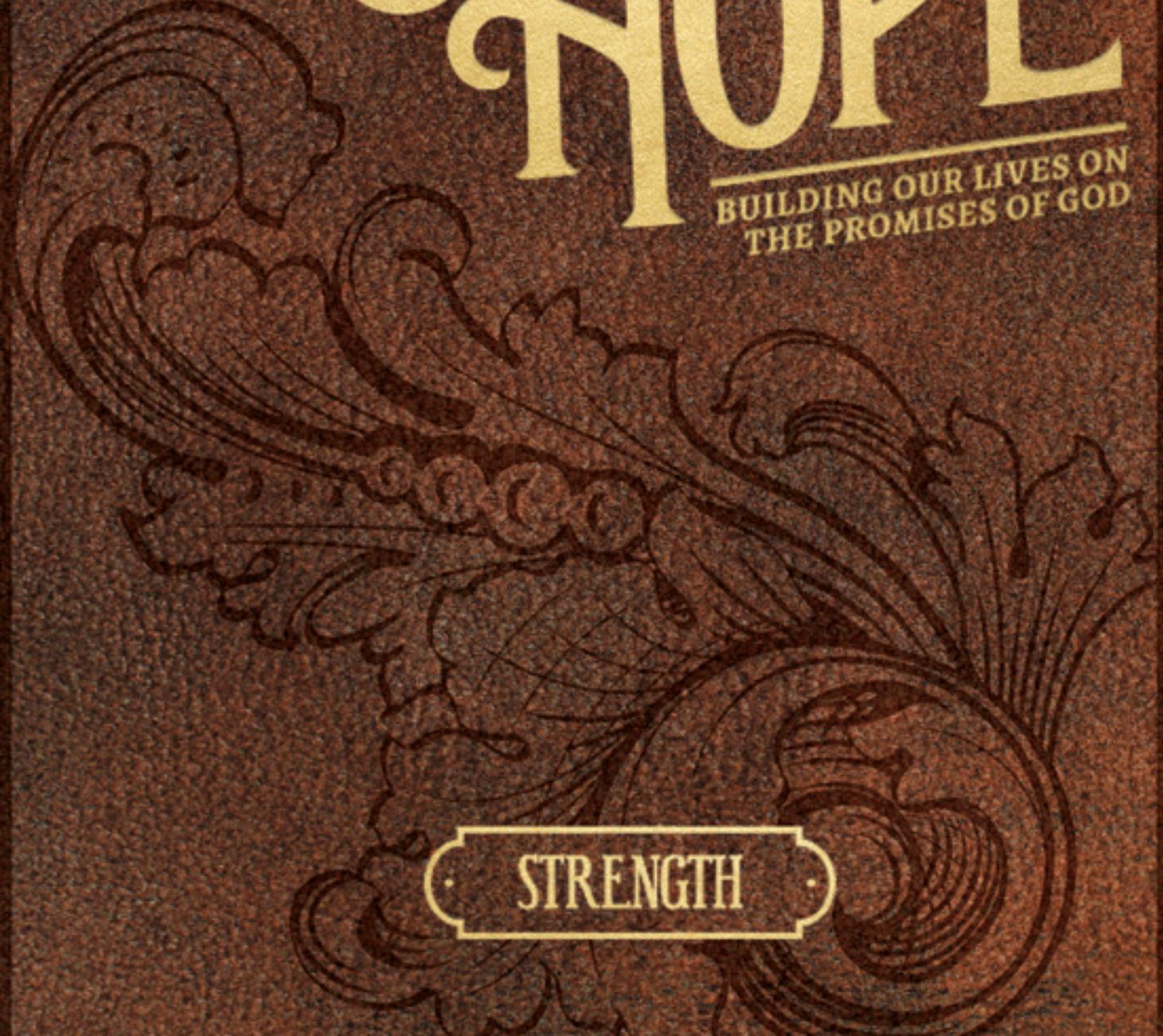


UNSHAKABLE HOPE

BUILDING OUR LIVES ON
THE PROMISES OF GOD



STRENGTH

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Unshakable Hope: Building Our Lives on the Promises of God
Study Guide – Strength

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WHY INTEGRATED BIBLE ENGAGEMENT?

Imagine this. The speaker in the main worship service preaches on one topic. An adult Bible class covers another one. The women's Bible study has yet another topic. A men's group will have still another one. The high school student hears a different topic. The elementary school student hears another one. If there is a small group experience, you guessed it: one more topic. All of this leads to Scripture that touches the surface of our lives, but never gets deep into our hearts.

INFORMATION VS. TRANSFORMATION

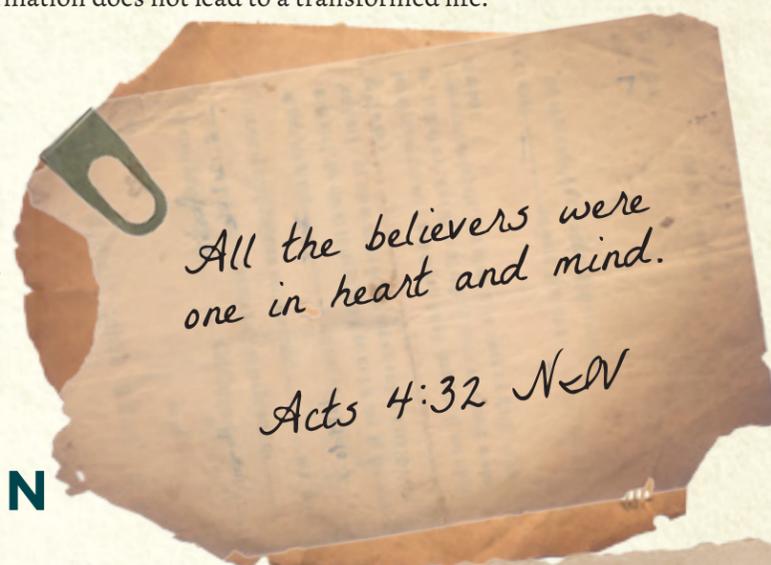
Because this is the pattern in most churches, many people have equated information with transformation. We make statements like, "That was a great message today. I learned something new." Or, "I've never really thought of it that way." Different ministries are even pitted against each other with statements like, "Student ministry gives the relevant messages." "My small group is the only place that goes deep." "My men's group is serious about the Bible." Here's the fact: More information does not lead to a transformed life.

ONE IDEA

What if the entire church focused on one passage or one idea for a week? What if your personal study covered the same topic as the Sunday sermon? What if your small group discussed the same thing as your student? What if those living in your home were equipped to put God's Word into practice together? What if we integrated people of all ages and stages, and all pointed in the same direction? It could be powerful, just like it was in Acts 4:32 where it says, "All the believers were one in heart and mind." (NIV)

VALUE OF REPETITION

"Won't I get bored if it's the same topic repeated in every environment in the church?" Initially, integrated Bible engagement feels different. We have been trained to expect new information in every church setting. Integrated Bible engagement is retraining. Research shows the value of repetition for true learning. Athletes practice the same play over and over until it becomes second nature. Training requires repetition. 1 Corinthians 9:25 says, "Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever." (NIV) Let's use integrated Bible engagement to really see God change our hearts and lives. 1 Timothy 4:8 says, "For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things." (NIV)



WHAT ARE THE FOUR ENVIRONMENTS?

Every week as we dig into the Bible during *Unshakable Hope*, the study guide will contain four sections: *Personal Life*, *Home Life*, *Community Life*, and *Weekend Experience*. Each of these four environments play an important part in helping you grow deeper in your relationship with Jesus Christ.

PERSONAL LIFE

All relationships need one-on-one time for greater health. Time with God on a regular basis in your personal life accomplishes a critical aspect in growing your relationship with God. Studying Scripture individually with only the Holy Spirit as your teacher can help you learn to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. This is crucial to move your relationship with God from your head to your heart. Psalm 1:2 says this about the blessed man: "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night." (ESV)

HOME LIFE

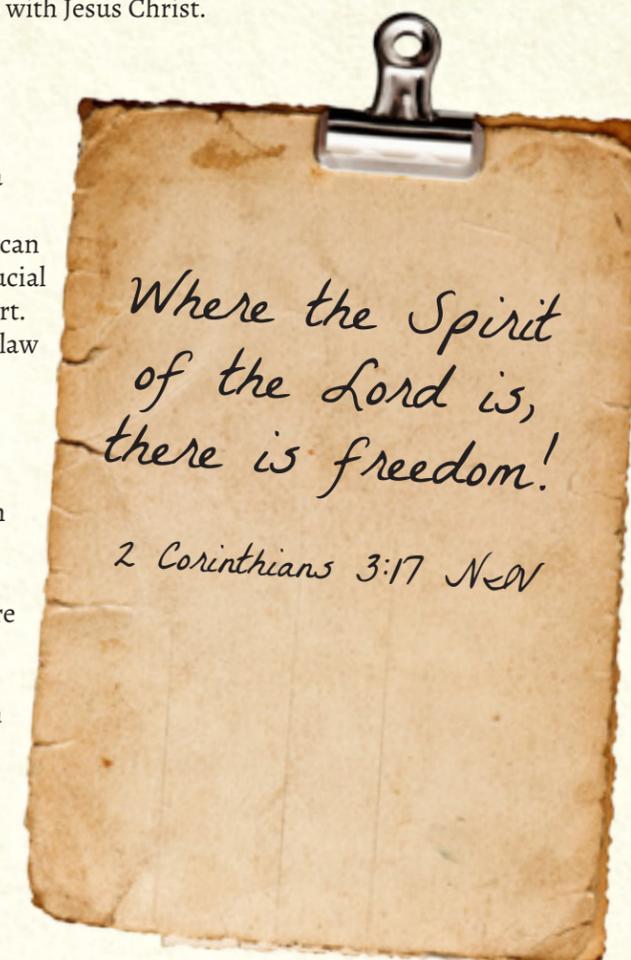
Whether there is one person in your home or many, this section of the study guide is designed to put what you are learning into practice. Each week there are opportunities for conversations, activities, and the application of God's Word to daily life. If there are multiple people in your home, the opportunity to practice your faith together can go a long way in bringing about true transformation. Deuteronomy 6:7 says, "...you shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." (ESV)

COMMUNITY LIFE

Andy Stanley observed, "Life change happens in circles, not rows." In community, group interaction and hearing the perspectives of others help fill in and round out our understanding of Scripture. That's why being in a small group during our integrated Bible engagement experience is so important. We learn from each other and we grow together when we pursue community built with Jesus as the uniting person. Acts 2:42 reminds us, "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." (ESV)

WEEKEND EXPERIENCE

By the time you come to the weekend service, you are truly ready to worship. You are not coming drained from a difficult week, but rather ready to celebrate what God has done in your personal life, your home life, and your community life. The *Weekend Experience* becomes the dessert to a hearty meal you have eaten all week. 2 Corinthians 3:17 says, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom!" (NIV)



HOW DO I GET THE MOST FROM THE STUDY GUIDE?

Keep this clearly in mind. The study guide is not the Bible. It is a resource, or tool. Use the resource with your Bible wide open in order to let God transform your heart and the hearts of those in your home and community. To get the most from the study guide, use it as a tool. But, also remember these three important things:

DAILY RHYTHMS

There is not one “right way” to use the study guide, but most people benefit from using it every day to do a little bit of the study. Waiting until Saturday night or right before your group time to try and finish everything will yield some impact, but daily time with God is better. Choose one or two questions or items each day, and build a rhythm or plan. Maybe it’s the first ten minutes of your day. Maybe it’s right after dinner or right before bed. Carve out a time. Put it on your calendar. Create a daily rhythm for your personal time with God.

REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

If there are others in your home, the best thing you can do with the *Home Life* section is to set realistic expectations. Not everyone will come with the same level of enthusiasm. There are attitudes, challenges, different maturity levels, and a variety of other factors to distract you. Don’t become discouraged by setting high expectations. The consistency of a regular practice in your home will yield results. Keep at it. Stay diligent. And leave the results to God.

ON THIS TEAM, EVERYONE PLAYS

The healthiest small groups are the ones with shared leadership. When one person always takes the lead, others can’t help but become passive. This study guide has been designed to let anyone be the “leader” for the gathering. Hand the responsibility to a different person each week. Give them a week to prepare, and let everyone take part. Use this phrase to get the most out of your time together each week: On this team, everyone plays.

FINDING UNSHAKABLE HOPE

When life shifts toward struggles or pain or disappointment, where do you turn? When uncertainty invades or sorrow seeps in, where do you look for answers? Here’s a suggestion: turn to one of over 7,000 biblical reminders of God’s care, concern, and guardianship. God, both promise-maker and promise-keeper, “has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4 NIV). Through this study, we’ll become well acquainted with many of these promises and learn to rely on them in every turn of life.

Our hope for this series is that each of us will be able to declare:

I AM BUILDING MY LIFE ON THE PROMISES OF GOD.

BECAUSE HIS WORD IS
UNBREAKABLE,
MY HOPE IS
UNSHAKABLE.

I DO NOT STAND ON THE PROBLEMS OF LIFE OR THE PAIN IN LIFE.
I AM STANDING ON THE
GREAT AND PRECIOUS
PROMISES OF GOD.

God's Promise, My Promise

GOD'S PROMISE

"[God] has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4 NIV)

"They will all know me." (Hebrews 8:11 NIV)

"Let us make mankind in our image."
(Genesis 1:26 NIV)

"The God who brings peace will soon defeat Satan and give you power over him." (Romans 16:20 NCV)

"When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown." (Isaiah 43:2 NLT)

"Faith is reckoned as righteousness."
(Romans 4:5 NRSV)

"I'll see to it that everything works out for the best."
(Isaiah 54:17 MSG)

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go." (Psalm 32:8 NIV)

"[You] are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ."
(Romans 8:17 NIV)

"The Lord is with you." (Judges 6:12 NIV)

"The Lord will redeem those who serve him."
(Psalm 34:22 NLT)

"The battle is the Lord's." (1 Samuel 17:47 NIV)

"When a believing person prays, great things happen." (James 5:16 NCV)

"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:5 NKJV)

MY PROMISE

I will build my life on God's promises.

I will make the knowledge of God my highest pursuit.

I will embrace my role as God's image-bearer.

I will acknowledge Satan but worship God.

I will respond to increasing evil with increasing faith.

I will rest in the assurance of salvation.

I will trust God in difficult seasons.

I will read and heed God's Word.

I will live out of my inheritance, not my circumstance.

I will lay claim to the nearness of God.

I will turn to Christ, my Kinsman-Redeemer.

I will battle in the name of the Lord Almighty.

I will make prayer my priority and passion.

I will pursue humility.

God's Promise, My Promise

"In all things God works for the good of those who love him." (Romans 8:28 NIV)

"The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house." (Haggai 2:9 NIV)

"It is God who works in you." (Philippians 2:13 NIV)

"Our high priest is able to understand our weaknesses." (Hebrews 4:15 NCV)

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well."
(Matthew 6:33 NIV)

"[Jesus] is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us." (Romans 8:34 NIV)

"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1 NIV)

"Death has been swallowed up in victory."
(1 Corinthians 15:54 NIV)

"Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning." (Psalm 30:5 NLT)

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you." (Acts 1:8 NIV)

"I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it." (Matthew 16:18 NLT)

"God will meet all your needs." (Philippians 4:19 NIV)

"For [God] has set a day when he will judge the world." (Acts 17:31 NIV)

"I am making everything new!" (Revelation 21:5 NIV)

"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." (Hebrews 6:19 NIV)

I will do what is right and trust God for the outcome.

I will make God's work my work.

I will welcome and cooperate with the inner work of God.

I will draw near to God with confidence that he hears and understands me.

I will seek first God's kingdom.

I will take heart because Jesus is speaking up for me.

I will find forgiveness in the finished work of Christ.

I will entrust my death to the Lord of life.

I will seek God even when I am sad.

I will seek to sense, see, and hear the Holy Spirit.

I will align my life with God's forever family.

I will trust God to meet my needs.

I will respect God's justice and delight in God's grace.

I will fix my eyes on things above.

I will anchor my soul to the hope of Christ.

GOD HAS GIVEN US HIS VERY

★ GREAT ★
& PRECIOUS
PROMISES,

SO THAT THROUGH THEM
YOU MAY PARTICIPATE
IN THE DIVINE NATURE.

★ 2 PETER 1:4 NIV ★

01
WEEK 1

GOD'S GREAT AND
PRECIOUS PROMISES

GOD'S
PROMISE

“[God] has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature.” (2 Peter 1:4 NIV)

MY
PROMISE

I will build my life on God's promises.

Promises are the stitching in the spine of the Bible. Since the beginning of time, God's relationship to man has been shaped by specific requirements and promises, unchangeable decrees that define the outflow of history. During the course of these lessons, you will discover the hope, the unshakable hope, that comes from building your life on the promises of God. Each lesson will explore a different promise and person of Scripture. And in each lesson we will embrace this declaration. Would you say it out loud?

We are building our lives on the promises of God. Because his Word is unbreakable, our hope is unshakable. We do not stand on the problems of life or the pain in life. We stand on the great and precious promises of God.

The promises of God will enrich your life and deepen your faith as you consider, pray, and live them.

01

PERSONAL

CONSIDER

Before you begin reading the passages below, prepare your heart in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth as you engage God this week.

Read Exodus 34:10-11. Why do you think it is important for God to make himself the focal point of the promise?

Read Joshua 21:43-45. How would these promises have built peace into the hearts of the Israelites?

Read Matthew 7:24-27. In what ways are you currently building your life on rock? What sand is sneaking into your foundation?

Read 2 Peter 1:3-4. How do you think God's promises can help you "participate in the divine nature"?

Read My Promise for Week 1. How can you take specific next steps to apply this promise in your life this week?

PRAY

Slowly read *God's Promise* three times. By the third reading, try to repeat this promise in prayer.

Personalize *God's Promise*. (Example: "Father, you have given me your very great and precious promises, so that through them I may participate in your divine nature.")

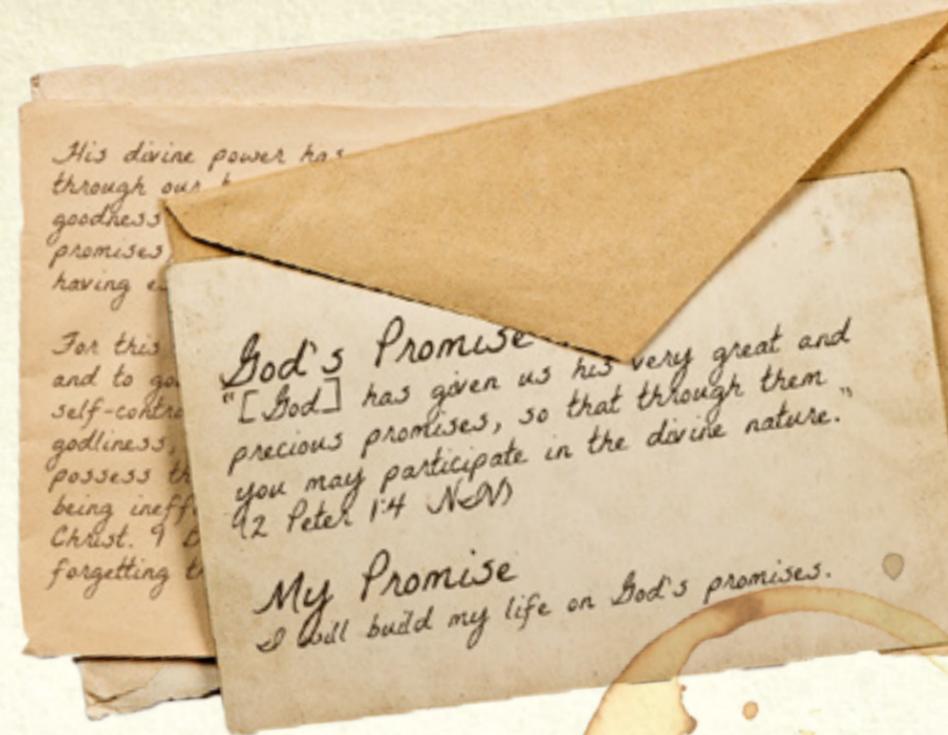
Prayerfully read *My Promise* as a declaration. Bring your answer from the fifth question in the *Consider* section to God in prayer.

LIVE THE HOPE

What fresh discoveries surfaced from your reading and study this week?

Ask God to reveal anything he wants you to apply based on the promises with which you engaged. (Example: "Father, is there any truth or action you would like me to apply from this week?") Then, simply listen in an extended time of silence to see if God places anything on your heart. Consider how those thoughts or nudges align with God's Word as you write them here.

What is this week's action point or takeaway? (Bring this to share with others in your *Community*.)



HOME

CONSIDER

Together, read aloud *God's Promise* and *My Promise* from Week 1.

Imagine a businessman promised to double our money if we invested in his company. How would we decide if we believed him?

Read Joshua 21:43-45. What do these verses tell us about the promises God made to Israel?

What evidences of God's faithfulness should we consider in deciding if we're going to build our lives on God's promises?

How has God shown himself to be a promise keeper in our lives?

PRAY

Thank God in prayer for being a generous promise maker and trustworthy promise keeper. Invite each person to express their desire to build their life on the promises of God. Example:

"Dear God, please help me to build my life on your great and precious promises. Amen."

LIVE THE HOPE

On a blank piece of paper write out the *Unshakable Hope Declaration* found on the back cover of your study guide. Read it aloud together, and sign your names at the bottom.

See if you can add any Bible verses to the document. If there are children in your home, let them draw or color on the document. Place this commitment in a prominent place, like your refrigerator, for the duration of this study.

Joshua 21:43-45 NIV

⁴³So the Lord gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors, and they took possession of it and settled there. ⁴⁴The Lord gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their ancestors. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the Lord gave all their enemies into their hands. ⁴⁵Not one of all the Lord's good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.

WE ARE BUILDING OUR LIVES ON THE PROMISES OF GOD. BECAUSE HIS WORD IS UNBREAKABLE, OUR HOPE IS UNSHAKABLE. WE DO NOT STAND ON THE PROBLEMS OF LIFE OR THE PAIN IN LIFE. WE STAND ON THE GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES OF GOD.

Cally
Ashley
Frederico
Anita
EMILY

COMMUNITY

CONSIDER

As you begin Session 1, pray together. Then, if this is a new group, briefly tell how you came to the group. Encourage one person each week to share a 3-4 minute version of their spiritual journey.

Read *God's Promise* and *My Promise* together aloud.

Share an insight from a specific Bible passage from this week's reading that challenged or encouraged you.

Share your action point or takeaway from *Live the Hope* in the *Personal* section.

Was there a moment from your *Home* experience you can share with the group?

God's Promise
"[God] has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature."
2 Peter 1:4 NIV

My Promise
I will build my life on God's promises.

As you watch the video from Session 1 of *Unshakable Hope*, use the section below to record key points.

These promises are the stitching in the spine of the _____.

God is a promise-_____.

God can be _____ to keep his promises.

What is _____ your world?

When the storm hits, put your trust in no one but _____.

What statement in the video teaching affected you? Why?

COMMUNITY

PRAY

Use the questions below to shape and grow your *Community* experience of prayer.

- How can you praise God for the way his promises influenced your life this week?
- In what specific ways will you ask God to help you build your life on his promises next week?
- How can you pray God's promises for people who are not yet part of the group?

NAME	PRAISES AND REQUESTS

LIVE THE HOPE

Allow ten minutes to talk about taking next steps to apply this week's promises to everyday life. What changes will you make this week to live the hope of God's promises?

How can you live the hope of promises this week in reaching out to others who may feel distant from God?

Video Answer Key – Bible/maker/trusted/shaking/God

WEEKEND EXPERIENCE

When you arrive in the worship service, take a few minutes to quiet your mind and heart. Ask God to help you connect your heart with his in worship. Quietly pray this week's promises. Then, use the space below to record your takeaways or take notes during the *Weekend Experience* as you *Consider the Promise, Pray the Promise, and Live the Hope.*

God's Great and Precious Promises

DATE: _____

I WILL MAKE
THE KNOWLEDGE OF

GOOD
MY HIGHEST
PURSUIT.

NO LONGER WILL THEY TEACH THEIR NEIGHBOR, OR SAY TO
ONE ANOTHER, 'KNOW THE LORD,' BECAUSE THEY WILL ALL
KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST OF THEM TO THE GREATEST.

HEBREWS 8:11 NIV

YOU WILL KNOW GOD: GOD'S PROMISE TO ALL

GOD'S PROMISE

"They will all know me."
(Hebrews 8:11 NIV)

MY PROMISE

I will make the knowledge of
God my highest pursuit.

Imagine while on a walk you saw a brand new computer on the side of the road. Would you ever in a million years think that computer assembled itself by accident? You would not think to yourself, "Isn't it amazing how all of these parts came together through a big bang and random chance to form such a complex and functional piece of equipment? Perhaps billions of years of explosions and chance occurrences finally gave us this advanced design!" You would know without a doubt there was a designer for that intricacy and a builder for that complexity. In the same way, God has made himself known to us through the intricacy of the world's design. Our society is prone to applaud the atheist. The person who proudly proclaims, "There is no God!" is seen as being enlightened. The Bible has another description for this person: a fool. Psalm 14:1 says, "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" (NIV) God wants all to know him, and he has given us evidence all around us.



We are building our lives
on the promises of God.

Because his Word is
unbreakable, our hope is
unshakable. We do not
stand on the problems of
life or the pain in life. We
stand on the great and
precious promises of God.

