



“Hope for the Longhaul” Small Group Discussion Guide

Leader’s Introduction:

Welcome everyone! This week, we're diving into the book of Daniel, focusing on the theme of hope amidst the challenges posed by earthly kings and kingdoms. Let's explore how Daniel's experiences can inspire us to maintain hope in our own lives and community.

Scripture Reading:

- Daniel 1:1 (ESV)

Key Themes:

- The historical context of Daniel
- The struggle between kingdoms
- The importance of maintaining faith and values
- Living righteously in a contrasting culture

Discussion Questions

1. Context of Daniel:

- What do you know about the historical context of Daniel? How does it shape our understanding of the hardships faced by his people?
- In what ways do you draw parallels between the struggles Daniel faced and challenges in our modern-day context?

2. Examples of Good and Evil Leadership:

- Reflect on the contrast between King Josiah and King Jehoiakim. What character traits define a 'good' leader according to biblical standards?
- How do the actions of kings like Nebuchadnezzar illustrate the conflict between God's ways and worldly kingdoms?

3. Daniel's Faith:

- How did Daniel maintain his faith in God while serving in a pagan culture? What challenges did he face?
- Discuss the significance of living “IN” Babylon without trying to forcefully change it. How can we apply this mindset in our lives today?



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4. Maintaining Hope:

- The message suggests that hope comes from our confidence in God's sovereignty. How can we cultivate this confidence in our own lives amidst pressure from society?
- Daniel demonstrates that he lived without compromise. In what areas of your life do you find it challenging to maintain your values?

5. The Big Question:

- The guide asks whether Daniel sought to change Babylon's culture or lived faithfully within it. What are your thoughts on this? How does this principle apply to engaging with the world today?

6. Personal Application:

- Reflect on Jeremiah 29:11. What does this verse mean to you personally? How can it inspire hope in your life or in challenging circumstances?
- How willing are you to prioritize God above all else in your day-to-day choices? What might that look like for you?

Closing Reflection:

- Spend a few moments in silence, allowing everyone to reflect on how they can live with hope and righteousness in their own lives.
- Encourage participants to pray for one another's challenges and for the strength to uphold their values in their own "Babylon."

Challenge for the Week:

- Choose one area in your life where you can practice living out your faith confidently and without compromise. Share your experience in the next meeting.

Prayer:

End the session with a group prayer, seeking God's guidance, strength, and hope in navigating the complexities of life in a contrasting culture.