

- 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. PERISHED HOPE

- Negativity Bias (focus problem) and Confirmation Bias (belief problem) hinders hope!
- The Scriptural account of Dry Bones coming to life is a huge Hope Booster! It very practically addresses our biases against hope, especially in the worst of situations.
- In dead areas where we've given up, like Ezekiel and his contemporaries, God can restore hope: Ezek 37:1-14-- The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. ² Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, *there were* very many in the open valley; and indeed *they were* very dry. ³ And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord God, You know." ⁴ Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!' ⁵ Thus says the Lord God to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. ⁶ I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I *am* the Lord.'" ⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸ Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but *there was* no breath in them. ⁹ Also He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.'" ¹⁰ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. ¹¹ Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' ¹² Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ Then you shall know that I *am* the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. ¹⁴ I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken *it* and performed *it*," says the Lord."

Insights:

B. DEAD AND DRY

- The first order of business is to do as Ezekiel did—take stock of the situation.
- His was grim. There was death everywhere. From the state of the bones, it's likely that it had been that way for quite some time.
- God had just promised hope, life, restoration, and newness to His people: Ezek 36:33-35— Thus says the Lord God: "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable *you* to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. ³⁴ The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. ³⁵ So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the Garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities *are now* fortified *and* inhabited.'

- God names “sin” as the reason that His people are “cut off” and dry (v. 33). Sin takes many forms and must be addressed. Then the promise of renewal can be fulfilled:
 1. Willful disobedience results in disconnection and dryness: Is 59:2 NLT—It’s your sins that have cut you off from God.
 2. Wounds that happen to us often elicit a sinful response from us. We aren’t just victims, but share responsibility for who we are becoming by the way we respond to life:
 - Eph 5:8-14--Live as children of light...exposing deeds of darkness.”
 - Jm 5:16 NIV-- Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.
 - Brennan Manning says, “If we conceal our wounds out of fear and shame, our inner darkness can neither be neither illuminated nor become a light for others. (*Abba’s Child*)
 3. Wrecked and/or Wrong Hope—When we give up hope in God acting on our behalf, we quit looking to Him or His promises to sustain us. That often leads to misplaced hope: Jer 2:13-- They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.
- Sin in any form disconnects us from God and leaves us scattered. Ezekiel’s vision shows us how God is able to put us back together again and renew Living Hope.

Insights:

C. SPEAKING HOPE

- God asked Ezekiel if these bones could live. He answered, “O Lord God, You know.” In this dead situation, Ezekiel demonstrates the importance of listening to God.
- We must listen to God about whether *these* particular dry bones can live again on earth. Listening to God enables us to align our prayers and words with His plans.
- The Lord *did* instruct Ezekiel to speak life over the dead place before him.
- God gave him a command to “speak a prophetic message” (v. 4 NLT). To prophesy means to declare the word of the Lord under divine influence. (Strong’s)
- God is giving us a great strategy here—begin to speak what He says instead of describing our problems in intricate detail (offense, loss, pain, history, waiting, etc.).
- The Lord was very specific in pointing out what was broken, disjointed, dry, dead, and dysfunctional. Then He spoke vivid details of His plans to renew hope there.
- God gave Ezekiel words of hope to speak and He’ll do that for us as well: Ezek 29:21 MSG-- I’ll stir up fresh hope in Israel—the dawn of deliverance! — And I’ll give you, Ezekiel, bold and confident words to speak. And they’ll realize that I am God.”
- The bones begin to rattle, move, and come together when the word of the Lord was declared over them: Heb 4:12-- For the word of God *is* living and powerful

Insights:

D. WALKING DEAD

- First, the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel. It is fundamental that God's word is the basis for our hopes, thoughts, and speech. It is a critical requirement.
- Things that were disconnected started to come together at the sound of God's word.
- Rattling happened, but it was lifeless movement. Hearing God's word prophesied can make the connection for us about our separation from God, but it can't give us life: Jn 5:39 NLT— You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!
- The bones didn't have breath. The word used is *ruach*, translated both "breath" and "spirit." (v. 8)
- When Ezekiel speaks to the breath, the Holy Spirit enters the Walking Dead and brings them to life! Ezek 37:10 TV-- So I did what God told me to do: I prophesied *to the breath. As I was speaking, breath invaded the lifeless. The bodies came alive and stood on their feet. I realized then I was looking at a great army.*
- Only by the power of the Holy Spirit do we have a hope of living out God's will and word. That's the promise of the New Covenant in the previous chapter: Ezek 36:27 MSG—I'll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that's God-willed, not self-willed. I'll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands.
- Believers can be biblically literate but powerless when it comes to dealing with their lifeless circumstances. Ongoing dryness and powerlessness is an indicator that we have not learned to live life based on the word and under the control of the Holy Spirit.
- We'll burn out and lose hope if we depend on ourselves to live out God's word.
- LISTENING EXERCISE: *Where have you felt lifeless and dry for an extended period of time? Ask the Lord to reveal where you have not been walking in His word by the power of His Spirit. (Use this exercise over the course of the week to gain more specifics.)*

E. BREATHING IN HOPE

- Begin to seek the Lord regularly about your dead or dry place even if it's hard to face. Keep a record of how He speaks to you by His Word and through His Spirit.
- For helpful hints about hearing God's word and allowing the Spirit to apply it to your life, refer to the handout "Tools & Techniques: Listening to God."
- Stop speaking death over your situation and start declaring Living Hope from God's Word over it. Some basic declarations you can make from previous lessons include:
 - Call on God and He will answer you (Jer 33:3).
 - He has good plans for your future (Jer 29:11-13).
 - He is working all things together for your good and His purposes (Rom 8:28-29).
 - You have hope of experiencing God's glory because Christ lives in you (Col 1:27).
 - You're in Christ. Nothing in creation can separate you from His goodness and love (Rom 8:31ff).
- As you spend time in God's Word during the week, ask Him to draw your attention to a promise He wants to apply specifically to your issue. Add it to your Promise Page!
- Yield to the Spirit daily, asking for His power to transform you according to God's word.

Insights: