



# Connection Resource

## A Sojourner's Guide

1 Peter 1:3-9

**Connection Leader:** The passages of Scripture below are provided to expand on the concepts presented in the Pastor's message on Sunday. I encourage you to read them and familiarize yourself with the content prior to class. There are many ways to use these passages during your group time. Here's a suggestion:

As you read the passages together, identify specific words that may have difficult or obscure meanings. Use Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary to discover the definitions ([websterdictionary1828.com](http://websterdictionary1828.com)). Noah Webster's original dictionary is a valuable resource for anyone who studies the Bible. His dictionary is the only mainstream dictionary to use references in the Bible to demonstrate the meaning of words.

There are four topics to discuss, and it will be difficult to cover all of them thoroughly. I encourage you to focus on the areas that appeal or apply to your group in particular. Take a cursory look at some passages while going deeper into other passages. Allow the Holy Spirit to be your guide in this matter and follow where He leads. Encourage your group to use the *Individual Resource* to continue pursuing God during the week.

### **Mercy and Grace for our Sin**

Hebrews 4:14-16, Psalm 103:1-5

Consider the definitions of "mercy" and "grace" in Webster 1828. Discuss the differences in these terms, then choose one or more of the following activities:

1. Divide your group into two. Using Psalm 103:1-5, have one group identify the examples of mercy in the text, while the other group identifies examples of grace. Discuss your findings together.
2. Invite the members to share a time in their life when a prayer resulted in mercy or grace from God. Discuss together how the remembrance of God's faithfulness affects their prayer life today.
3. Read Luke 6:36 and brainstorm together ways that you might demonstrate mercy and grace to family, friends, neighbors, and even strangers this week.

### **Hope for our Journey**

Romans 5:1-6, Romans 15:1-6

These passages reveal that there are three sources of hope in the Christian life. Hope is acquired at the moment of salvation. Hope is obtained as a result of the work of endurance. And hope is the result of encouragement through reading and studying the Bible. As you discuss these with your group, consider one of the following activities.

1. Look up the definition of "hope" in Webster 1828. Look up the four passages listed in the definition (Job 8:13, Joel 3:16, 1 Peter 1:3, and Psalm 43:5). Discuss the value of hope in the life of a Christian. (You may need to consult the KJV for clarity when comparing to Webster's definition.)
2. Invite members of the group to discuss a personal experience with hope as a result of one of the three sources of hope listed above.
3. Think of someone in your life who clearly demonstrates hope in their relationship with others. What evidence of hope do you see in their life? Then consider how hope is demonstrated in your own personal life. How do family, friends, and neighbors encounter hope because of the work of God in you? How might you intentionally share your hope with those around you

### **Faith for our Trials**

**John 16:33; James 1:2-8, 12; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18**

Trials have a purpose in the life of a Christian. They build faith and develop endurance. Examine the definition of "faith" and "endurance" in the Webster 1828 Dictionary. Discuss with your group how endurance contributes to the building of faith. Then consider one of the following activities:

1. Using 2 Corinthians 4:7-18, have members of the group share from personal experience how vs. 16-17 are possible. How is the inner person renewed even when the outer person is destroyed? How does glory outweigh affliction?
2. Using James 1:2-8, 12, have members of the group share about a time when God answered their request for wisdom, or a time when endurance produced greater steps toward spiritual maturity, or a time when doubt interfered with answered prayer.

### **Joy for our Distress**

**Psalm 16:7-11, John 15:9-11, John 16:21-24, Romans 15:13, Galatians 5:22-23**

While happiness is often a byproduct of our circumstances, true joy flows from the Father. The gift of joy is a direct result of the work of the Holy Spirit in your life. As you consider the passages above, chose one of the following activities for your group:

1. Compare the definitions of "happy" and "joy" in the Webster 1828 Dictionary. Look up the three passages listed in Webster's definition of joy (Hebrews 12:2, 1 Thessalonians 2:19, and Habakkuk 3:18), and discuss the differences in these two emotions (Consult the KJV for clarity when comparing to Webster).
2. Think about the happiest day of your life and the worst day of your life, and discuss the presence or the absence of real joy on these two occasions.
  - a. Using Psalm 16:7-11, consider that there are good days and bad days to come in life. How might you prepare for those days so that your joy isn't influenced by your circumstances?
  - b. Using Romans 15:13, consider and discuss how joy influences hope.