

*there's*  
**Hope**

***A SEVEN-WEEK GROUP  
STUDY***



**SHEPHERD CHURCH**

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INTRODUCTION

**Dear Life Group members,**

## **WHY SHOULD I BE IN THIS GROUP?**

Life Groups are designed to help you experience the life God has for you by helping you **CONNECT** with other believers, by helping you **GROW** to be more like Christ, and helping you make an **IMPACT** with the gospel.

Every time a group meets, they spend time connecting by building relationships, growing through a discussion-led Bible study, and making an impact by supporting each other through prayer and service. And as a result, group members experience growth, belonging, and care. A Life Group is your chance to pursue healthy relationships and spiritual growth. You can't grow spiritually without connecting relationally.

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## **HOW WILL THIS SERIES HELP ME?**

Life can get pretty rough, even for the most seasoned of Christ followers. Both Jesus and Paul warn of coming trials and instruct us to stay connected with God to receive His peace and comfort. Followers of Christ know the promises we have been given that He will be with us during all times. It is this hope that we cling to even during the roughest of life's challenges.

This Life Group series will help give you a better understanding of the hope that we have in Jesus, even through the difficult times of life. With the help of Scripture, you will learn how God's love brings you hope and gives you encouragement to share the burdens of others as they go through difficulties. Ultimately, the goal of this series is to help you better understand and realize that wherever Christ is present, there is always hope. It is our prayer and desire that through this series, you will find Jesus' hope and strength during troubling times, experience the peace and comfort that only God can provide, and consequently, grow your faith in Jesus.

## **WHAT IS MY ROLE IN THIS GROUP?**

As you attend a weekend service and participate in this Life Group series, you will be equipped to live the life that God desires for you. Of course, the bottom line is, it comes down to

you. Only you can share in your group, pray about the things God is teaching you, and take action to allow Jesus to work in you and through you. Enjoy the encouragement and challenges that God desires as His grace abounds in your Life Group.

*The Life Groups Team*

# USING THIS WORKBOOK

*(Stuff to Help You Have a Great Life Group Experience!)*

- 6
- 1 Notice in the Table of Contents there are three sections: (1) Sessions; (2) Life Group Toolbox; and (3) Life Group Leaders. Familiarize yourself with the Appendix parts. Some of them will be used in the sessions themselves.
  - 2 If you are leading or co-leading a Life Group, the section for Life Group Leaders will give you some hard-learned experiences of others that will encourage you and help you avoid many common obstacles to effective small group leadership.
  - 3 Use this workbook as a guide, not a straightjacket. If the group responds to the lesson in an unexpected but honest way, go with that. If you think of a better question than the next one in the lesson, ask it. Take to heart the insights included in the Frequently Asked Questions (pg 96) and the Life Group Leaders section.
  - 4 Enjoy your Life Group experience.
  - 5 Now read the “Outline for Each Session” on the next page so that you understand how the sessions will flow.

## OUTLINE OF EACH SESSION

Most people want to live a life that is orderly, meaningful, and satisfying, but few achieve this by themselves. Most small groups struggle to balance all of God’s purposes in their meetings. Groups tend to overemphasize one of the various reasons for meeting.

Every Life Group session is structured to reflect the values of Life Groups, which are: **Connect, Grow and Impact.**



Therefore, the

sessions are designed to help each group member participate and gain deeper insight into each topic by connecting with others, growing to be more like Christ, and impacting the community with the gospel.

A typical Life Group session will include the following:



## CONNECT

The foundation for spiritual growth is an intimate connection with God and His family (a few people who really know you and share their lives with you). This section of each session is designed to allow group members to get to know each other. You can do this by using the icebreaker questions provided or by asking light, easy-to-answer questions of your own that invite involvement from everyone.

As your group begins, use the Life Group Agreement, Life Group Calendar and Life Group Community Project Worksheet to help your group see how everyone has a part in making a Life Group come to life. As the group develops intimacy, use the Prayer and Praise Report to keep the group connected.



## DVD SESSION

Serving as a companion to the “There’s Hope” Study Guide is the “There’s Hope” video teachings and testimonies. This DVD is designed to combine teaching segments from pastors and teachers along with leadership insights and personal stories of life change. Using the teaching video will add value to this seven-week series.



## GROW

Here is where you will process the teaching you heard and saw as a group. The focus won't be on accumulating information, but on how we should live in light of the Word of God. We want to help you apply the insights from Scripture practically, creatively, and from your heart as well as your head. At the end of the day, allowing the timeless truths from God's Word to transform our lives in Christ is our greatest aim.

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## IMPACT

Impact is about putting what you just learned into action. It is about walking the talk. This section is to help apply the insights and principles learned in the lesson. It is by this application that the lessons will have an impact in you as well as through you. We ask that all groups do some sort of community project together, some time during each series. Most groups have found that they have made significant contributions to society through this, and have made a lasting impact on people for Jesus.

This is a good place to have different group members close in prayer, even when the instructions don't specify. You can also provide some time, if the schedule allows, for people to reflect on the Prayer and



Praise Report  
at the end of  
each session or  
take a little time  
to meet with a  
Spiritual Growth  
Partner.

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## SESSION ONE

Running On Empty



# CONNECT

During each session, we will begin with a few questions to help you connect with one another and grow in your intimacy. Since this is your first time together (at least for

10 this new series), take a few minutes to make sure everyone knows each other's names.

- As you begin, turn to the “Life Group Roster” on page 92. Take time to pass around your study guides and have everyone write down their contact information.
- Whether your group is new or ongoing, it's always important to reflect on and review your values together. On page 93, there is a Life Group Agreement with the values we've found most useful in sustaining healthy, balanced groups. Take a few minutes to go over the agreement together.
- One of the markers of a healthy and happy group is when everyone takes ownership of the group. A great way to help everyone be involved is to share in weekly responsibilities, whether it's taking turns praying for the group, providing snacks or providing drinks. You can turn to page 94 where you will find the Life Group Calendar and blank group tasks.
- In this series, we will have discussions based on God's promises of love, grace, mercy, peace, and comfort that we find all throughout Scripture. Through these discussions, we will discover more reasons for the hope that we find in Jesus. To start our series and help break the ice, go around and answer one of the following questions:

- Describe a time when you were the most tired you've ever been.



- If money was no object, where would you vacation and why?

11



## DVD SESSION

This study is designed to be used with an accompanying video teaching. Please play DVD Session One. Use the space below for notes, questions or comments you want to bring up in the discussion later.

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# GROW

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussions to help expand your knowledge on the topic of this session.

- 12 If time is a concern, please choose just a few of the questions to answer and discuss in your group.

**Take a minute and discuss what you learned or found most interesting or important from the video.**

Read 1 Samuel 30:1-6

- 1 How would you describe David and his men's emotional state throughout this passage?
- 2 What do you think the writer of this book wants us to feel by writing, they "wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep"? How have you experienced these feelings in your own life?
- 3 Share some life circumstances, which drive people to the point where they just don't feel that they can go on?





13

4 What thoughts do you think were running through the minds of David and his men at this, their lowest point? How does David find strength and hope in this passage?

5 What are some ways we can find our strength in the Lord when we are running on empty?

Read Matthew 11:28-30

6 What does it mean to you, to go to Jesus? In what way or area do you feel Jesus calling you to “come to Him”?

7 How have you experienced Jesus’ rest and refreshment in the past? Why do you think rest always comes with surrender?

Read Isaiah 40:28-31

**8** What state would you describe your life right now...walking, running, soaring, or something else?

**14**  
**9**

How do these passages give you a hope and desire to connect with God?

**10** What is one thing you can do this week to start connecting with God on a deeper level?

## Deeper Study

Read Romans 5:1-5

**11** According to these verses, why can we find hope even in our sufferings? How have you seen the process that Paul describes in verses 3 and 4 in your life?



12 How does verse 5 bring you comfort and strength?  
According to verse 5, who is the source of our strength  
when we are running on empty?

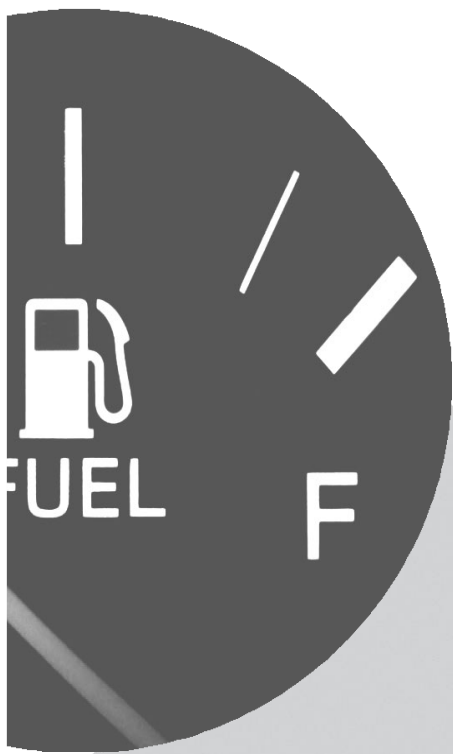
13 What are some practical ways we can tap into the  
power of the Holy Spirit when we are running on  
empty?

15

Read Matthew 24:13, 2 Timothy 2:12, Hebrews 10:36, James 1:2-4, and James 1:12

14 How are these verses similar?

15 According to the above  
verses, what are some of the  
promises for those who endure?





## IMPACT

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One of the core principles in Life Groups is to have an impact on the community around us. In the following section, we have given you some ideas of how you can have an impact in the community, both as a group and individually. Please go through and discuss how you can impact the community around you with the gospel.

- One of the greatest tools we have in spending time with God is to pray over other followers of Jesus. God has given us a community in the Church, to support and love each other. This communal bond is extremely beneficial to strengthen others through prayer.

Fill out the circles with names of people who could experience support and love in the manner God intended us to experience it. You've experienced this love and support; now pray for someone to experience that same support and love, and to come to your Life Group to get plugged in.

**Family**  
(parents or siblings)

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**Friends**

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**Familiar**

(neighbors, kids, sports  
teams, school, and so forth)

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**Fun**

(yes, hobbies, hangouts)

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**Firm**

(work)

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- As we learned in this week's session, life gets busy, and we even get to a point that we don't have a whole lot of room to rest or time to spend with God. Some of these things are not our fault, it is just the hand we've been dealt, and we are just trying to survive. Others of us create a busy schedule without thought of rest for ourselves or our family. However it has happened, that is not how God intended for us to live our lives. We are created to need rest, and God built that into His instructions to live a full, godly life.

This week, ask God to guide you to see what needs to be cut out of your daily routine, to allow you to rest and even spend time with God. Write out some of these ideas and pray over them. Time spent with God will help you to have a clearer revelation of what God is showing you about your heart and how to deal with it. Through practice and conditioning, God will give you the rest that you so desperately need. Time spent with God will also ease your heart and give you a peace that you may not have felt in a long time, if ever. Prioritize God and enjoy the life that He intended you to live.

**Please take some time to end your group in prayer. You may use the Prayer and Praise Report on the following page as you pray and close your session for this week.**



# PRAYER AND PRAISE REPORT

This is a place where you can write each other's requests for prayer. You can also make a note when God answers a prayer. Pray for each other's requests. If you're new to group prayer, it's okay to pray silently.

## Prayer Requests:

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## Praise Reports:

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