

OLEN GRIFFING

Prisoners of Hope Olen Griffing

Focus We all have seasons in our lives. There are two types of seasons: seasons we like and seasons we don't like. Many of us are in a season we don't like, and we've lost hope. In this fallen world, the enemy takes advantage of us during our times of weakness. But God wants to restore hope to our lives.

Fun Grab a deck of cards and ask each member to pick one card without looking. Once everyone has picked their card, they can see what they have. Each member will share as many things about themselves as the number on the card. If they drew a Jack, Queen, King, or Ace, it counts as 10. Set a timer and give each person 60 seconds to accomplish this challenge. Ready, set, GO!

Review Key Scripture: Zechariah 9:11–12; Jeremiah 29:11–12; Hebrews 11:1

- **The Problem of a Dry Pit**

God desires for us to live lives of hope and abundance, but because we live in a fallen world, there are things that happen to us that may cause us to lose hope. The dry pit represents seasons or situations that cause us to fall into a pit with no hope. Hope is from God, and it is the expectation of something promised. True hope structures our lives in anticipation of the future and influences how we feel. But when we lose hope, we lose sight of God.

- **The Provision of Returning**

People find themselves in a dry pit for one of two reasons: misunderstanding God's ways and being strangers to God's covenant promise of hope. We can't get out of the pit on our own—we need God's help. Sometimes when

we've been hurt, we can be quick to blame others for our pain. Blame puts us in a pit. But we need to move past blame to hope in God.

- **The Promise of Restoration**

God desires for us to return to His stronghold as His prisoners of hope. God wants His hope to be released in our lives so He can draw us out of the dry pit. We must agree with Him by declaring God's truth—God's promises. We enter God's stronghold of hope when we worship and align our attitude with God's Word. God promises to restore hope to our lives if we put our trust in Him.

Group Dynamics Idea One of the best ways to bring your group together is to do an outreach project together. Take time to consider what your group might be able to do together to bring God's hope to places out of your normal comfort zone. This will encourage community in your group as you look for ways to restore hope to others.

Discuss

1. In your own words, describe what hope means to you and how it has looked in your life.
2. Pastor Olen said that we are all in a season that we either like or don't like. What type of season do you think you are in right now? Share.
3. We have all have gone through situations where we feel like we have lost our hope. During these times of lost hope or being in a dry pit, what do you do to find hope? Share.
4. Read Jeremiah 29:11–12 and Hebrews 11:1. As you hear these Scriptures read aloud, how does it make you feel? What areas of your life do you feel like hope needs to be restored to and why?
5. God has given us all a story; however, Satan tries to mess with the middle of our story to cause us to lose hope. Are you in a season in a dry pit? Is it hard for you right now to have hope? Would you like prayer to ask God to bring you out of the pit and restore your hope? Allow time for a response from the group members, then take time to pray for everyone who communicates that they need hope restored in their lives.

Take Home

As we conclude, remember the following:

- We were created to experience God's hope.
- Sometimes life's circumstances rob us of the hope God has given us.
- God is able to restore hope to our lives and to bring us up out of the pit.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for being willing to reach into our world to show us how much You love us. We are all in different seasons, but we all need hope. Please help us to always know that we can trust You. If there is anyone here that needs hope restored, please draw them to You, Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip

Sometimes the only thing keeping a person from experiencing the joy of relational community is a simple invitation. The most effective way for your group to grow is for you (and for the other members of your group) to personally invite others. Use the weekend services as a "fishing pond" and look for people to invite to your small group.