

Mental



✓ Prepare in Advance

Facilitator: In advance of the session:

- Provide a flipchart or white board and appropriate markers.
- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.

✓ Explore

As you begin, have someone read Jeremiah 33:14-16 out loud and show the *Bible Background Video*.

✓ In Need of Hope

- From what you know of the background of this passage, why were the people living in despair at that time?
- Does it seem odd that God would speak two very different kinds of messages through Jeremiah – first of condemnation and punishment, then of rescue and hope?
- In what ways does God also offer both of these types of messages to us today?

✓ Living With Hope

- Have someone read Jeremiah 32:13-15 and 42-44 out loud. Why did Jeremiah buy the piece of land, even when he knew by faith that God was about to bring destruction on the nation?
- It's one thing to have hope that something will happen... it's quite another thing to live and act in a way that demonstrates that hope! What did Jeremiah's purchase say about his hope?
- Using the board or chart, make a graph with three columns. Label the left-hand column "Promise." Label the middle column "Reality." Label the right-hand column "Life with Hope."
 - On the first row, discuss the time period in which this was written. What promise had God made? What was the current reality they faced? How did Jeremiah demonstrate his hope in spite of the circumstances?
 - On the second row, discuss the time period of Jesus' birth. What promise had God made? What current realities did the people face? Which people do we find in the stories about

Jesus' birth, who demonstrated their hope in spite of those circumstances?

- On the third row, discuss how this passage could offer hope for us today. What has God promised us? What realities do we face that make our hope seem impossible? What kinds of things can we do – big and small – to demonstrate our hope?

✓ Closing

God, you give us great hope! But our circumstances often make that hope hard to comprehend. Give us courage to live in a way that demonstrates our hope!

By Jon Parks

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