



WHAT MATTERS MOST AT CHRISTMAS

AN ABUNDANCE OF HOPE

4 STEPS TO HOPEFUL LIVING

1. **Stand In Hope (Ephesians 1:18)**
2. **Pray for Discernment**
(Hebrews 5:14b; Ephesians 5:8-10)
3. **Look for Help (2 Timothy 2:1-2)**
4. **Choose Selflessness**
(Romans 8:5; Philippians 2:3-4)

MY HOPE IS BUILT (Edwin Mote)

My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
in ev'ry high and stormy gale,
my anchor holds within the veil.

His oath, His covenant, His blood
support me in the whelming flood;
when all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in Him be found,
dressed in His righteousness alone,
faultless to stand before the throne.

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand,
all other ground is sinking sand.

Ephesians 1:18a-b . . . having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know: what is the hope to which He has called you,

Hebrews 5:14b: . . . those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

Ephesians 5:8-10: . . . for at one time you were in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

2 Timothy 2:1-2 - You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

Romans 8:5: For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Philippians 2:3-4: Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Isaiah 40:31: . . . those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Discussion Questions:

1. How's your hope meter (1 = I'm living in hope; 10 = I have lost all hope) Discuss reasons why you chose the number and share why you did with the group.
2. Discernment is vital in a believer's life. Read the definition found in the second part of Hebrews 5:14, and Paul's challenge to "discern what is pleasing to the Lord," in Ephesians 5:8-10. When you have a big decision to make what process do you use to discern the will of the Lord? Discuss.
3. Who are the people in your life that give you hope when you talk to them about your struggles? This week send them an e-mail, text, or card telling them how much of an encouragement they are to you.
4. Read Isaiah 40:31. Celebrate this truth of God together as you walk in hope through this season.
5. What is one area of your life that affects your hope meter? Take some time to pray together about this. Choose hope!