

Marriage Workshop: “Hope in the Present”

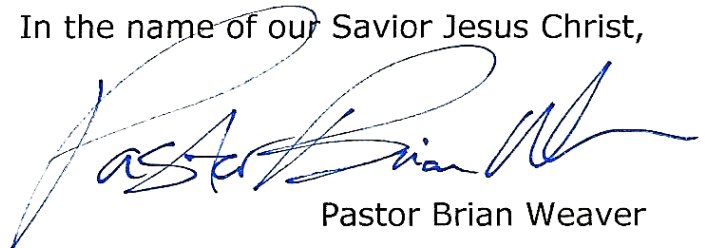
The materials included in this packet were originally designed for and used in a workshop setting that I led in November 2016 at Gloria Dei. They were prepared originally with the intent of using the midst of conversation with myself and the couples attending the workshop.

In an effort to encourage continued growth in our marriage relationships at Gloria Dei, this material is being provided in an adapted form so that more couples can work through the Bible study and exercises together as the opportunity arises.

For us as Christians, our hope is grounded in the truth and promise of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that no matter the situation, He is always working for our good (Romans 8:28). Our hope is not in some fleeting concept, but in the truth we cling to in faith – that our God never breaks His promise to us.

No matter where you are in your marriage relationship, the Bible study and exercises will help you and your spouse turn to our Savior and the hope He provides in His truth and grace. If you would like to discuss this material more, or discuss any part of your marriage relationship, please do not hesitate to contact me at bweaver@gdlc.org, or 281-333-4535. It is my prayer that God will work in you and your spouse as you seek to strengthen and encourage your relationship in His truth and grace! He has promised to never let go of each of us, and His promise in Jesus Christ is to bring you and your spouse closer together, as you, together, grow in Him.

In the name of our Savior Jesus Christ,



Pastor Brian Weaver



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- What do all of these passages, and many more not listed, teach us about Biblical hope?
 - o Hope in the Bible is not a fleeting concept, but promise we can cling to that no matter the situation, our loving God is working good for us (Romans 8:28)
 - o Hope is also an act of faith that keeps us from always looking into the past, or dwelling on what is the present reality. Instead, hope turns our eyes forward in faith (Hebrews 11:1) with the reminder that God is doing something good (Romans 8:28) and that will be made known to us at the appropriate time.
 - o Hope also changes how we act in such a way that people notice something is different about us AND they want to know why so they too can experience it (1 Peter 3:15).
 - o Finally, hope, as Christians, is grounded in the truth that we believe God always keeps His promises. We have seen this to be true in Jesus Christ, and therefore, we can have faith that it will remain true for you and me, for us as a couple.

- Marriage is one of the toughest relationships we can have because it is so easy to get caught in our present reality and forget that God has something yet in store for us as a husband and wife.
 - o So, what does hope for you in your relationship look like?
 - o How have you gotten trapped into always looking to the past or dwelling on the present, instead of looking with hope to what God has in store for you and your spouse?
 - o What have you seen God already doing in your relationship that reminds you of His presence and gives you hope for what is yet to come?

Took:

- 1 Peter 3:15 calls us to be ready to “give defense of the hope that lives within us”. What does that mean for you as an individual as you think about the Biblical understanding of hope?

- What is the hope in your marriage that you are ready to give a defense to and why?

Communication Exercise

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This exercise is to be done in 3 parts. Each spouse will decide on an image for the other spouse to draw. Both should be facing away from each other for the drawing portion. After both spouses have taken turns drawing, share what you actually drew and compare that with what the other spouse was leading you to draw.

- 1) Each spouse should use a blank piece of paper and decide on an image that the other spouse will draw.
 - Rules:
 - No spatial directions (i.e. place circle on top of triangle, in the northeast corner of this object draw XXXX)
 - No questions from spouse drawing the image
- 2) Each spouse should decide on another image that the other spouse will be instructed to draw.
 - Rules:
 - Spatial directions can be given (i.e. place circle on top of triangle, in the northeast corner of this object draw XXXX)
 - No questions may be asked from the spouse drawing the image
- 3) Each spouse should decide on another image that the other spouse will be instructed to draw.
 - Rules:
 - Spatial directions can be given (i.e. place circle on top of triangle, in the northeast corner of this object draw XXXX)
 - The spouse drawing the image may ask any questions necessary

Conversation:

- 1) Which of these exercises was the most difficult for you as a couple and why?
- 2) Which of these exercises was the easiest and what made it so?
- 3) What do these exercises teach us about communication in a relationship?
- 4) How does communication impact the hope we have in our marriage?

Moving Forward in Hope Exercise

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What is God up to in our life?

As a couple, it's important that our faith in our Savior Jesus Christ, and our understanding of what He does within our lives, shapes our perspective of our present reality. So, as a couple discuss the following topics...

- 1) How has God shown up in a big way in the last 6 months? What are specific instances that we can thank Him for what He has done?
 - For the sake of this exercise, avoid the general, and try to be as specific as possible.

- 2) How have we ignored God in a big way in the last 6 months? What are specific instances that we need to confess to Him and receive His forgiveness?
 - After discussing this, take time to actually ask God and each other for forgiveness.
 - You can even say it as simply as this:
 - "Lord, I am very sorry and seek your forgiveness for _____. Remind me that in Your Son Jesus Christ, my sins are forgiven! Amen."
 - Or, to your spouse: "I am sorry for _____ and ask that you please forgive me." And in response you can say, "In our Savior Jesus Christ, I forgive you for _____."

- 3) Through the last 6 months what has been our perspective on our relationship and our reality? What do the Bible passages from earlier tell us we need to focus on moving forward?

What's in store for the future?

For this exercise, each spouse needs one blank piece of paper.

- 1) Separately, each spouse should dream up the perfect vacation *as a couple, without children or other family members*. This can be anywhere and doing anything on vacation, there are no restrictions.
 - a. Write out what you would do on the trip. Are there special sites you'd want to see? Places to eat? Special excursions, etc...?
 - b. Also discuss why you chose this as your dream vacation.

- 2) Share with your spouse your dream vacation. Then, talk about what it would take for that dream vacation to happen (time off, money saved, childcare, etc...)
 - a. Actually lay out a plan to make each of your dream vacations happen.
 - b. You should notice that for something you are "dreaming" about to take place, your actions in life may have to change. They change because of the *hope* (promised reality) of this dream trip taking place. We don't change our behaviors or attitudes for fleeting ideas. We change them when they are grounded in something real and tangible- like the promise of God in our Savior Jesus Christ.

- 3) Now discuss what you each desire of your relationship in 20 years, 30 years, 50 years. What does your relationship look like? What would your family and friends say about your relationship?

- 4) Talk about what needs to happen in your relationship for #3 to be a reality.
 - a. Go back to exercise 2a and 2b. Our understanding of hope is not a fleeting concept, but something grounded in the promise of God, who never breaks His promise!
 - b. So, as a couple, what do you hope to see in your relationship and how is that grounded in the love of our Savior Jesus Christ?