

TO HELP YOU NAIL DOWN TRUTHS IN THE BIBLE

One of our goals at Bethlehem is for you to spend time with God daily - this **HAMMERTIME** Card can help. It is designed to help you spend 15 minutes (or more) with God, 4 days a week. Here is an example of how to use this card. Study notebooks are available in the Bethlehem lobby.

Read the Bible verses (4 min)

- Read through one time, then re-read and underline any key points.

Read the card/think about it/write in your notebook (6 min)

- Write down some of the main ideas from the passage.
- Write down a “key for me” that is your main point that day.

Pray (5 min)

- Write down some of the things you are praying about that day.

Current Series: “HOPE”

Current Message: “Men of the New Testament”

Designed to supplement Pastor Dickie Spargo’s current Sunday series.

- ◆ **Listen to this message** (or other messages in the series) again online at <http://www.bethlehembc.com/mediacenter.htm>.
- ◆ **Study Notebooks & Audio Message CD’s** available at ‘Above the Grind’ Bookstore for purchase.
- ◆ **HAMMERTIME Cards** - available Sundays at Bethlehem Church or online at www.bethlehemtoolbox.com.
- ◆ Contact Matt Vanderbilt, Connections Pastor, at mvanderbilt@bethlehembc.com or 704-823-5050 x104 for additional information.

Day 1: Nicodemus

Read: John 3:1-21

Nicodemus was a man who needed hope. He was very involved in ‘religion’ - not just as a Pharisee, but as a member of their ruling council. He knew about tradition, rituals and rules. Evidently, ‘religion’ failed him, leaving him hollow and without hope, since he was willing to assume incredible risks just to come and talk with Jesus in order to hear about the hope Jesus offered.

The first thing to be learned from Nicodemus is that he took a step, deciding to approach God. Jesus’ offer was always there, but only if Nicodemus approached him to learn about it.

Second, Nicodemus had to listen to God. He was a very educated man, but this was not time for Nicodemus to talk - it was time for him to listen to the Son of God. When you are seeking hope, sometimes the busyness and pressure of life makes it hard to slow down, in order to approach God and then with patience and openness to listen to Him.

Last, Nicodemus had to accept God’s blessing of hope. Hearing what Jesus had to say was important, but a gift left unopened is of no value. He had to accept the gift and let God work in his life. **To grasp the hope that God has for you on a daily basis, learn to approach Him, listen to Him and then accept what He wants to give you.** Not religion, but a personal relationship of hope.

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Day 2: Jairus **Read: Mark 5:21-43**

Have you ever been desperate to find hope? Jairus was desperate - his daughter was dying. In his desperation, Jairus exhibited three virtues that guide you in gaining hope. First, Jairus was humble - both to approach Jesus (synagogue rulers would never do that) and then to fall at Jesus' feet. Jairus understood who was honorable, and he knew it was not himself.

Second, Jairus had patience. With the crowds surrounding Jesus, it must have been a very slow journey to Jairus' house. Then along the way, Jesus stopped to talk with a lady who was bleeding. Jairus had to be patient to receive what Jesus had in store for him.

Third, Jairus had perseverance. He could have given up during the delays, when they told him that his daughter had died - or even when the people at his house laughed at Jesus. But Jairus persevered and kept his mind focused on the hope that he knew Jesus could bring. **Jairus displayed humility, patience and perseverance.** God rewarded him with hope and the healing of his daughter, which was better than anything he had ever experienced before.

Day 3: Stephen **Read: Acts 6:1-15; 7:51-60**

Stephen's story is about the hope that awaits you in heaven. Stephen was killed, which may look to the world like he was hopeless. But Stephen lived and died with eternity in mind. Stephen exhibited four characteristics showing that he grasped God's eternal hope:

- **Character:** Acts 6 shows Stephen's reputation as a man of character.
- **Vision:** Throughout Stephen's testimony, he shares a clear view of heaven.
- **Boldness:** Stephen stood up for Christ - even in the midst of intense persecution.
- **Forgiveness:** When Stephen died, he still showed a love from God alone.

In your daily challenges, as you seek hope in a hopeless world, let Christ build your character and focus your vision on eternity. Be bold to represent Him well in any situation and allow Jesus to help you forgive people who have hurt you.

Day 4: Silas **Read: Acts 16:16-34**

Silas traveled with Paul on a missionary journey. Wherever they went they faced the possibility of persecution, beatings and death. In the town of Philippi, these concerns became reality. Paul & Silas were arrested for spreading Christ's love (helping the helpless) and were brought to trial. After an unfair trial and vicious beatings, they were thrown in prison. How then could they hope?

Amazingly, Paul and Silas clung to the hope that came from their Savior. First, **they spent time in prayer.** There were probably prayers of crying out in pain, but it appears there were also prayers of faith and commitment to God. Second, **they called out to God in worship.** What a testimony to the other prisoners to see men in pain, unjustly accused, possibly waiting to die - yet they chose to honor and worship God with their voices.

Paul & Silas also acted in mercy. When the chance to escape came, they chose to care for the jailer, showing him the love of Christ. Last, **they shared the Gospel,** which gave hope to the jailer and his family. By selflessly sharing the story of salvation, lives were changed for eternity!

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