

LESSON 12

ANCHOR 12

Live out and share the hope that I now have.

1 Peter 3:15 – “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”

PRAY

Ask God to speak to you as you read His Word. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a revelation of God’s truth and love and give you understanding of what you are about to read. Pray that you will have an Encounter with God as you earnestly seek Him. Don’t rush through reading everything and don’t rush through praying. Take some time to stop and listen so you may hear anything God wants to say to you.

After you read the scriptures, ask:

- “God, what are You saying in these scriptures?”
- “God, what are You saying to me in these scriptures?”
- “God, how do You want me to apply this to my life?”

Write in your journal as you spend this time with God.

When you become a follower of Jesus, you are not left alone to live the Christian life all by yourself. The ministry of Encounter was formed to help you know where hope can be found in the face of life’s adversities. Our signature verse is from **Hebrews 6:19** – “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.” Our Four Pillars at Encounter are Discipleship, Recovery, Evangelism and Community. During this Encounter Study we trust that you have learned about the importance of these Pillars and how they work together in making your life better, so you can get well and recover from the adversities of life.

Anchor 12’s key verse is found in **1 Peter 3:15**. It talks about the hope that has changed us so we can share it with others, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have”. That is what Anchor 12 is all about – telling others about the goodness of God and how He has changed your life.

At Encounter, we know that, in order to truly recover from any adversity or hurt in your life, you must come to know God and His Word. As you become a Christ follower, and learn to apply the truth of God’s Word to your life, you learn to live a life of gratitude towards God for who His is and all He has done for you. Gratitude towards God, and surrender to His ways, allows God to transform your mind and your heart, so your thoughts and your actions start to line up with the new person and the new nature that God has given you as a Christ follower.

Knowing God and all He has done for you, and following Jesus out of gratitude, not only changes your eternal destiny, but it also changes you for the rest of your life here on earth. God can help you recover from any adversity in life, if you allow Him to lead and guide your life. As you grow in God’s Word, you grow in wisdom, truth and character. As you grow in wisdom, truth and character,

you begin to discover that you have choices in life and that God can help you cope and respond in better and healthier ways to life's adversities. As you begin to recover from the things that have hurt you or caused your life to be broken, you find that other people are also finding hope in the saving grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. You discover that being accountable to God and to others and sharing what you are going through, or have been through, in life is a big part of getting better.

Sharing your struggles, your celebrations and your hope in a safe community with others can bring great healing in your life. And, once you have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, your gratitude compels you to want to tell the world about Him and what He has done for you. You want others to encounter God and have the kind of life-changing experience that you have had with Him. Evangelism involves telling others God's story through sharing your own personal story of how He has transformed your life and given you hope. When you spread the Gospel, the easiest way for others to see and know that it is real and true is to see how it has changed you.

When you are truly transformed by God and your life reflects those heart, mind and soul changes, people will take notice and start asking questions. Christ is the anchor for your soul. He is your hope. When you share that with others, you bring God glory. You share your hope with them, so they too can find hope. Let's look at how you can live out and share the hope that you now have.

The most effective and important way to share the hope you now have is by looking at the life of Jesus and following His example. Jesus had a recurring theme in the bible and throughout His ministry on earth. It could be paraphrased as, "Come and see, follow Me, then go and tell". As Jesus ministered to others, He invited them to hear the grace and truth of the gospel and to follow Him. He then told them to go tell others what they had learned and experienced. That same invitation is yours today. Through applying the 12 Anchors to your life, you are living out the principles of "Come and see, follow Me and go and tell" that Jesus taught.

Jesus invites us all to come and see what life with Him is all about. Come and see what grace is. Come and see what forgiveness is. Come and see what eternal life is. Come and see what salvation is. Come and see what the abundant life Jesus died for is all about. Come and see what miracles are all about. Come and experience healing. Come and see what freedom looks like. Come and see what real joy and purpose in life is all about. Jesus' disciples were not the only ones to receive His invitation. You have the same invitation. Jesus invites you to come and see how great and awesome life with Him can be, and how your life will be changed forever if you follow Him and allow Him to lead your life.

Once you taste and see the greatness of the Lord, He extends another invitation. He invites you to follow Him. He invites you to die to your old self and your old ways and to follow Him and His ways. He knows it won't be easy for you or popular by the world's standards, so He sends you the power and the person of the Holy Spirit to help you follow Him in His strength and His power, not your own strength and power. He invites you to pick up your cross which is weighed down with the challenges and sufferings that accompany a life devoted to Jesus, and follow Him. He invites you to let go of the grip you have on this earthly life, so you can grab hold of Him and the eternal life He has for you in heaven – a life that starts here on earth, but is filled with the hope of heaven to come. He invites you to crucify your old self, your selfish motives and desires, your human instincts, your earthly goals and ambitions, your past, your shame, your regrets, your mistakes, your pain, your disappointments, your strongholds, your fears, your insecurities, and anything else that would keep you from thinking and acting the way Jesus would think and act.

Jesus invites you to be His friend. God's Word tells us that to be a friend to this world is to be an enemy of God – Read James 4:4 for reference. What does that mean? It simply means that you can choose God or you can choose the world, but your choice matters here and now and for eternity. When Jesus invites you to follow Him, He invites you with an all-inclusive invitation. His arms are open wide. He wants all of you all of the time, not just some of you some of the time. Why does He want all of you? Besides the fact that He adores you and wants to be in close relationship with you, the main reason Jesus wants all of you is because it is God's best plan for your life. It is for your ultimate good that God desires His best for you and your life. You have learned in previous Encounter lessons that God went ALL-IN for you when He sacrificed His one and only Son as payment for your sins and the sins of the world – to offer forgiveness for anything you have ever done. He wants you to go ALL-IN with and for Him. It is the only way you will ever truly experience freedom and victory in this life. His ways are indeed higher than your ways. Trust that His ways are better.

Finally, Jesus invites you to go and tell. Once you come and see and follow Him, Jesus gives more than just an invitation. He gives us a command to Go and tell others by spreading the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God doesn't give you an option. He doesn't say to do it only if you feel comfortable doing so. No, He commands that you go and tell the world.

Read **Matthew 28:18-20**. The Great Commission is not only for Jesus' original disciples. It is intended for all of us who make Jesus our Lord and Savior. We are commissioned and commanded to spread the Good News.

By telling others about the saving grace and work of Jesus in your life, you spread the good news and give away to others what was given to you. You have found the cure, the antidote to living a life of sin that was once destined for hell. You know that only Jesus offers the salvation that forgives you and the world of sin. You can tell others about Jesus, about what He has done for you, about the hope you have in Him and the hope of heaven for eternity. You can invite them to come and see, follow Jesus also, and then go and tell. The goal is to take as many people to heaven with you as possible. God has allowed you to be a part of spreading the Gospel so others can know Him and be in heaven with Him for eternity.

What an awesome thing to be able to follow Jesus and follow God's commands. Have you ever thought about what giving yourself away for the cause of Christ would look like? It is giving freely of your time to others, sharing your healing with others by telling them your story, sharing the wisdom God has taught you with others, sharing the knowledge you have gained, giving generously of your money to God and being generous to others, holding loosely to the things you treasure so they don't have a hold on you, sharing the ministry God has entrusted to you with others so He is glorified and sharing your gifts and talents to bless others and advance God's kingdom. Ultimately it is about shar-ing the greatest news in the world – Jesus saves and He changes us and makes us new!

Read **Philippians 2:1-11**. When you live out the Great Commission, you serve others freely and do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourself. You help others less fortunate than you are. You walk alongside someone who is struggling with similar pain or hurts you have struggled with, or still struggle with. You give freely to others with an attitude of gratitude, because Jesus has given His grace so freely to you. You are thankful and filled with hope. You open up your heart, your wallet and your life to support God and His agenda, and lay your own selfish agenda at the foot of the cross and surrender it to God so His will can be done in your life.

Read **Acts 20:24** – “But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned to me by the Lord Jesus – the work of telling others the good news about the wonderful grace of God”. The Apostle Paul was very clear on communicating what his assignment was and how important it was to him as a servant and follower of Christ. When you go and tell, you may be the only bible someone will ever hear. Make sure you are a good translation. Be grace-filled. Be humble. Be truthful. Be led by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was also pretty clear in the Bible when He said in **Matthew 10:32-33**, “Everyone who acknowledges Me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before My Father in heaven. But everyone who denies Me here on earth, I will also deny before My Father in heaven”. Jesus’ ministry and death were public. He died for all the world to see. He wants your faith to also be public. He wants you to go and tell others about the hope you now have.

Read **Ephesians 2:10** – We are God’s workmanship – His masterpiece. You were created to go public with the gifts that God gave you and the mission God planned for you thousands of years ago. Whether you realize it or not, you are a walking translation for the hope that you have. You are giving answers to a world that has questions. The manner in which you live communicates the hope for which you live. People around you are watching and they are asking. Are you emulating a life that has hope, a life that loves and lives like Jesus, a life that is led by the Holy Spirit?

People don’t care so much about what you know. They want to see if you are willing to live out your beliefs and convictions. They want to see if you are willing to live out what you know when the pressure is on, when the heat is turned up, when the storm is raging and the battle and struggle is real for you. People want to see how you handle adversities, setbacks and disappointments. They want to see what your answers are for the hope you now have. What kind of answers are you giving? Are you communicating well, and accurately, the hope that now lives within you?

At Encounter, the goal is that you would get better, despite what happens in the world around you and despite what happens in your life. The goal is to help you be an overcomer. Overcomers invite others to come and see and share the hope they now have.

Encounter’s 12 Anchors of Hope will help you give an answer for the hope you now have. If you come and see what knowing and loving God is all about, it will give an answer. If you follow Jesus, it will give an answer. If you go and tell others about God and what He has done for you, it will give an answer.

Here are some practical ways you can live out and go and tell others of the hope you now have:

- Loving and serving God and others
- Spiritually leading your family
- Volunteering in your church and ministry and encouraging the body of Christ
- Giving generously of your time, talents and finances to God and to others
- Living your life for God’s glory and not for your own selfish desires
- Telling others how God has saved you and transformed your life

You can see throughout the Bible how these principles were taught. The Apostle Paul said, “For 89

me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” – Read **Philippians 1:21** for reference. He prayed that he would die daily to himself. He wanted to live out the life of Christ within him. He wanted to deny his selfish sinful nature, so he could live out the purposes of God in his life. He wanted others to encounter the Jesus He had encountered. He wanted others to be transformed as he had been transformed. He lived to go and tell.

John the Baptist said, “He must increase, but I must decrease” – Read **John 3:30** for reference. This is yet another example of someone who was transformed by the love and power of God wanting to live that out and let others see Christ in and through his life. When you have the best news in the world you want to share it – you want others to experience more of Him.

Even Jesus made Himself nothing to accomplish the purposes and plan of God. He came to serve and not to be served. He humbled Himself repeatedly. He came in the form of a baby in humble surroundings. He carried a cross and died on that cross so that He would take the sins of the world upon Himself and be the payment for those sins. He was obedient to God, all the way to death.

By applying the 12 Anchors of Hope to your life, your life will be different – you will not be the same, anymore. You are different than when you first started this study. You made the decision to get well and realized that you do a terrible job at playing God. You now have hope and a firm foundation by which to live your life. You made the decision to accept God’s love through His Son and are trusting in the finished work of Christ. You realized what your new and true identity is in Christ. You got honest about your past, so you can become God’s best version of you now and in the future. You decided to become a disciple by allowing God to make the transformation changes He wanted to make in your life. You closed all your accounts with others by forgiving them and experienced the peace of God. You allowed God’s Word to become the authority over your life. You decided to make prayer a priority and grow your relationship with your Father in Heaven. You are now armed for spiritual battles by getting dressed daily in the armor of God and learning how to take your thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ. You now trust in the power of the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you. And, as a result of living out all these Anchors of Hope, your mission in life is to share them anywhere, and with anyone, in word and deed!

Saint Francis of Assisi once said, “You should preach at all times, but sometimes use words.” That doesn’t mean that you should not speak. It only means that the way you live your life should speak even more loudly than your words, and that your words should represent a life well-lived. Be a good translation so people can appropriately interpret the hope you now have.

You can choose to be selfish or you can choose to be a servant. You either have a mindset of “What’s in it for me?” or one of “How can I share this Good News with others?”. Overcomers share their hope and healing with others. You now know where hope can be found. Share it with others so they, too, can have the hope that you now have. Invite them to, “Come and see, follow Jesus, then go and tell”.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU:

- 1. What holds me back from serving, giving, and sharing the hope that I now have? What part of my life am I holding onto with tight clenched fists?**
- 2. Read Acts 20:24 NLT once again. The Apostle Paul knew what his assignment was and how important it was to him. Ask God: What is my ministry assignment? Where do You want me to serve today, and in the future, in order to share my hope with others? How**

do You want me to make other disciples and how have You gifted me to go and tell?

3. What is different about me now, compared to when I first started this study? How do I handle adversity differently? What healing and changes have I experienced? What root issues did God expose and heal in my life?
4. Share a short testimony of my life:
 - Who I was, and what significant events shaped my life
 - Where I found hope
 - How I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ
 - The work God did in my life and the hope I now have

EPILOGUE

Thank you for being a part of Encounter's Study of the 12 Anchors of Hope. We are honored that you took the time and made the effort to do so. We hope and pray that God has transformed your life and that you have embraced all you have learned within this study, so you can continue to live life as an overcomer that glorifies God in everything you say and do.

The best way to wrap up this study is by utilizing God's Word. The Apostle Paul came to know and understand full well that the joy of the Lord is our strength. He knew that any joy in this life is found in Christ. In a letter to the Philippians, he wrote the following in Philippians 2:14-18. It conveys so perfectly that the unifying power and joy of the Lord helps Christ followers "shine like stars" in a world that can be otherwise dark and sinful. Paul knew that total commitment to the Lord meant service and sacrifice, serving our Lord with joy and gratitude and encouraging fellow believers in the faith.

"Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God, without fault in a warped and crooked generation. **Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the Word of life.** And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me."

God is faithful. We hope you have encountered Him in a powerful and life-changing way. Keep your eyes, mind and heart on Him and His ways. He is with you and He will keep you. Be well and live well as you go and tell. Shine among them like stars in the sky!