

Talking through the message during the week helps you turn what God is saying to you into action steps. These talking points, questions and scriptures are designed to help you take the next step.

This past week you learned about hopelessness and hope. Where have you been living, in hopelessness or hope? Why?

Have you extended any acts that would give another person hope this past week? If so, what were they?

Read Lamentations 3:19-20; Job 19:19, 27:8, 30:26

Sometimes when we look back it is with warm nostalgia. But, often our looks back are only memories of our past problems, mistakes and relationships.

- When you remember what do you usually focus on? Do these things encourage you or discourage you?
- Do you ever feel like no matter how good something looks, that due to past experiences, deep down you know something is going to go wrong?
- The passages from Job are laments of how things have turned out. Do you tend to rehearse your laments? Who hears them – just yourself, your spouse, a best friend, everyone who will listen? What about God, do you ever take them to Him?

Read Lamentations 3:31-23

Jeremiah makes a shift and says that in the midst of all the problems he still has hope.

- What is it that Jeremiah remembers that gives him hope?
- How does he qualify these characteristics? What hope should that bring to you?
- What are some ways that you have experienced these three characteristics of God in recent days?
- Do you start each day as a new opportunity to experience God's work in your life? Even in trouble?

Read Romans 12:2; Ephesians 3:18-19, 4:18

- Do you every shut your mind against God? What are the

results?

- What are some experiences you've had that have helped you to discover how wide, long, high and deep God's love is?
- What are some ways that you can refocus your mind?

Read Isaiah 43:18; Psalm 103:10-12; Micah 7:18; Romans 3:22, 8:1

- Is it easy for you to live in the present or do you tend to dwell on the past? What are some things you can do to change that?
- While most of us know that God offers forgiveness for our sins, it is another thing to fully live in that forgiveness. Do you live as a forgiven person or one who still carries the heavy burden of sin?
- This perhaps reflects your view of God? What understanding should we have based on these passages of scripture?

Read Ezekiel 36:26

- How has God worked in your life to take away your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender responsive one?
- If you've never opened your life to God and his forgiveness, why not do that now?

My Next Step Today Is To . . .

- Choose to trust God, putting my hope in Him, by asking Him to forgive my past.
- Give an area of my past, that I've been holding on to, to God. Trusting in Him to renew my heart.
- Commit to spread hope this week by using one of the "a little something extra" cards.
- Meditate and/or memorize Lamentations 3:21-23

Talk It Over with God:

These prayer tips can guide your time alone with God each day. Praying with a friend or a small group might help you stick to it.

- Ask God to guide you as you seek to share hope with someone by sharing "a little something extra" this week.
- Give you past to God and ask Him to help you receive His forgiveness.
- Start each day asking God to give you something positive, hopeful, to focus your thoughts on for the day.