SESSION 6
LEAD IT: HIGH SCHOOL

GOALS

As students experience this session, they will:

- Examine the connection between our sufferings and our rewards
- Compare the era we now live in with the era yet to come
- Explore how the idea of eternal hope can impact our everyday lives

MATERIALS: Group

- Printable sheets of optical illusions (sheet is with student pages), enough for one per pair of students
- Large chart paper or white board, and markers
- Post cards (3x5 index cards) with questions (see Taking It Inward below; you'll want to prepare these before your session)
- **Optional:** The story from Setting the Heart out of your Session 6 Prep It is a real-life testimony showing the passages of this session in action. We will leave it up to you as to whether you use the story in your group session. If used, it would be appropriate as a companion to Digging In or as a closing exercise.

MATERIALS: Each Student

- Scripture sheet and journal page (including optical illusions page)
- markers/highlighters (two colors per student if possible)
- Pens/pencils
- Bible or Bible app

Materials Note for Next Week:
With the next session being your last, one of the exercises in the session asks for students to review their journal pages from the previous six sessions. You'll want to ask them to bring their journal pages to your next session (or have them available if you have been keeping them).

OPEN

Divide students into pairs and give each pair of students an optical illusion sheet and share in your own words:

> **On this sheet you'll see some optical illusions. You may have seen them before. Share with your partner and help each other see "unseen" things when we take a closer look. Share with each other about which image is more dominant to you.**

Give students a few minutes to discuss and then transition into study mode with these thoughts.

> **Like these optical illusions, things in life are not always as they seem. When going through difficult circumstances, it's easy to be overwhelmed by what we see in front of us and we lose sight of the fact that our reality isn't what we experience in the confines of time, but rather what God is preparing for us when time is over. Time will be over either when we move out of this era through our death, or the next era comes to us through Jesus' return. Scripture is packed with this truth, but we tend to gloss over this information, largely because we are simply overwhelmed with what's in front of us.**

DIGGING IN

Move into study mode by sharing in your own words:

> **We have explored many angles of loss through the lens of the Bible in our sessions. Today we will look at the ultimate payoff of suffering and the reward it will lead to.**

Draw your students' attention to the Scripture passages under Digging In on their Scripture sheets. Invite them to read the passages and do this:

1. **When you see a reference to our current era, mark it in one color.**
2. **When you see a reference to our future era (hope, comfort, restoration), mark it with another color.**

While your group is reading the Scripture, create the chart below on your board (without answers). After students have finished reading and marking the passage, ask students what they learned about our current era and our future era and write the info in your chart.

Current Era	Future Era
Wasting away	*Eternal glory*
Light, momentary	*Liberated*
Temporary	*Freedom*
Suffer a little while	*Strong, firm, steadfast*

TAKING IT INWARD

After getting your observations on the board, internalize the Scripture by discussing these questions and exercises as a group:

> **What differences do you see between our current era and what we get to look forward to?**
>
> **How have you experienced the temporary nature of our current era?**
>
> **How does the knowledge of our "future" era help you with the circumstances of our "current" era?**
>
> **Quick question: What's the longest you've waited in line for an amusement park ride?**
>
> **Why do we wait so long in lines for these rides?**

Share with your group the following paragraph from your Prep It:

> **Anything bad that we experience in our lives now will, in the end, look like a small blip. It's a little like waiting in a long line for a roller coaster at an amusement park: By the time we experience the thrills of steep hills, high speeds and sharp curves, we have forgotten about the hot, slow, boring line. In fact, we might turn right around and get back into that hot, slow, boring line. The long wait has obviously become a blip compared to the thrill of the ride. Obviously with regard to life, we don't have the advantage of having yet experienced our eternal hope. We must simply trust what Scripture says about our eternal hope, and endure the long line. But as we learned from Session 4, God is enduring the long line with us — providing refreshment and encouragement to help us persevere.**

Ask:

How does that analogy of waiting in a long line for a roller coaster (or a ride you enjoy, if you're not into coasters) help you with the perspective of temporary troubles versus eternal hope?

Once students have had a chance to respond, divide into pairs for the next activity. Give each group a postcard (3x5 index card) with a question written on it (you'll want to write these on each post card ahead of time). Ask students to share together their responses to the question on the card and then share with the larger group. You'll see example responses below.

QUESTIONS

What can you adjust so that the promise of eternal hope impacts your behavior?
Example: don't let the little things snag me, keep myself reminded of eternal hope

What can you adjust so that the promise of eternal hope impacts your outlook on the future?
Example: don't get nervous about my short-term future, eternal hope is bigger than anything I can see

What can you adjust so that the promise of eternal hope helps you process bad news?
Example: bad things will happen in this fallen world, eternal hope will get me through temporary hard stuff

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

As you transition the conversation, ask students to refer to Putting Into Practice on their journal pages. Then share:

Using your Bible or Bible app, complete the chart under Putting Into Practice on your journal page. Spend some time doing this exercise in solitude before we discuss it as a group.

Passage	How is eternal hope or glory described?	How does it come about?
Psalm 73:23-24	*A place where God takes us*	*God leads us by the hand*
2 Timothy 2:8-10	*Worth everything*	*Through salvation*
1 Peter 1:3-5	*Living, never perishing, spoiling or fading, kept in heaven*	*Through the resurrection of Jesus*

Help your group internalize these passages by discussing these questions:

Which description of eternal hope do you find most encouraging?

What thoughts do you have about how our eternal hope comes about?

Once students have shared as a group, ask them to write a prayer that includes the elements below. They'll see a space for this on their journal pages.

PRAYER ELEMENTS

- **asking God to keep showing them glimpses of their hopeful eternity**
- **committing to God to let those glimpses impact their lives every day**
- **resolving to fix their eyes on what is unseen, their true reality of eternal life**
- **committing to pursue knowledge and understanding of our hopeful eternity through God's Word and the testimony of friends and family**

After a few minutes, ask for volunteers to share their prayers and let those prayers close your session.

Note for Next Week:
With the next session being your last, one of the exercises in the session asks for students to review their journal pages from the previous six sessions. You'll want to ask them to bring their journal pages to your next session (or have them available if you have been keeping them).

Optical Illusion Credits

Saxophone Player/Woman's Face

Attributed to Stanford University psychologist Roger N. Shepard in his book "Mind Sights" (1990)

Vase/Two Face Profiles

"Rubin's Vase"

Edgar John Rubin (1886 - 1951), Danish psychologist and philosopher

Younger Woman/Older Woman

Also known as: "My Wife and My Mother-in-Law"

Anonymous illustrator in late 19th century Germany. William Ely Hill (1887 - 1962), a British cartoonist, produced a later, well-known version.

Eskimo/Face

Credit unknown

Attributed to public domain