

- I. ONE THING—The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

II. MEDITATION

B. Review your class notes from Tuesday.

- Take some time to think about the main ideas of the lesson. If you want to add details to your notes, you'll find the audio message on our website under the Resources tab. (www.DivineDesignDiscipleship.com).
- Which of the scriptures referenced were particularly meaningful to you? Write out those verses below and spend some time studying them this week.

C. Rewrite your One Thing into a prayer, expressing your heart's desire for God to make this truth become your experience.

III. PRINCIPLES

Use the principles found in these Scriptures to help you understand the concept of Living Hope:

A. FAITH, HOPE, & LOVE

- Today we will look at the relationship between Living Hope and Faith.
- Faith sees, hope feels, & love never fails: 1 Cor 13:13 TV--But now faith, hope, and love remain; these three *virtues must characterize our lives*. The greatest of these is love.
- Faith and love are the environment in which Living Hope grows.
- In the natural, seeing is believing; but in God's Kingdom, believing is seeing. Faith isn't the absence of evidence, but the presence of conviction: Heb 11:1-3-- Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a *good* testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.
- Let's not question *if* we have faith, but where to invest it:
 - Rom 12:3b-- God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.
 - Heb 11:6 NLT—It is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

Insights:

B. FAITHFLESS & FAITHFUL

- Abraham is our biblical example of faith and Living Hope: Heb 11:8,11 NLT-- It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going... ¹¹ It was by faith that even Sarah was able to have a child, though she was barren and was too old. She believed that God would keep his promise.
- Here is the Readers' Digest version of Abraham's story: Rom 4:16-21 NAS-- For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ (as it is written, "A father of many nations have I made you") in the presence of Him whom he believed, *even* God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. ¹⁸ In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "So shall your descendants be." ¹⁹ Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body,

now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; ²⁰ yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

- A closer examination of Abraham's life shows us that Living Hope and walking by faith is not an easy process.

1. Errors

- Abram got a message from God when he was 75 years old: Gen 12:1-2 NLT-- The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation."
 - Shortly after Abram and Sarai got settled, hardship came: Gen 12:10-13 NLT-- A severe famine struck the land of Canaan, forcing Abram to go down to Egypt, where he lived as a foreigner. As he was approaching the border of Egypt, Abram said to his wife, Sarai, "Look, you are a very beautiful woman. When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife. Let's kill him; then we can have her!' So please tell them you are my sister. Then they will spare my life and treat me well because of their interest in you."
 - Abram was afraid and, because of that, he made a huge error in judgment. Fear is faith in the wrong thing and the expectation/(hope) of a negative outcome.
 - Abram had what psychologists call a Negative Bias—the tendency to give greater weight to negative information. (Jon Beaty)
 - LISTENING EXERCISE: *Is there anywhere in your life where you are giving more weight to negative information than to God's goodness or His good plans for your life?*
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- At 86 years old, Abram's faith had grown. Even though he questioned God, he gave more weight to God's promise than to negative expectations: Gen 15:4-6 NLT-- The Lord said to him, "No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir." Then the Lord took Abram outside and said to him, "Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!" And Abram believed the Lord, and the Lord counted him as righteous because of his faith.

Insights:

2. Evidence

- After a decade of waiting, Abram and Sarai don't see evidence of God's promise:
Gen 16:1-4-- Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no *children*. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. ² So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing *children*. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai. ³ Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. ⁴ So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes.
- Abram & Sarai both had Confirmation Bias—the tendency to pursue and believe facts that "prove" what we already suspect or believe to be true. (Jon Beaty)
- They did what humans have done since Creation—they believed the lie that God was holding out on them.
- All of us share the temptation to doubt the promise, purpose & destiny of God.
- We're born heirs of Adam and he passed on to us an Orphan Spirit. That makes us susceptible to the messages that life's hurts and trials send us:
 - *I am alone.*
 - *I don't have what I need.*
 - *I must take care of myself.*
- Anywhere you are not experiencing Living Hope, look for a lie in your belief system. Battle orphan and do-it-yourself lies with these truths:
 - Rom 8:15-16 TV-- You see, you have not received a spirit that returns you to slavery, so you have nothing to fear. The Spirit you have received adopts you *and welcomes you* into God's own family. That's why we call out to Him, "Abba! Father!" *as we would address a loving daddy. Through that prayer, God's Spirit confirms in our spirits that we are His children.*
 - Heb 2:10 GNT-- It was only right that God, who creates and preserves all things, should make Jesus perfect through suffering, in order to bring many children to share his glory.
 - 2 Cor 6:18- "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty.
- As time passes, we must be vigilant to focus on what God says vs. the evidence.

Insights:

3. Emotions

- By the time he was 99 years old, Abram didn't *feel* hopeful anymore: Gen 17:15-17 NLT-- God said to Abraham, "Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai. From now on her name will be Sarah. And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings of nations will be among her descendants." Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. "How could I become a father at the age of 100?" he thought. "And how can Sarah have a baby when she is ninety years old?"
- Abraham's emotions betrayed him. He laughed at the word of the Lord!
- With God, we are safe to express our honest emotions. He gave us emotions to help us get in touch with our internal temperature. **(Car Story?)**
- Don't lose hope! Use your errors, doubts, and emotions to draw closer to God:
 - Heb 4:14-16 NLT-- Since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. ¹⁵ This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.
 - 2 Tim 2:13 NLT--If we're unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is.

Insights:

C. PROBLEMS & PROMISES

- When you examine it closely, Living Hope and Faith has its Ups & Downs.
- God was pleased with the overall trajectory of Abraham's faith: Rom 4:16 GNT-- Abraham is the spiritual father of us all.
- Abraham's faith grew stronger because he had to push against the resistance of his errors, the evidence, and his emotions: Rom 4:20 NLT—(Abraham's) faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God.
- Abraham fulfilled the general life purpose of all God's children: giving God glory.
- The word glory literally means "weight." Abraham gave more weight to what God said than to the negative thoughts, feelings, and decisions he made.

- Like Abraham, we prepare the way for God's glory when we hold onto hope while God does His work in us.
- We have the opportunity to choose faith, hope, and love as we wait on God. As we do, He transforms us more & more into the image of Jesus: Rom 8:29-30 MSG-- God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him. After God made that decision of what his children should be like, he followed it up by calling people by name. After he called them by name, he set them on a solid basis with himself. And then, after getting them established, he stayed with them to the end, gloriously completing what he had begun.
- God uses adversity to develop our relationship with Him and our character: Lam 3:24-41 AMP— The Lord is my portion *or* share, says my living being (my inner self); therefore will I hope in Him *and* wait expectantly for Him. The Lord is good to those who wait hopefully *and* expectantly for Him, to those who seek Him [inquire of and for Him and require Him by right of necessity and on the authority of God's word]. It is good that one should hope in *and* wait quietly for the salvation (the safety and ease) of the Lord.
²⁷ It is good for a man that he should bear the yoke [of divine disciplinary dealings] in his youth. Let him sit alone uncomplaining *and* keeping silent [in hope], because [God] has laid [the yoke] upon him [for his benefit]. Let him put his mouth in the dust [in abject recognition of his unworthiness]—there may yet be hope. Let him give his cheek to the One Who smites him [even through His human agents]; let him be filled [full] with [men's] reproach [in meekness].
³¹ For the Lord will not cast off forever! But though He causes grief, yet will He be moved to compassion according to the multitude of His loving-kindness *and* tender mercy. For He does not willingly *and* from His heart afflict or grieve the children of men, to trample *and* crush underfoot all the prisoners of the earth, to turn aside *and* deprive a man of his rights before the face of the Most High *or* a superior [acting as God's representative], to subvert a man in his cause—[of these things] the Lord does not approve.
³⁷ Who is he who speaks and it comes to pass, if the Lord has not authorized *and* commanded it? Is it not out of the mouth of the Most High that evil and good both proceed [adversity and prosperity, physical evil or misfortune and physical good or happiness]? Why does a living man sigh [one who is still in this life's school of discipline]? [And why does] a man complain for the punishment of his sins? Let us test and examine our ways, and let us return to the Lord! Let us lift up our hearts and our hands [and then with them mount up in prayer] to God in heaven
- Lam 3:57-58 AMP-- You drew near on the day I called to You; You said, Fear not. O Lord, You have pleaded the causes of my soul [You have managed my affairs and You have protected my person and my rights]; You have rescued *and* redeemed my life!

Insights: