

LESSON 2

ANCHOR 2

Believe that God's love and power can restore hope and healing.

2 Timothy 1:7 - For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

PRAY

Ask God to speak to you as you read His Word. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a revelation of God's truth and love and give you understanding of what you are about to read. Pray that you will have an Encounter with God as you earnestly seek Him. Don't rush through reading everything and don't rush through praying. Take some time to stop and listen so you may hear anything God wants to say to you.

After you read the scriptures, ask:

- "God, what are You saying in these scriptures?"
- "God, what are You saying to me in these scriptures?"
- "God, how do You want me to apply this to my life?"

Write in your journal as you spend this time with God.

Activating Anchor 2, by believing that God's love and power can restore hope and healing, creates a critical crossroads wherein you can experience healing and growth in your life.

At this crossroads, you can choose to reconcile God's truth and ways to your own beliefs and ways. Ask yourself these questions:

Do I really believe God is who He says He is?

Do I really believe God can do what He says He can do?

Do I really believe that God loves me and has my best interests at heart?

Our circumstances and the brokenness of this world can tend to overwhelm us. Our problems can seem so much larger than anything else in our life. It can seem devastating when we don't have a reason to hope, when we don't have the faith that things can get better for us. Anchor 2 can be called the 'faith' anchor because it is the only anchor that begins with the word 'believe'. Faith requires belief, but it is key to have the correct beliefs if we are to have hope in this world.

Read **Hebrews 11**. It chronicles great heroes of faith in God. **Hebrews 11:1** says, "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." The bible says that God actually rewards the person who believes and sincerely seeks Him with all their heart. In **Hebrews 11:6**, it says, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him." These 'rewards' aren't always realized in the here and now, but the great heroes of faith maintained a great expectation that God was, and would be, faithful. We can authentically encounter Him as we earnestly seek

Him. His presence can assure us that He is with us and He can give us a peace that the world does not offer. (Read **John 14:23-27**)

Some are surprised to hear that God has already placed a measure of faith within us. In **Romans 12:3**, Paul says to the Romans, "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."

Everyone has faith. But the difference between the Christian faith and a non-Christian faith is in whom or what we have placed our faith. The nature of a committed Christ follower is to place their faith in the God of all hope. The people of faith in **Hebrews Chapter 11** recognized the faithfulness of God. They had great faith because of God. Their lives weren't always easy - they were often just the opposite. But they kept on keeping on because their hope was eternal and God was the object of their faith.

What about your own faith in God? Do you have hope that God is faithful? Our body is full of God-given muscles. But, in order for those muscles to grow and develop properly, we have to exercise them and work them out. The same holds true for our faith. While God may have given us faith, it is up to us to work out our faith so it can grow. We need to exercise our spiritual muscles so we can increase and properly develop our faith in our faithful God.

Most of us can identify times in our lives when we felt like we didn't have enough faith. Jesus addressed this concern when He told us that we can move mountains with faith even as small as the size of a mustard seed.

Read **Matthew 17:14-21**. Jesus cast a demon out of a boy after the disciples were unable to do so. In verses **19-21**, the disciples asked Jesus privately why they were unable to drive out the demon. He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

Jesus was speaking to the disciples, but His words also resonate with those of us that follow Him. We really don't need huge amounts of faith to do the impossible and move the 'mountains' in our lives. What are the mountains you want to move in your life? Do you have mountains of doubt, fear, insecurity, bad habits, hurts, sin, etc.? Ask God to help you activate the faith that you have, even if your faith is as small as a mustard seed - the smallest seed of seeds.

Read **Mark 9:14-29**. Mark's account of this story gives voice to the father of the boy who was demon possessed. In **Mark 9:22**, the boy's father said to Jesus, "But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." In **Mark 9:23**, Jesus replied with the question, "If you can?" Then He continued with, "Everything is possible for him who believes." In **Mark 9:24** the boy's father replies, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

Can you relate to that response? If you still struggle with unbelief, God already knows. It's as if He is standing by, saying, "If I can?" You can do as the boy's father did and say, "Help me overcome my unbelief!" Spend some time with the LORD and allow Him to help you overcome any area of unbelief that hinders your faith and hope in Him.

Be sure to journal what the Holy Spirit reveals to you as you honestly ask Him to help you believe. Ask God to help you believe that He is bigger than your problems and bigger than any mountain

you need removed from your life.

What we believe or do not believe about God is critical both here on earth and in eternity. Our beliefs determine how we think and act. Most people assume that, at the end of their lives, God will judge them on what they did or didn't do on earth. In reality, their legacy on earth and their future in heaven is determined by what they believed or did not believe.

It is by faith that we can encounter the love, power and peace of God, which leads to hope. What keeps you from believing that God loves you? Maybe it's you, or maybe it's other people. Maybe it's your pain or circumstances, or maybe it's the pain you see in others. Maybe it's the sorrow and grief of loss and disappointments? Maybe it's your struggle with doubts and temptations? Whatever it may be, God wants to reassure you of His love for you. He wants you to know that His love for you is far greater than whatever problems you have in this world. He wrote a book about it. The bible is His love story to you.

Love was God's idea. Scripture tells us that God is love. In reality, that's more easily said than grasped by the human heart and intellect. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit gives followers of Christ the same power and ability that Jesus promised the disciples. He counsels us and teaches us and helps us truly experience the love of God.

Many people try to fill the void created by pain and emptiness in their lives and search for love in all the wrong places. Have you ever searched for love in other people or in other things, outside of a relationship with God's Son, Jesus Christ? Unfortunately, most of us have done this and we have been hurt or we have hurt others in the process. Our view of God and His love, and even our capacity to love or to be loved, can be severely handicapped when we haven't first believed God and experienced His love for us.

Read **Romans 5:1-8**. In **Romans 5:3-5**, the apostle Paul writes, "We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because He has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love."

Read **Ephesians 1:15-20**. The Apostle Paul must have known that we would struggle to comprehend the love, wisdom and power of God. In this letter to believers in Ephesus, Paul said that he prayed for God to give them spiritual wisdom and insight so they might grow in the knowledge of God and their hearts would be flooded with light so they could understand the confident hope God had given to them. In verse 19, Paul goes on to say, "I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe Him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms." This passage reinforces the concept of Anchor 2 – Believe that God's love and power can restore hope and healing.

As you stop to pray, ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand and instill this confident hope within you. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand that the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead, lives in you when you surrender your life to Jesus Christ.

In our humanity, we may think we have to be strong in faith before we can experience the power and grace of God. But the truth is just the opposite. In times of trouble and weakness, when we are at our lowest, when we are at our breaking point, the grace and power of God is readily

available to us.

Read the following scriptures about God's power:

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 - Paul had begged the Lord three times to take away an infirmity. Each time the Lord had said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." Paul became glad to boast about his weaknesses, so the power of Christ could work through him. He came to recognize Christ's strength in his own weakness.

Philippians 4:13 - "For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength." Paul was writing from prison. He had endured much persecution and hardship, yet his joy and confidence had grown stronger in the Lord. Christ had become everything to Paul. Can you identify with that? Have you been able to find the joy of the Lord, even in your trials?

John 15:15 - Jesus said, "Apart from Me you can do nothing." And in **Matthew 19:26** He said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible." Jesus was clearly saying that our source of power was in and through Him. The simple conclusion is that, apart from Jesus, there is no hope, but with Him we have endless Hope!

Romans 10:17 - "So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ."

Ask the Holy Spirit to restore and renew your hope as you meditate on the following:

Romans 15:4 - "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." Knowing the Word of God instills hope

Romans 15:13 - "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Being filled with the Holy Spirit instills hope.

Hebrews 6:19 - "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." Hope is an anchor that is trustworthy.

Ephesians 2:12 - "In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope." Hope comes from knowing Christ.

Psalms 130:5 - "I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in His Word I put my hope." Hope requires waiting and trusting God's Word over your circumstances, feelings, and emotions.

Psalms 33:18 - "But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear Him, on those whose hope is in His unfailing love." When we honor God with our lives and put our hope in Him, He never takes His eyes off of us. You could say we are the 'apple of His eye'. He sees us and knows and cares about every detail of our lives.

Psalms 42:5 - "Why am I so depressed? Why this turmoil within me? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise Him, my Savior and my God." Hope can help us refocus our attention from our problems to giving thanks and praise to our Savior. It can decrease the sadness and increase the gladness.

Romans 8:24 – “For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?” Hope is unseen. It is a confident expectancy that God will be faithful.

Romans 12:12 – “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” Hope produces joy and perseverance as we seek the Lord.

Hebrews 10:23 – “Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.” Hope helps us experience the faithfulness of God:

Read **2 Timothy 1:1-14**. Paul was writing to Timothy, encouraging him to continue in what he had learned and that which he had been convinced of. Timothy had joined the missionary journeys of Paul and was a follower in the church movement. But the early church faced much opposition and persecution from unbelievers. Paul wanted Timothy to remain confident in hope and faith in Christ. Paul knew Timothy would face hardship and trials and he urged him to keep his eye on the prize and not to allow fear to discourage him.

As you focus on **2 Tim 1:7**, note that Paul reminds Timothy of the power of the Holy Spirit within him. “For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, of love and of a sound mind.” Can you relate to such fear as you try to get well and follow God? Can you hang on to hope, despite the trials you have been through or are going through? Can you be confident in the power, love and peace of God to keep you? Can you tell your story of what He has done for you?

There are people who don't believe God is real. You may even doubt that God can make your life better if you surrender completely to His will and humble yourself to be led completely by Him. Ask yourself, “Am I afraid to go “all in” with God? Am I afraid of the changes I need to allow God to make in my life so I can be transformed and live in hope and freedom? What are the changes I need to allow God to make in my life?”

There are people who may say that you and others are crazy for believing God is real. Does surrendering your will to God make you fearful of what people may think of you? Ask yourself, “Do I want to please man or do I want to please God?”

Paul went on to urge Timothy not to be ashamed to testify about their Lord. Much like no one can argue with how God changed Paul, neither can anyone argue with your testimony and story of how God has worked in your own life. They may not readily believe scripture or doctrine, but they can easily observe a changed life. Paul goes on to urge Timothy not to stray from sound teaching and truth and to guard it all with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Reflect back upon this passage and think about your own story. Ask yourself, “Has God changed my life?” Facing your fears of what happened in the past or wondering how you will resist temptations and withstand trials in the future can be daunting. The same scripture holds true for you, though. The person who is following Jesus has the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit to help them in the spiritual (and often also emotional and physical) battle that ensues when they choose to do things God's way.

This letter Paul wrote was probably intended just as much for our benefit today as it was for Timothy's benefit. It reminds us that, even if people in this world disagree with us or the teachings in the bible, God calls us to stay true to those teachings and to not be afraid to put our hope in Him and walk in faith as we share our story of what He has done in our lives. If the power of God

could change Paul, a former persecutor of the early church, into a Christ follower who became persecuted for believing in Christ, can that same power not change and transform each of us who choose to follow Christ?

Believing **2 Timothy 1:7** at face value is being confident that believing God and following Him completely in all our ways gives us the perfect antidote to fear. God gives His followers a power they never had before, the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. And He instills His love into believers in such a way that they are able to make loving and sound decisions when they rely on His guidance throughout their lives.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU:

1. What do I honestly believe about God and His love for me?
2. Why is the fear of experiencing change and living my life differently one of the biggest fears to overcome?
3. From what additional fears do I need the help of God to overcome?
4. What needs to be restored in my life that only God can restore?
5. On what or whom have I fixed my hope? How does my life reflect that? Has it changed who I am, what I value, and what I am doing with my life?
6. Write and share a short testimony of hope where the love and power of God helped me when I was at a weak point in my life.