

## 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”

### Current Message: “Women of the Old Testament”

Designed to supplement Pastor Dickie Spargo’s 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.bethlehtoolbox.com](http://www.bethlehtoolbox.com).

◆ Contact Matt Vanderbilt, Connections Pastor, at [mvanderbilt@bethlehembc.com](mailto:mvanderbilt@bethlehembc.com) or 704-823-5050 x104 for additional

### Day 1: The Widow & Elijah

**Read:** 1 Kings 17:7-24

This woman was facing a crisis. In this brief interaction with Elijah, you see that she is a widow (a very dangerous situation), she is running out of food and her son is experiencing a life-threatening illness. Sound like any situations you have faced? The widow displays some virtues to learn from as you try to keep a view of hope in seemingly hopeless situations.

First, the widow acts in faith. Elijah speaks as God directs him, making a promise in verse 14. Read that verse again and note how the widow had to decide whether or not to believe God and have faith in His provision. Second, she responds in obedience. In verse 15, she puts action to her faith by doing something that logically did not make sense. Why would she take her last supplies and use them for someone else? Because she had faith in God and obeyed His command.

Last, the widow showed that she believed in prayer. Elijah may have been the one recorded in Scripture as praying, but surely she was also praying fervently for her son, calling out to God and believing that He was really able to do something.

From this widow you can learn **3 keys about HOPE:** Act in Faith, Respond in Obedience and Trust in Prayer. God wants to prove to you that there is reason to have HOPE!

**Day 2: Rahab****Read:** Joshua 2:1-24, 6:20-25

It is amazing that God teaches us about hope through the life of a prostitute. Yes, He can give hope to anyone - anyone who trusts in Him and submits to His leadership. Rahab is a prostitute in the city of Jericho, where Joshua (the leader of the Israelites) sent spies to 'scout out' for battle. Clearly, Rahab had heard about God and what He was doing (2:9-11). She feared Him and was willing to put herself at risk (2:4-7) for the chance of being a part of God's plan. The spies did escape safely and later her family also benefited from her faith.

From Rahab's life, you can see that God can use any person - and He can give anyone hope. Your hope in Him does not come from who you are or what you have done. **Your hope in life comes from a faith in God, followed by obedient action, even in the midst of danger.** Like Rahab, anyone with *any* past can find hope in God and be used by Him in a powerful way (see Matthew 1:1-6, 17).

**Day 3: Ruth****Read:** Ruth 1-4

Ruth was a woman of noble character (3:11, cross reference Proverbs 31:10-31). She had suffered pain with the death of her husband (1:5) and could have 'just looked out for herself.' But she chose to be faithful to her mother-in-law Naomi (1:16-18), also a widow. This made it very difficult for Ruth to get even the necessities of shelter and food. At times, her view of hope was severely tested, since she could have felt like she was cheated, got a bad deal or was forgotten by God. Yet, she worked hard as a woman of character (2:3-7, 17-18, 23; 3:11) and appeared to trust that God was watching over her. In chapter 4, you read about things 'turning around' - even to the point of Ruth getting married (verse 10).

**When life looks dim and hope seems to disappear, be faithful to care for others, live a life of godly character and trust that God is still working for you.** Like He was with Ruth, God will always be there with you.

**Day 4: Esther****Read:** Esther 1-5 & 8:1-8

You can read the background of Esther's story in the first 3 chapters of the book of Esther. In chapter 4, Esther becomes aware of the task before her - go talk with the king and try to save the Jews (including herself) or shy away and let thousands of people be killed. Of course, approaching the king also had its risks. If he did not like her request, he could have her killed on the spot. There was a lot of pressure on Esther with the challenge that came her way (4:8-16).

Chapter 5 describes how Esther focused on the hope she had in God and this allowed her to overcome her fears. She controlled what she *could* control (presenting her request to the king) and trusted God to control what was out of her control (steering the heart of the king to a favorable decision). Note the results in 8:1-8, as well as Esther's faith and courage that saves the Jews (and herself).

What can you learn about hope from the life of Esther? Esther knew what was right and sensed that God had placed her in a position of influence for "such a time as this" (4:14). **When things seem hopeless to you, focus on what God says is right, seek His leadership as He shows you what you can control, and then put your faith in Him to take care of the things that only He can control.**