

Freedom Groups Facilitator's Guide

For The "HOPE" Study Guide

Foundation Information:

1. Freedom Groups were created so that we could share with, learn from and support each other as we each walk on our personal journeys to freedom together.
2. We all face issues in our lives that tend to become roadblocks to us moving freely into our future.
3. As we encounter these roadblocks, hopelessness can set in.
4. Hopelessness is one of the major issue that can keep us from moving forward and keeps us trapped by our past.
5. Hopelessness usually does not totally consume most of us, but we can become hopeless in certain areas of our lives.
6. When we do, negativity can soon spread from this one area to the rest of our lives. Negativity can become our nature.
7. This is not the plan God has for us.
8. God has good plans for us, and when we trust in Him and His plans then hope grows.
9. Hope is not easily manufactured, but it will grow!
10. Therefore putting our trust and hope in God, and not in others or ourselves, is a spiritual discipline that we all need to develop more in our lives.
11. So please share how God helped you to hope, in spite of yourself or others, and the blessings and freedom and have come from that.

The Meeting:

I. Introductions/Ice Breaker: (15 minutes)

Welcome everyone.

Remember: If you have anyone new, we do not want to single them out and make them feel out of place, but we do want them to feel welcome as part of the group. So take special care of welcome them and have everyone in the group introduce themselves, not just the new people/person.

Ask how everyone's week was and allow a few minutes for sharing.

Then ask one, two or all three of the WARM-UP questions on page one of the HOPE study guide.

II. The Study: HOPE (30 minutes)

Share with the group, *"Over the last several weeks we have talked about how unforgiveness locks us in the past and does not allow us to move into the future.*

Sometimes people accept being stuck in the past because they do not have hope for things to change in the future.

Most often this hopelessness does not consume us, at least not initially. Instead it tends to creep in and overtake an area of our lives. We might not have any hope that our financial situation will ever change, or we might not have hope that a broken relationship will ever get better, or that someone close to us will ever change. When we lose hope in areas of our lives we tend to get negative towards those circumstances or people. This hopeless negativity usually only serves to make things worse, not better. Then problems compound, which only validates to us our hopeless negativity. This negative affirmation often causes us to feel justified in our negative hopelessness ... and then it begins to grow. It spreads to other areas of our lives. It is a negative spiral that can lead us to becoming a negative and hopeless person.

But there is a better way! We can be people who learn to continually renew our hope by creating a fertile atmosphere in our lives in which hope will grow. This hope leads away from negativity to a positive hope-filled outlook on life that will impact and change our circumstances. This hope can grow and spread, and even overflow, into joy and peace. It can become contagious so that others will catch it.

Yes, hope and hopelessness are both powerful, but only one reaps good fruit.

In this study we will take a look at how we can avoid hopelessness and grow hope in our lives."

Facilitate your group's discussion by going through the study guide.

- Start with reading the WORD section;
- do section 1, reading the Scripture and question
- do section 2, reading the Scripture and question
- do section 3, reading the Scripture and question

III. Application: (10 minutes)

Then ask 1, 2, or all 3 of the questions in the APPLICATION section of the study and discuss.

IV. The Challenge and Prayer (5 minutes)

Lead your group in praying using the PRAYER section as a guide.

Remind them of your next meeting time and place and then dismiss on time.

Thank you facilitators for the difference you are making in the lives of others!