

## HOPE IS RISING | 11-29-15

### REFLECT & DISCUSS

Advent is a season designed to prepare us for the coming of our Savior at Christmas. Christmastime comes and goes each year filled with shopping, giving presents, and enjoying the presence of loved ones. Do you feel stress or joy about buying presents and the busyness of this time of year? Why? How does consumerism affect the joy of this season? What do you hope to experience this Christmas? How can we hold on to hope as we prepare for Christmas?

### READ: *Genesis 3 :1-15*

A serpent is a symbol for the curse that came when Adam and Eve sinned. Verse 15 foreshadows how Jesus would crush the curse of sin to win our freedom. How does it make you feel to know that immediately after humanity turned against Him, God was already working on a plan to rescue us? How does this give you hope in the struggles you face?

### READ: *Psalms 119:116-117*

When do we need God to sustain us the most? What things in your life threaten to crush your hope? How does God sustain us in hard times? Do you sense that the Psalmist is struggling as he writes this? Is it a despairing struggle or a hopeful struggle? What's the difference?

### READ: *Hebrews 11:1*

Why is faith essential to hope? What is something in your life that you have assurance of but cannot see? How can we be confident in something we cannot see? We excitedly anticipate the gifts we will receive on Christmas. What does it look like to apply this same anticipation to the things you hope God will do for you and others in your life?

### CHALLENGE

Write down three things you hope will happen this Christmas season. Intentionally guard against anything that threatens to crush your hope. Trust God and pray for this hope to become reality.

### PRAYER

Holy Spirit, thank you for empowering me with faith that is confident in what I hope for and certain of what I do not see. I will not lose heart because I trust in you. Thank you for your faithfulness in my life. I joyfully anticipate what you will do in me as I prepare for your arrival!