

TO HELP YOU NAIL DOWN TRUTHS IN THE BIBLE

One of our goals at Bethlehem is for you to spend time with God daily - this **HAMMERTIME** Card can help. It is designed to help you spend 15 minutes (or more) with God, 4 days a week. Here is an example of how to use this card. Study notebooks are available in the Bethlehem lobby.

Read the Bible verses (4 min)

- Read through one time, then re-read and underline any key points.

Read the card/think about it/write in your notebook (6 min)

- Write down some of the main ideas from the passage.
- Write down a "key for me" that is your main point that day.

Pray (5 min)

- Write down some of the things you are praying about that day.

Current Series: "HOPE"
in Jesus"

Current Message: "HOPE We Find

Designed to supplement Pastor Dale Lawing's message of current Sunday series.

♦ **Listen to this message** (or other messages in the series) again online at <http://www.bethlehembc.com/mediacenter.htm>.

♦ **Study Notebooks & Audio Message CD's** available at 'Above the Grind' Bookstore for purchase.

♦ **HAMMERTIME Cards** - available Sundays at Bethlehem Church or online at www.bethlehemtoolbox.com.

♦ Contact Matt Vanderbilt, Connections Pastor, at mvanderbilt@bethlehembc.com or 704-823-5050 x104 for additional information.

Day 1: Hope for Eternity

Read: John 3:16-17; Ephesians 5:8; John 9:1-7, 25

Have you ever been in prison? Imagine being in prison with a life sentence - no chance of parole, no chance of ever being free. Think of all the parts of life that you love and would never experience again. What if someone offered to let you out of that sentence, to offer you grace, to give you freedom that was totally undeserved? How incredible that would be - and how grateful you would be!

Jesus offers that same type of gift - only better, to every person. He offers hope for eternity to each sinful person who has no chance of parole and no chance of ever being free. The grace He offers frees us from an eternal prison and takes away the condemnation that we deserve. Read about Christ's offer in the popular verses from John 3 - but when you read them this time, think about them in the light of the prison picture described above. Think about the fact that you were in darkness (Ephesians 5:8) and after receiving Christ, actually moved from darkness into light. You were blind, but now you see (John 9). The changes in you will be dramatic and permanent.

When Jesus comes into your life, you receive hope that is freeing, fulfilling and can never be taken away. That hope will last for eternity!

Day 2: Hope for Today**Read:** John 10:10, Nehemiah 8:10, Isaiah 40:31

Jesus clarifies in John 10:10 that the hope He gives is for more than just eternal life. He wants us to experience life in an overflowing, joyful, abundant way every day. This means He wants you to catch a glimpse of that hope daily and for it to give you strength that makes a difference in your life (Isaiah 40:31). Nehemiah knew that strength comes from the joy that Jesus brings, and that joy is centered around hope that impacts your eternity and makes a real difference in your everyday life.

Think about what Jesus meant when He talked of living abundantly. He does not want you living like a former prisoner that still carries around chains or still lives in fear of the life sentence that you used to have. Jesus died to take off your chains and to remove that prison sentence. Be thankful for the eternal hope, but don't forget to enjoy that hope every day. You will gain strength and joy from it and will truly live life to the fullest.

Day 3: Habits of Hope **Read:** Romans 12:1-2; Philippians 4:6-7; Hebrews 10:25

So what habits can you build in your life so you can more fully experience the hope that Jesus offers? First, read your Bible consistently - a big part of "renewing your mind." Focus your mind on the promises of God - they will "transform" you.

Second, have regular times of prayer - it will improve your communication with God by speaking to Him and hearing from Him. Speaking with God, especially when you are stressed or 'anxious', will allow God's peace and hope to flow naturally into your life and circumstances.

Third, talk with other Christians. Hear from them how God is working in their lives and how His hope is a reality. These stories of hope from their lives will teach you, encourage you and remind you of the hope that God wants to bring into your life every day.

Day 4: Tell Others About This Hope**Read:** 1 Peter 3:15,

Romans 5:3-5

Note from Peter's words that God wants you ready at any time to tell people about the hope that you have found. It is not just for you to keep and enjoy for yourself - it is a powerful, life-changing gift to share. This does not mean that you have to be a great speaker, an eloquent evangelist or a Biblical scholar.

Remember the blind man from Day 1 this week? All he did was tell his story about how God changed him. That is your calling, too. Notice what God does in your life and be ready to tell other people about it. Once they hear the message of hope, God will do the work in their hearts. You don't have to try to change others. Only God can do that!

Look for opportunities to help people as they go through suffering. God's Word promises in Romans 5 that something good can actually come out of suffering. Suffering can produce perseverance, which shapes character. Strong character (in the likeness of Christ) produces hope. God promises that hope will not disappoint you, so be looking for His work - even in suffering. Tell other people about how you have experienced His hope and how it can help them in their suffering, too. Hope for eternity and hope for today - Jesus died for us to experience that hope. Spread the news!