

Discussion Guide

Read the passage and share what you imagine heaven to be like.

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it ever entered in to the human mind, the things God has prepared for those who love him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9

If you have the ability to listen to music, listen to the song by Mercy Me, *I Can Only Imagine*” as a hope building experience.

1. Sharing the picture you have in your head of your future. What hopes do you have? If you want, use the questions below to help you get at those hopes.
 - What do you want to have?
 - What do you hope to do?
 - What do you hope to learn?
 - What do you hope to become?
2. There are many voices in our culture that paint a very different picture of your future. What were/are those voices and what do they say you have to look forward to?
3. What hope do you draw from being in relationship with God through Christ?
4. What is your hope level now? Over the years, how have you learned to hope? Share what occurred in your life that lowered your hope level.
5. Was there ever a time when you felt like the Israeli mom who “lost it?” Share that time and how you got through it.
6. Who functioned as a “Jonathan” in your life? If you did not have many or any, share the effects of the lack of having a Jonathan in your life.
7. What do you see God doing to redeem the current time we are in? Have you heard of any positive stories of what people have done to help others during the pandemic? Share a story or two.
8. Brainstorm ways your small group could be a Jonathan to another person, organization, or business. Pick one of those ideas and do it!

8. How do you tend to respond to times when everything seems to be going wrong? Do you tend to “encourage yourself in the Lord” or “discourage yourself in the Lord?”

Here is an example of positive self-talk in scripture. It’s another example of how David encouraged himself in the Lord when he was down. Consider using it the next time you are discouraged.

“Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.” Psalm 42:5

9. What helps encourage you when you are low or stressed out? Share one passage from scripture or a song that helped you grow in hope when there was little reason for hope.