

# Rebuilding Hope

## Small Group Guide

**Warm-up Question:** (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What is one important thing that you hope to accomplish within the next 5 years?
2. What is one thing from the past week that you are thankful for?

**Read the following passage:** Ezekiel 37:1-14.

Ezekiel lived in one of the darkest generations in the history of Israel. Israel's world was built on four major pillars: 1) their covenant with God; 2) their land; 3) their temple; and 4) their king. At the end of the seventh century BC, each of these foundations was being threatened. Within a few decades, they were all gone. Ezekiel's vision of a valley filled with dry bones captured the utter hopelessness that many Israelites felt during this period. In fact, "Can these bones live" was ultimately a question about hope. And it's a question that all of us face at different times throughout our lives. Ezekiel's experiences with God show us that it is possible to rebuild hope when it feels like it is gone.

**Questions for Discussion** (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Christian psychologist Henry Cloud observes that genuine hope is based on something objective. "Hope" that is based on nothing is just wishful thinking. What are some objective foundations for real hope in different areas of our lives? What role should the Scriptures play in building (or rebuilding) our hope?
2. Are you practically able to derive hope from the reality that God's intentions toward you are good (Romans 8:28)? Why or why not? What are some things that we know from the Scriptures that God wants for us?
3. Do you look to any outside inputs to help fuel your hope? Explain. What are some resources you could look to to help build hope in an area of your life?
4. For most of us, in one situation or another, it is tempting to believe that we are doomed, that there is nothing we can do to move forward. Why might such an outlook lead to hopelessness? What can we do to start to regain agency and take responsibility for our future? What are some significant things over which we do not have control and some significant things which we can control? Why is it important to understand the difference? What happens when we get these categories mixed up?
5. Confirmation bias is the tendency we all have to only see the evidence which confirms our opinions. So, for example, if we think that everyone is against us, we will tend to notice all the times other people hurt us, and we will dismiss all the times people treat us kindly or try to help us. How might confirmation bias keep us

in a place of hopelessness? What can we do to try to overcome this?

6. Paul told the Corinthians, “we live by faith, not by sight.” How should this principle impact what we do with the things we observe around us?
7. What is one area of your life in which you would like to rebuild hope? What can you do to start that process?

**Pray**