LOSSOLOGY 101
THE PROMISE OF HOPE: IT'S WORTH IT!!

SESSION 6
LEAD IT
COFFEE HOUSE

MATERIALS: Each Student

- Scripture sheets for Session 6
- Student journal pages for Session 6
- A Bible (or Bible app) and pen

MATERIALS: Group

- Optional: a pack of colored pencils for Scripture sheets

GOALS

As students experience this session, they will:

- Discover God's glory in our lives will likely involve delayed gratification
- Explore how the hope of God's glory in our lives can impact attitudes and decisions in the meantime

PRAYER

After students have gathered, pray, thanking God for being with us in everything we face, good and bad.

OPEN

As students enjoy their coffee drinks, ask them to think about a time they knew something good was coming, but they had to wait for it. What was the situation? How did they feel in the waiting? Was it worth the wait?

Ask your students to read on their journal page the story by Barry Shafer, the founder of InWord Resources, describing an event that happened after his wife, Dana, had died from cancer.

> Having been widowed for six months, I was in the epicenter of grief. One evening while in a mountain cabin in Montana, I found myself asking the question: "How would Dana comfort me if she knew how much I was hurting?" Soon a conversation was taking place in my mind, or my heart. I wasn't sure which. I felt something different was happening because things came to my mind that were a bit unusual, things I would not have already had in my mind.
>
> Here is what I wrote down from that "conversation":
>
> *Bear (what Dana called me), about your heartache and your pain: I've seen where this all leads, and it really doesn't matter how much you hurt. I've seen how and where you will end up. It doesn't matter how hard things are for you now. It will be worth the pain. Bear, of all the crap I endured to try to beat that crazy cancer, it was worth that pain. It's actually not even on a comparable scale. It doesn't matter how much worse things get for you on earth; it doesn't matter how much deeper the heartache gets; it doesn't matter if you get a bad disease yourself. In fact, just to stress the point: I won't even waste time trying to comfort you. All I can say is, it really doesn't matter! I can't wait until you see how worth it it all is!! I SEE it. I SEE the forever! It's real! Bear, it's worth the pain. It was worth all my pain/ suffering. It doesn't matter how hard it gets. It WILL be worth it.*
>
> That was not what I was expecting.
>
> A couple days later I hiked a one-hour, rather boring switch-back trail that ended in a breathtaking overlook. I stayed there for over an hour processing the conversation and the concept that all our suffering "will be worth it!" Hiking back down, I passed two other hikers on their way up. As hikers do, they asked for recon (information or strategy). First, in a nod to the boring trail, they asked, "How far to the overlook?"
>
> "You're about halfway," I answered.
>
> They took a couple steps and then asked, "Is it worth it?" I loved telling them how "worth it" that it would be.
>
> After returning to my car, I realized I had just lived my "conversation" experience. I felt I had been given a giant confirmation to trust it, and realized the conversation was simply a merciful reminder of what God has been saying to us all through Scripture.

Say something like this:

> **Barry's story is not from Scripture, but, as he says, it reminds us of and is consistent with Scripture.**

DIGGING IN

Let's look at a couple of those reminders from Scripture.

Invite students to read **2 Corinthians 4:13-18** and **Romans 8:18-21** from their Scripture sheets and look for the following:

1. **Underline any references to the era we now live in along with references to the troubles and suffering of this era.**

2. **Circle all references to anything we get to look forward to along with references to hope, comfort or restoration.**

TAKING IT INWARD

Invite students to process the following questions together regarding the passages they just explored:

1. **How is our current era described?**

2. **What differences do you see between our current era and what we get to look forward to?**

Refer back to some of their answers in the opening section—things they had to wait for, but the waiting was worth it. Explain that anything bad we experience in our lives (even waiting!), in the end, looks like a small blip once we experience the very thing we've awaited.

With regard to life, we don't have the luxury of having yet experienced our eternal hope. We have to rely on and trust what Scripture says, and wait. But, as we learned from Session 4, God is enduring the long wait with us, providing refreshment and encouragement to help us persevere. Process the following questions together encouraging your students to make notes on their journal page for future reference:

1. **What do you need to do so that the promise of eternal hope actually impacts things like:**
    a. **Your behavior?**
    b. **Your outlook on life?**
    c. **How you process bad news?**

2. **Referring back to the hiking story:**
    a. **What parallels can you draw between that story and our faith journey?**
    b. **In our faith, what represents the hiker coming down from the summit? How can we get good recon on what's "up there?"**
    c. **How can we gather as much information as possible from our recon sources?**

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

Explain that we are going to look closer at the last question: How can we gather as much information as possible from our recon sources? Invite students to look up the following passages on their Scripture sheets and process these questions for each passage:

1. **How is eternal hope or glory described?**

2. **How does eternal hope or glory come about? How is it realized?**

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

Read the following verse with your students:

I Peter 1:13 (The Message)
So roll up your sleeves, put your mind in gear, be totally ready to receive the gift that's coming when Jesus arrives.

Ask students to journal their answers to the following questions on their journal page and then discuss the questions as a group:

1. **What is God teaching you about eternal hope and glory?**

2. **What do you need to do to fully put your mind and heart into believing God's eternal hope and glory is worth the suffering we have to endure now?**

Say something like this:

None of this makes waiting any more enjoyable than it was before. But just as some of the best gifts or events we've experienced made waiting worth it, God promises that his hope and his glory will outshine any hurt or pain we may endure.

Close your time together in prayer thanking God for his promise of giving us hope and his promise of revealing his glory to us.