

Cultivate Reflection Guide

When in Rome: How to Find Hope in Hardship?

March 27/28, 2021

If you missed this weekend's messages, watch at cultivate.sc/discussion

Following God in a culture that doesn't is easier said than done. The book of Romans is full of foundational gospel truth that will teach us how our faith can influence the world around us, instead of letting others tell us what to believe – in the places where Christianity and culture collide.

Use our Weekly Reflection Guide, in community or through personal study, to live out what we're learning on the weekends. It's not about getting through the content, but getting the content through you. Choose the questions that are meaningful to you, then be REAL with self, God or others as you reflect, respond and pray.

1. Keeping Score: Pastor Fredo cautioned us against accumulating or “keeping score” of our disappointments which can produce skepticism and defeat, rather than hope and healing.

“...we also rejoice in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope. This hope will not disappoint us...” Romans 5:3-5 CSB

- Is there a disappointment in your life that has or is sticking with you?
- How does this verse shift your perspective on that disappointment OR how have you experienced this verse to be true in your life?

2. Finding Hope: Hope is confident certainty in God's love for us. However, we can often place our hope in things that sound true [plans, perceptions, people] but are not God's truth for us.

- Be REAL with self – when things get difficult or disappointing, where do you first turn to find hope?

Dig Deeper: Using the index in the back of your bible or even Google, search for scripture on hope. Choose one that encourages you and work on committing it to memory so that when (not if) disappointment comes, you have God's hope hidden in your heart.

3. Holding Hope & Hardship: Our faith gives us the space to hold hope and hardship together. For that reason, we don't have to “tough it out” in hardship or manufacture hope. It's possible to find REAL hope because God:

1. Invites us to have **peace** with Him [even when things are not peaceful]
2. Offers us a place in His **grace** [through access to His presence]
3. Gives our pain a **purpose** [fortifying our faith]
 - In which pursuit – peace, grace or purpose – do you need to grow and/or trust God more?
 - What is a next step you could take to cultivate this into your life?
 - Invite God to not only help you pursue the growth you desire but to help you to be expectant – watching, believing and trusting Him to do this work in you.

4. REAL Hope: REAL hope is rooted in God's love – a REAL love that will never disappoint us. We don't walk through this life alone. Not only has Jesus gone before us, but He meets us where we are and walks the path ahead. Through His Holy Spirit and the truth of His word, God is with us...and He loves us.

“This hope will not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Romans 5:5 CSB

Be REAL with God. Tell Him where in your life you need the reminder that He is with you and He loves you. Invite Him to meet you there – whether it's the first time or the fiftieth. As you walk forward, remember that God goes with you. Turn to Him – through His Holy Spirit and His word – and ask Him to give you hope, then be intentional about fixing your eyes on Him and what is hopeful in your life.