

Introductory Meeting Outline Overview

I. Welcome/Prayer (5 - 15 min.)

Short prayer.

Crowd Breaker:

- If you could have a dream come true, nothing off limits, no money concerns or time concerns...what would that dream be?

II. Devotional Time

Let's open our bibles to John 5 where we will see a picture of hope:

The Healing at the Pool

John 5

¹Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews.

²Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda^[a] and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades.

³Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.^[b]

⁵One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.

⁶When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"

⁷"Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me."

⁸Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."

⁹At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.
The day on which this took place was a Sabbath,

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Workbook Study Fall 2010 WEEK ONE – HOPE!

page 3

Let's observe/interrogate the text a little bit...ask who, what, where, when, why, how sort of questions.

Where does this take place?

Jerusalem (1), a pool near the Sheep Gate (2) "Pool of Bethesda" means "pool of mercy."

What is this pool like?

Surrounded by covered pillars with a bunch of disabled people lying around it. Blind, lame and paralyzed. They had the belief that an angel would stir the water of the pool and when that happened the first one down into the water would be healed.

Who are the players in this passage?

Jesus, disabled people, one in particular

Why are they all there?

To get healed. They hoped in the angel, in the pool, etc.

Workbook Study Fall 2010 WEEK ONE – HOPE!

page 4

What do we learn about the man who is the focus of the story?

Invalid for 38 years. We can wonder how he got there...if someone brought him there each day and took him back home each night. He laid there by the pool.

So what does verse 6 say about Jesus?

What was the question that Jesus asked?

There are many types of questions...what type of question is this? Is it open ended? Rhetorical? A simple yes/no answer?

What answer does the man give, however?

Why do you suppose the man answered the way that he did?

Do YOU have any kind of infirmity that you need God to heal?

If Jesus were to ask you, “Do you want to get well?” what might your answer be?

For me: “Yes, but my husband needs to be well first, Lord. As long as he is so unpredictable, I need to have free access to food for comfort. I ‘deserve’ to ‘slip’ every now and then, after all.”

He says to me again “Do you want to get well?” No excuses...a simple YES or NO answer is all he calls for.

By the same token, I am touched that he doesn’t chastise the man for playing the “I am a victim” song. He understood what the man wanted. Jesus cut to the chase. Healed him. But note that Jesus told him to ACT on what Jesus had given. GET UP! Go for it! Don’t wait here to get in the pool any more, I HAVE HEALED YOU. Live out the truth of it!

Workbook Study Fall 2010 WEEK ONE – HOPE!

page 6

I think he asks us the same question, “Do you want to be healed?” We may hem and haw...he sees the truth of it. In Christ, scripture says ALL THINGS ARE NEW. THE OLD IS GONE the NEW IS COME! He says that he HAS opened the prison gates. We can leave! We don't need to sit in the self-imposed prison of over-eating, shame about how we look or the secret eating habits we have fostered. We can hope in the fact that CHRIST HAS DONE IT. HE HAS WON. He has attributed that victory to us. He has given us freedom. He has purchased it with his blood.

We are NOT victims.

We are vicTORS.

Shall we GET UP?

Shall we PICK UP OUR MATs and Walk?

(Read blog entry)

III. Group discussion time.

I want to give some time to talk about the lesson this week, for you to share insights that you gleaned, etc.

First, I hope that some of you kept the attributes of God list, but it occurred to me that I didn't share with you what I meant by it.

- SHARE MY LIST.

- What God is like and what He does.

- How I use it.

How about you? Did you have a chance to begin your list? This is a list we will add to for the duration. So even if you haven't started yet, please do! It will be great!

Workbook Study Fall 2010 WEEK ONE – HOPE!

page 8

Lesson Highlights:

Page B-3 says “Our God is amazing! He who set the stars in the heavens and measured all of the waters of the earth in the palm of His hand desires intimacy with you (Isaiah 40:12).”

It goes on to say: “You are His beloved and He draws you with loving-kindness (Jeremiah 31:3). All the heavens declare His glory yet He esteems you (Psalm 8:3-8). It is this God who provides the grace, mercy, and strength needed for you to persevere as you trust and obey.”

Isn't that a cause for rejoicing?

Oh, I hope this feeds your SOUL that you might be satisfied with the wonder of his bounty!

It is my hope that this week, some of you got a taste of the “new thing” that God IS doing.

In fact, if you had a glimpse of a “new thing” that God is doing in your life, will you take a moment and tell us about it?

Workbook Study Fall 2010 WEEK ONE – HOPE!

page 9

Was there anything in the lesson that God used to encourage or challenge you? Did you have any questions as you read through it?

I was reminded that my hope is not in ME. It is in HIM!

I was also reminded that LOVE is what motivates EVERYTHING that he does!

On page B-4 we are asked if we have ever felt as if we were in captivity. How about you?

Did you feel hopeful as you went through the material this week?

How did you do with regard to waiting for physical hunger, or what Thin Within calls “0?”

On page B-5 we did an activity in the lesson where we tried to identify various body sensations that could be identified as hunger. I am the one who, when I have a bad taste in my mouth, has historically considered that “hunger!” God has retrained me and I see that for what it is now. 😊 But in the past, I ate when I had a bad taste in my mouth.

How did you do with regard to stopping at 5?

Workbook Study Fall 2010 WEEK ONE – HOPE!
page 10

What questions do you have about 0 and 5 or anything else related?

Did you find it easy? Simple? What surfaced for you as you attempted to eat between 0 and 5?

** When it comes to Knowing God by Heart questions, I recommend using online bible tools and dictionaries instead of a regular dictionary or thesaurus. When we update the workbooks next, I look forward to overhauling that part of it a bit.

I want to give you a chance to share any insights or questions that you may have from the daily exercises.

If you used page B-17 to keep track of things as you went this week, go ahead and turn there and let's share...or as I ask the questions on B-17, feel free to page through the lesson and see if there were things that struck you, questions you had, insights you gleaned.

Did you use the temple toolkit? What did you think of it?

IV. Closing (5 - 15 min.)

Assignment:

- Please read and complete all of Lesson 2
- Keep a list of “What God is Like” and “What God Does”
- Take 5 minutes before your time in the lesson exercises to thank and praise God for anything on your list!
- Work on memorizing 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- Write daily in the Temple Tool Kit if you feel so led.

Prayer requests

Next week’s meeting

Close in prayer.