SESSION 6
LEAD IT: HIGH SCHOOL

GOALS

As students experience this session, they will:

- Consider how our eternal reward can outweigh the pain and suffering we experience in this life.
- Identify their own "It's worth it" moments from the pain and loss they've experienced.
- Reflect on the ways that their own experiences and insight gained from loss might benefit others on the same path.

MATERIALS: Group

- White board or Post-it wall pad (the 25"x30" variety)
- A variety of markers or sharpies for the white board or Post-it pad
- Prep It book, Session 6 (depending on the option you choose for sharing the story about a "conversation" on the mountain; see Taking It Inward below)

MATERIALS: Each Student

- Journal pages and Scripture sheets
- Pens/pencils
- Highlighters or colored pencils
- Bible (have extras available for students without a Bible)

OPEN

Begin your session with a review, asking students to write on their journal pages their top two or three takeaways from Session 5. Here are some talking points to jog memories if needed.

- **The pain and suffering that accompany loss are never meaningless. God does not allow us to struggle in vain.**
- **God can take the pain and hurt that we experience and redeem it for his glory or to take us deeper in our relationship with him.**
- **Scripture directs us to approach hardships with joy because we know that God is actively using these situations for our benefit.**

Share the following in your own words.

How many of you know the hit song Bless The Broken Road made popular by the country group Rascal Flatts?

In case you haven't heard the song, the lyrics talk about the many shattered dreams and broken hearts experienced in life. Initially it might sound like one of those country songs where all the writer has left at the end are his truck and his old dog. But that isn't the direction of the song. Instead, as the song progresses, you hear that the pain experienced was a blessing that led to love!

Blessing is probably not the first thing that we think of when we endure hardship or experience pain. But that's what Scripture teaches us, and I suspect that the writers of this song also picked up on this truth when they wrote the words "God blessed the broken road, that led me straight to you." It's a love song with a deep spiritual truth, and that truth is… "It's Worth It." All of our suffering, heartache, and grief is worth it.

**Consider playing the song for your group and discussing the pain that's described as well as the ways that the pain was "worth it."*

Song info*: Bless the Broken Road* (1994); written by Bobby E. Boyd, Jeff Hanna, and Marcus Hummon. Recorded by Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Selah, Rascal Flatts.

Use the questions below to transition into study mode:

Does the "it's worth it" moment happen immediately when going through pain?

It's one thing to look at experiences like a bad breakup leading to a new relationship as an "it's worth it" moment. But what about the pain that comes from losing everything in a house fire, someone you love going through Alzheimer's, or even the loss of a loved one? How can we say that the pain we experience in these situations is "worth it?"

DIGGING IN

Share in your own words:

It may be hard to come up with a good answer to that last question, especially when we are in the midst of grief or suffering. However, Scripture is packed with reminders that "it's worth it." In fact, we're going to look at a cross section of those reminders.

Invite students to look for the following as they read the passages from their Scripture sheets.

1. **Look for references to the era we now live in along with references to the troubles and suffering of this era. Use highlighters or colored pencils to mark these references.**

2. **Look for references to anything we get to look forward to along with references to hope, comfort, or restoration. Mark these references with your highlighters or colored pencils, using a different color than step one.**

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 them what they learned about our current era and our future era and write the info in your chart. Invite students to note this info in the chart on their journal page.

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?

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.**

With that perspective in mind, thoughtfully process the exercise below. Ask students to take a moment to write their responses in the space provided on their journal pages and then discuss as a group.

What do you need to do so that the promise of eternal hope actually impacts things like:

Your behavior?

Your outlook on life?

How you process bad news?

Story Options:
Choose one of the following options for sharing the story from Barry that you read in your Prep It about the "conversation" on the mountain.

Option 1: Read from your Prep It book
Read the story from Setting the Heart, Session 6 from your Prep It book (p. 44) and then process the story with the questions below.

Option 2: Recap the story with this adapted excerpt

From Barry Shafer, founder of InWord Resources (publisher of Lossology 101*)*
A few months after my wife passed away from cancer, I took a personal retreat on a ranch in Montana. One night, while gazing at the night sky, I had a prayer experience that gave me a glimpse into the eternal, joyous party that my late wife was now experiencing. I had two takeaways from that experience: 1) No matter how bad things are on this earth, it will all appear as a blip that doesn't matter when we get to our eternal joyous party; 2) Enduring all the bad things on this earth will be worth it when we get to our final destination.

A couple days after that experience, while still on my retreat, I hiked a trail that was a one-hour rather boring switch-back trail which ended in a breathtaking overlook. I stayed at that overlook for over an hour, processing the prayer experience and the concept that all our suffering "will be worth it!" As I hiked back down from the overlook I passed two other hikers on their way up. As hikers do, they asked for recon. First, in a nod to the boring switchback trail, they asked how far to the overlook. I shared that they were about halfway. They took a couple of steps and then asked, "Is it worth it?"

That question was like a giant exclamation point validating my prayer experience earlier in the week.

After reading, process the story as a group with these questions:

What parallels can you draw between this story and our faith journeys?

What in our faith journeys represents a hiker coming down from the summit that we are hiking to? How can we get good recon on what's "up there?"

How can your own recon be useful to others?

What can we do to gather as much information as possible from our recon sources?

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

Help your students pull together all that they've learned in this session by leading them through the questions below. Share the following in your own words:

We want to close this session by helping you with that last question: *How can we gather as much info as possible from our recon sources?* On your journal pages you'll see under Putting Into Practice verse references that point to eternal hope and eternal glory. These are a complement to the passages you've already explored (and in some cases, even connected to passages you've already explored).

As you read these passages from your Bible, write down some thoughts about the following:

1. **How is eternal hope or glory described in each passage?**
2. **How does eternal hope or glory come about? How is it realized?**

Psalm 73:23-24
2 Timothy 2:8-10
1 Peter 1:3-5

Use these last questions to prayerfully close your session.

What is God teaching you about eternal hope and glory?

Have you wrestled with the thought that your personal "it's worth it" moment may not get fully realized this side of eternity? How does faith in what God's Word teaches us lead us to a place of peace?

In 1 Peter 1:13 we are exhorted to set our hope "on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming." What do you need to do to do this: to put your mind and heart in a position to believe that eternal hope and glory is worth the suffering we have to endure now?

Close your session with a time of prayer. Consider giving students time to pray through the questions you've led them through above before closing with a time of group prayer.