

- 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](http://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. BROKENNESS & DRY BONES

- Here’s a principle that is true for each of us and our personal stories:



- This continuum shows how God integrates our faith into our daily lives as His truths penetrate to the deepest places of our beings: Ps 51:6 NAS-- Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.
- Grabbling with our brokenness and dry bones isn’t easy, but it is the 1<sup>st</sup> step to the kind of hope that is living and breathing and transformative.
- Just like Abraham, we have mixed responses to the offer of Living Hope over the course of our lifetimes. Yet, God is pleased to come to us with healing and growth.
- Our spiritual health and maturity goes hand in hand with our *emotional* healing and growth. Otherwise, we will be like those dry bones with no breath – they had God’s word in their heads but no penetration to their hearts. That requires the Holy Spirit.
- The Emotionally Healthy Spirituality assessment helps us identify broken, disconnected, weak, and immature spots. (10/24/17, Lesson 6 handout)
- Shame tells us we are not enough. It lies to us and says, “God can’t love you until you clean yourself up and get it together.” Shame says, “Hide! Put on fig leaves!”
- Brokenness and weakness can heal and grow only when we bring them into the light.
- Vulnerability is a weapon against shame and disconnection:
  - Lk 10:3 TV--I’m sending you out *armed with vulnerability*, like lambs walking into a pack of wolves.
  - Rom 5:5 NIV--Hope does not put us to shame
- Hope grows as we share our stories with one another. Scripture tells us God will bring about growth and healing for us just as He’s done for others: Rom 4:18-5:5 TV-- Against the odds, Abraham’s hope grew into full-fledged faith that he would turn out to be the father of many nations, just as God had promised when He said, “That’s how *many* your descendants will be.”<sup>19</sup> His faith did not fail, although he was well aware that his impotent body, after nearly 100 years, was as good as dead and that Sarah’s womb, too, was dead.<sup>20</sup> In spite of all this, his faith in God’s promise did not falter. In fact, his faith grew as he gave glory to God<sup>21</sup> because he was supremely confident that God could deliver on His promise.<sup>22</sup> This is why, *you see, God saw his faith and counted him as righteous; this is how he became right with God.*<sup>23</sup> The story of how faith was credited to Abraham was not recorded for him and him alone,<sup>24</sup> but was written for all of us who would one day be credited for having faith in God, the One who raised Jesus our Lord from the realm of the dead.<sup>25</sup> He was delivered over to death for our trespasses and raised so that we might be made right *with God*. 5:1 Since we have been *acquitted and made right through faith*, we are able to experience *true and lasting peace* with God through our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One, *the Liberating King*.<sup>2</sup> Jesus leads us into a

place of *radical* grace where we are able to celebrate the hope of experiencing God's glory. <sup>3</sup> And that's not all. We also celebrate in seasons of suffering because we know that when we suffer we develop endurance, <sup>4</sup> which shapes our characters. When our characters are refined, we learn what it means to hope *and anticipate God's goodness*. <sup>5</sup> And hope will never fail to satisfy our deepest need because the Holy Spirit that was given to us has flooded our hearts with God's love.

Insights:

B. WALK THE WALK

- This passage uses Abraham's journey to invite us to greater and greater hope.
- Unlike our emotions, the will is cold-blooded. We can choose to let God do His work of bringing spiritual and emotional health even when it seems impossible: Rom 4:17 MSG-- We call Abraham "father" not because he got God's attention by living like a saint, but because God made something out of Abraham when he was a nobody.
- Choosing God's way begins with the understanding that only He can accomplish it: Rom 4:18 MSG-- When everything was hopeless, Abraham believed anyway, deciding to live not on the basis of what he saw he *couldn't* do but on what God said he *would* do.
- That's the very pathway that Jesus chose:
  - Jesus deeply desired God's pathway: John 4:34-- Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.
  - He chose to live His earthly life in total dependence on His Father: Phil 2:6-8 NLT-- Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form he humbled himself in obedience to God
  - The Son of God listened to the Father for His instructions: Lk 5:16 NIV-- Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.
  - Just like us, He was required to stretch and grow in every dimension: Lk 2:52-- And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.
- As impossible as it sounds, we are commanded to grow up to be just like Jesus!: Eph 4:13 AMP-- Until we all attain...the [full and accurate] knowledge of the Son of God, that [we might arrive] at really mature manhood (the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection), the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ *and* the completeness found in Him.
- Christ-like character requires "a long obedience in the same direction." (F. Nietzsche)
- We must invest in our spiritual lives (prayer, Bible study, community, etc.) in order to mature: Hos 10:12a--Plant righteousness, and reap the blessings that your devotion to me will produce.

- Jesus calls us to follow Him, to walk as He walked, led by the Spirit:
  - Gal 5:16 NIV-- Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.
  - Gal 5:25 NIV-- Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.
  - Col 2:6-7-- As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.
- God takes our steps of obedience and grows us up tall! With every inch we gain, we have more reason for joy: Rom 5:1-2 MSG-- By entering through faith into what God has always wanted to do for us—set us right with him, make us fit for him—we have it all together with God because of our Master Jesus. And that’s not all: We throw open our doors to God and discover at the same moment that he has already thrown open his door to us. We find ourselves standing where we always hoped we might stand—out in the wide-open spaces of God’s grace and glory, standing tall and shouting our praise.
- Walking with God produces in us ever-increasing Living Hope, faith and joy!
- Where we’re immature, we’re free to revert to our most basic relationship with God-- Father and child: Rom 8:14-16--For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons (huios/mature child) of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children (teknon = little child) of God

Insights:

C. EMBRACE THE LIMP

- To go after wholeness, we must look beneath the surface: Hos 10:12b--Break up your fallow ground, for *it is* time to seek the Lord, till He comes and rains righteousness on you.
- Often, we shut off our emotions in response to hurt and end up with hearts that are numb: Eph 4:17-19 NIV--You must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts having lost all sensitivity
- We must choose to open our hearts to God and feel the feelings again.
- In our fallow, broken places, it’s awkward and painful to touch the weak or wounded spot God desires to heal: Heb 12:11-13 AMP--For the time being no discipline brings joy, but seems sad *and* painful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness [right standing with God and a lifestyle and attitude that seeks conformity to God’s will and purpose]. So then, strengthen hands that are weak and knees that tremble. Cut through *and* make smooth, straight paths for your feet [that are safe and go in the right direction], so that *the leg* which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather may be healed.
- Though hard to imagine, there is hope of wholeness for our past hurts and deficits. We can eventually break through to joy even there: Rom 5:3-5 MSG-- There’s more to come: We continue to shout our praise even when we’re hemmed in with troubles, because we know

how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling shortchanged. Quite the contrary—we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit!

- Our “troubles” are the very thing that God uses most effectively to write our stories!
- Troubles = *thilipsis* (Strong's 2347): also translated suffering weakness, pressure, burdened, distress, tribulation; the calamities of war, want, and birthing pains
- God is giving us a growth and healing model in our text:

**TROUBLES → ENDURANCE → CHARACTER → HOPE (ANTICIPATE GOODNESS) → LOVED!**

- Any seasoned child of God will tell you that the most difficult situations are the ones that produced the most growth in character and intimacy with God.
- Like healing from surgery, we may limp in these weak areas until He calls us home.
- When Jacob contended with God for His blessing, He was transformed and thereafter called Israel. God touched him in the hip joint as they wrestled: Gen 32:28-31 NAS-- He said, “Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.” ...And he blessed him there. So Jacob named the place Peniel, for *he said*, “I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved.” Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh

Insights:

#### D. CELEBRATE HOPE

- Living Hope in our troubles leads us to the place where we can celebrate and boast about our Dry Bones and Brokenness:
  - Rom 5:2 TV-- Jesus leads us into a place of *radical* grace where we are able to celebrate the hope of experiencing God's glory.
  - 2 Cor 12:9 NLT-- He said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.
  - The same Greek word used in both of these verses is *kauchaomai*, meaning, “to rejoice with or without reason.” (Vines)

- God is actually suggesting that we sing, celebrate, and brag about our weak spots! This is a recurring theme throughout the Bible:
  - Ps 27:5-6 NLT--For he will conceal me there when troubles come; he will hide me in his sanctuary. He will place me out of reach on a high rock. Then I will hold my head high above my enemies who surround me. At his sanctuary I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy, singing and praising the Lord with music.
  - Is 54:1--“Sing, O barren, you *who* have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you *who* have not labored with child! For more *are* the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman,” says the Lord.
  - Jm 1:2-4 NLT--when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

Insights:

E. GROW IN LIVING HOPE by applying the principles we have previously learned:

- If you have not done so, take the assessment on Emotionally Healthy Spirituality. Use the results to pinpoint areas of growth in your relationship with God and others.
- Be alert for any Negativity Bias (focus problem) or Confirmation Bias (belief problem). Ask for hope (an expectation of good) in the areas where you're struggling.
- Keep asking: *What am I pursuing and prizing that may indicate that my worship is off?*
- “Remember the Deeds of the Lord” and be encouraged by His faithfulness.
- Bring glory to God and grow in hope and faith by giving more weight to what He says than to your emotions, evidence, and errors. Use the resistance to make you stronger!
- Review regularly the benefits of being “In Christ” and having Christ is in you:
  - Surety—We can have confidence in God’s unchanging character.
  - Purity—Our salvation is sure and our record is spotless because of Jesus.
  - Security—The Lord’s acceptance, love, and worth for us is unconditional.
  - Maturity—We grow in Christ as we abide, repent, wait and watch for His word to be fulfilled.
  - Authority—In Christ we have authority to overcome the flesh, the world, and the enemy.
- The Scripture verses on the handout “Tools & Techniques: God Makes Things Right” offer comfort and hope when you have been wronged.
- Invite the Spirit to speak through His word and breathe His life-giving power where you have been lifeless and dry. Believe that those Dry Bones can dance again!
- 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. Ask Him to draw your attention to a promise from His word He wants to apply specifically to your issue. Add it to your Promise Page!
- Yield to the Spirit’s transforming power each day. Thank God that it’s not all on you!