

LIBERTY:

Setting My Past Free

Session Two

GETTING HELP – THE HOPE CHOICE

MY CHOICE:

I earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He has the power to help me recover.

BEATITUDE:

"Happy are those who mourn, for God will comfort them!" Matthew 5:4 (TEV)

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Matthew 5:4 (NKJV)

CATCHING UP

1. Did you read the introduction and chapter 1 from Life's Healing Choices? Would you like to share something that was especially meaningful to you?
2. In our last session, we prayed for God to give us the willingness and courage to admit we are powerless. How did the concept of admitting powerlessness impact you this week?

KEY VERSE

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

DIRECTIONS

Watch today's teaching together (DVD lesson is 20:38 minutes), and then split up into gender-specific groups for your discussion time.

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TO MAKE THE HOPE CHOICE, WE MUST:

1. Acknowledge God's _____.

Anyone who comes to [God] must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6 NIV)

The question for most people is not, "Is there a God?" The real question is, "What kind of God is He?"

2. Understand God's _____.

Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God. (Colossians 1:15 PH)

Three Things We Learn About God's Character from Jesus Christ

- a) God _____ about my situation.

You ... have seen the crisis in my soul. (Psalm 31:7 LB)

You know how troubled I am; you have kept a record of my tears. (Psalm 56:8 TEV)

O God, You know how foolish I am. (Psalm 69:5 NLT)

God is NOT shocked by your sin!

b) God _____ about my situation.

He is like a father to us, tender and sympathetic. (Psalm 103:13 LB)

He knows what we are made of; he remembers that we are dust. (Psalm 103:14 TEV)

"I have loved you with a love that lasts forever. I have kept on loving you with faithful love." (Jeremiah 131:3 NIRV)

God's love never fails. He loves you on your good days and bad days, when you serve him and when you don't, when you're right, when you're wrong. God even loves you when you're angry, or selfish, or out of control. He loves you even when you're breaking his heart. Why does God keep on loving you? Because his love is unconditional. It's not based on your performance; it's based on his character. It's not based on what you do; it's based on who He is.

God showed his great love for us, by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (Romans 5:8 NLT)

c) God can _____ me and my situation.

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT)

3. Accept God's _____ To Help You

It's not enough just to believe in God. You've got to plug into His power.

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. (Philippians 2:13 NLT)

The only way to get God's power is to surrender to him and let him fill you with his Spirit.

The Spirit that God has given us . . . fills us with power, love, and self-control. (2 Timothy 1:7 TEV)

a) Power

b) Love

c) Self-Control

You're not really in control until Christ is in control.

How do you plug into God's power? Real simple. Believe and receive. First, believe that God exists and that he knows and cares about you, and has the power to help you. Then receive Him into your life — simply say, "Jesus Christ put your Spirit in me."

There is a higher power you can plug into. His name is Jesus them!" Believe and receive. Open your heart and your life to him today.

"Happy are those who mourn, God will comfort them!" (Matthew 5:4, TEV)

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matthew 5:4, NKJV).

"When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up." (Isaiah 43:2 NLT)

Small Group Guidelines

Split up into gender-specific groups for your discussion time and review these Small Group Guidelines.

1. Keep your sharing focused on your own thoughts and feelings.
2. Each person is free to express feelings without interruption.
3. We are here to support one another. We will not attempt to fix one another.
4. Privacy and confidentiality are basic requirements. What is shared in the group stays in the group. The only exception is when someone threatens to harm themselves or others.
5. All small groups are same-sex groups.

For a more detailed list of guidelines, please see Appendix 5, "Small Group Guidelines".

Discovery Questions

1. Pastor Rick said, "The question for most people is not, 'Is there a God?' The real question is, 'What kind of God is He?' What do you believe about God?"

2. What part of God's character gives you the most hope?

3. God's love for you is not based on your performance. It is based on his character. The Bible says, "God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners" (Romans 5:8 NLT). What does this truth tell you about the nature of God's love?

4. *"The Spirit that God has given us ... fills us with power, love, and self-control"* (2 Timothy 1:7, TEV). Talk about a time in your life when God gave you power, love, or self-control when you faced a tough situation.

Living On Purpose: Fellowship

Like physical health, spiritual health is often easier to maintain when you are working out with a partner. As you work out what God is working in you, sometimes you need someone to encourage you and help keep you on target. Prayerfully consider which member of your group you might ask to become your **Accountability Partner**. Men partner with men and women with women. Commit to meet and pray for each other regularly for the duration of this study. Check in throughout the week by phone, or perhaps over coffee, to see what each of you is learning and how you can pray for one another.

Accountability Partner:

1. Pray Daily
2. Connect Weekly

Putting It Into Practice

In our last session, you admitted you are powerless. In this session, you discovered God is all powerful. Think of a challenge you are currently facing: relational, emotional, financial, a hurt, a hang-up, or a habit, etc. How will you apply God's power to your situation this week?

Prayer Direction

Begin your prayer time by thanking God that he is powerful enough to handle any situation you are facing. If you feel comfortable, share your current challenge with the group and pray for each other, inviting God to bring His power to bear in one another's lives.

Diving Deeper

This week, read chapter 2 of the ***Life's Healing Choices*** book by John Baker, and be ready to share your thoughts in your next session. Pay particular attention to the stories from Mary and Tim at the end of the chapter.