming days.

Hope-Killer Number One: Fatigue

Share with your community what makes you weary in this season and how you usually respond to weariness.

Meditate upon these passages. What is the difference between resting in Christ and resting from Christ? Share your answer with your community.

2 [Jesus said:] "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:14-16

DAY 3

Hope-Killer Number Two: Isolation

Isolation can happen when we are alone but also in a crowd. We long to be known, but being known requires vulnerability, courage and wisdom (who to be vulnerable with). Do you have someone you can be your most honest self with today? If not, ask God for a friend like this.

And who can you seek to know – being a safe person who listens without judgment or interruption. Ask God to bring a person to mind as you sit with him today and then reach out and check in with them.

Meditate upon these passages. Martin Luther, the great reformer, said, “You should not only meditate (on Scripture) inwardly in your heart but also outwardly by repeating the words aloud. . . reading and rereading it, carefully, attentively and reflectively, to gather what the Holy Spirit means by them.”

17 As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17

9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Romans 12:9-13

8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10 Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 11 If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:8-11

DAY 4

Hope-Killer Number Three: Worry

Hope only exists alongside worry. As long as we live by faith and hope we will know doubt and fear . . . (Elijah) had to choose hope and manage fear. So, Elijah courageously faced his fear by taking action and obeying God. It's easier to act your want into a feeling, than to feel your want into an action.

With your community or trusted friend, share the top 2-3 things you are worried about today. How will you choose hope and manage your fear?

Mediate upon **Joshua 1:7-9** and make it your prayer today.

⁷ "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

DAY 5

What would you do **today** if you were feeling great hope in God? Pastor Rob suggested the following at the end of his sermon. Circle one (or add your own) and commit to doing it today. Be sure to share this with your community. Pray bold prayers? Pray it.

- Give generous gifts? Give them.
- Take the initiative to reach out to a friend? Reach out.
- Start learning a new skill? Start now.
- Commit to volunteer in a helpful way?
- Cheer on a co-worker? Make the call or write the note.
- Confess a hidden sin or addiction to a trusted friend? Confess and ask God for healing.

Return to **Romans 15:13** and pray it for yourself and those you love.

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.