

WEEK 1 HE IS HOPE

HE IS

SCRIPTURE

Open your Bible and read today's verses with your family.

• Colossians 1:15-17

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

• Romans 15:13

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."

CONTENT

Read today's devotion aloud with your family, small group, or simply during your personal time with the Lord.

There always seems to be that one person on your Christmas list who feels impossible to buy for. What do you give the person who already has everything? This line of thinking becomes even more complicated when you apply it to Jesus. We certainly aren't buying Him anything, but what do you give the King of Kings, the One who created everything??

A list of all the "right" answers may quickly come to mind. We give Him our heart. We bring Him our worship. We surrender our all. And every single one of these is absolutely true! But those gifts can feel a bit intangible, and we can sometimes feel like we have nothing to offer Him - especially when December has shown up with discouragement and difficulties, making Christmas feel like forced joy and chaotic days empty of peace.

But what if, as we prepare our hearts this year, we shift from focusing on what we can give our King to what He has given us - which is Himself? To do this, we will spend the next few weeks looking at who He is. Grasping who Jesus truly is will stir deep and authentic worship within us, and seeing His glory and goodness and acknowledging all He has done will result in us giving Him what He was after all along - the wholeness of our hearts, with no need to force or fake anything.

First, we see that Jesus is our HOPE. While the exact word hope is not in Colossians 1:15-17, all we learn about who Jesus is from this passage gives us hope. Here are a few of the truths we find:

He is the image of the invisible God: We have the hope of knowing what our unseen God is like. Because of Jesus, God does not have to feel distant or mysterious. Because He is the exact image of the Father, we can see and know God ourselves as we look to Jesus and get to know Him.

He is the Creator: We have hope in the knowledge that He created all things. We do not need to give in to fear in any area of our lives because there is nothing and no one greater or more powerful than Jesus. He reigns supreme. We also have the hope of knowing we were created for Him. No one is here by accident, not a single human life. But we also are not here to exist for ourselves. We have purpose and find our purpose in Jesus.

He is Eternal: We have the hope of an eternal Savior. Jesus was there at the beginning, He will be there at the end, and He is present and helping us every day in between. In Revelation 22:13, Jesus declares, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." His eternal nature is hope for every moment we will ever know. He is with us. He also sees what is ahead and knows how to prepare us for the future and how to provide for us today.

He is our Sustainer: We have the hope that Jesus holds all things together. The One who created and sustains the entire universe can be trusted with any and every detail of our lives. Even when everything feels as though it is crumbling around us, when we keep Christ central, He can hold us together. He sustains all things, including us.

All of this hope that we have in Jesus has nothing to do with wishful thinking and everything to do with the fact He is wholly worthy of our trust. Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines hope as "to expect with confidence." Also, when we read that our God is a God of hope in Romans 15:13 and that we are born again to a "living hope" through Christ in 1 Peter 1:3, the Greek word for hope in these passages points to the idea of expectation and confidence. Our hope in our truth-telling, promise-keeping, forever-reigning Savior is sure!

What hope do you need today? All that we need, He is. He is the author of our hope. He is the foundation of our hope. He is the sustainer of our hope. And because Christ is eternal, we have eternal hope.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Use these questions to start conversation with your family, small group, or simply to further your own understanding and application of today's scripture and devotion

1. How would you define the word "hope," specifically as Christians? What are some tangible and practical ways we can put our hope in the Lord?
2. What is difficult about having to wait at Christmas? What can be exciting about waiting? How does the hope we have in Christ help in seasons of waiting?
3. We learned in today's scripture about who Jesus is. Think about and discuss how He has shown Himself to you over the last year as our Eternal God who is our Creator and Sustainer?.

CONNECTIONS

Use the following activities and ideas throughout the coming week to further connect the lessons from today's scripture and devotion as well as deepen connections with family, friends, and community.

1. Make a paper chain to countdown the days until Christmas and prepare your heart to celebrate the Advent season. Write a scripture reference on each one. Read that passage when you take off a link from the chain each day.
2. Decorate! A special tradition is putting a nativity scene out as your first Christmas decoration and having it be the last Christmas decoration you put away. If you don't own a nativity, you could invest in one this year or make your own out of things you have around the house.
3. Christmas trees, lights, stars, bells, wreaths, and more all have Christian roots and can point us to Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE

Use the memory verse to lock in the Biblical truth of today's lesson throughout the week.

Romans 15:13

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."



*His name shall
be called
Wonderful
Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting
Father,
Prince of Peace.*

ISAIAH 9:6