

THE WAY OF HOPE

WORKBOOK

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This workbook is to be used in conjunction with *The Way of Hope DVD* by Beth and Dave Weikel (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2016).

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INTRODUCTION

Life can be tough and even frightening. Perhaps you agree with those who sigh, “No place is safe.” After all, shootings and bombings take place unexpectedly in schools, workplaces, airports, malls, and parks. It seems the world is hopelessly trapped in a state of fear and uncertainty. Furthermore, we all experience loss of one sort or another. We may encounter loss of a job, finances, health and vitality, friends, or a loved one. As a result, we feel hopeless and helpless.

So what do you need to do in the face of apparent hopelessness? The answer lies in this significant study: *The Way of Hope*. With the help of this workbook, five video sessions, and two books—*Hope in the Midst of Loss* and *The Way of Hope*—you will learn that God has provided hope. His gift of hope is available, resilient, and triumphant. Grasp this hope firmly and share it freely!



SESSION 1

TESTIMONIALS ABOUT LOSSES

Contrary to the belief that the Christian life includes nothing but prosperity and happiness, the Bible teaches that it includes not only blessings but also burdens. Periods of loss and sorrow befell many Bible characters. For example, Job was a righteous man, but he experienced colossal losses: his livestock, his servants, his children, and his health. Moses also had his share of hardship. He went from a privileged position in the palace in Egypt to the lowly job of shepherd in Midian. Later, when he led the Hebrews out of Egypt, Pharaoh pursued Moses with the purpose of destroying him and the Hebrews. During the wilderness wanderings, Moses' life was in jeopardy at the hand of the very people he had delivered from Egypt. He "cried out to the LORD, saying, 'What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me'" (Ex. 17:4). David underwent intense persecution before he became king. And the apostle Paul experienced severe trials as he carried the gospel throughout the Roman Empire (see 2 Cor. 11:23–33).

The testimonies given in the video affirm the truth that personal loss and hardship are realities we must face and handle appropriately. *The Way of Hope DVD* brings us face-to-face with several believers who experienced serious losses.

EMBRACE THE TRUTH

1. To which video testimonial(s) do you most closely relate? Why?

2. On page 15 of *The Way of Hope*, authors Beth and Dave Weikel state: "Our God is no stranger to loss himself." Why do you agree or disagree with this statement?

3. The Weikels lost a son in Iraq. If you experienced a similar loss, would you be angry with God? Why or why not? Would such anger be justified? Why or why not?

4. Why is it important to face your loss rather than deny it?

5. How might it help you overcome the sadness of your loss by acknowledging your feelings?

6. Read Galatians 6:2. Specifically, what resources has God made available to help you get through your losses?

7. Is it therapeutic or harmful to cry during a time of loss? Why or why not?

8. Read Romans 8:28. Do the “all things” in this verse include personal losses? If so, how does this verse encourage you?

9. How can you draw hope from Job’s experiences with trials?

APPLY THE TRUTH

What personal experience with loss will you share with a hurting person this week in an effort to encourage that person?

LOOKING AHEAD

How does a believer escape the clutches of personal loss and renew his or her hope? Session 2 provides the answer.

3. The video emphasizes the emergence of support from friends as a blessing found in trials. How have friends helped you during a time of loss?

4. Read Mark 14:3. Beth Weikel cited the example of the woman mentioned in this verse as someone who supported Jesus as He approached His time of suffering on the cross. How did she support Him?

5. On page 70 of *Hope in the Midst of Loss*, Beth Weikel writes: “We all have our experiences with loss, some worse than others, but it’s not about us. It’s about the truth that hard times can introduce in tangible ways. . . . As we are afforded a widening sphere of influence to help others in disastrous and dangerous circumstances, we count on the fact that He goes with us and lives within.” Read 2 Corinthians 1:3–5. How do Beth Weikel’s words affirm the truth of this passage of Scripture?

6. How might a job loss lead to blessings?

7. Stacey and Richard, featured in the video, lost a newborn baby, but they received strong support from their church. What might your church do to help a couple cope with a similar loss?

8. Dave and Beth credit music with helping them cope with their loss. Has music helped you cope with loss? If so, how?

9. What new pursuits and/or interests might help a person deal with loss?

10. Near the end of session 2, Beth Weikel advises us to deal with loss by asking God to keep our hearts soft. What might God use to keep your heart soft in the midst of loss?

APPLY THE TRUTH

Choose to find blessing in the support of friends, in music, and/or in a hobby. Ask God to keep your heart soft.

LOOKING AHEAD

Session 3 offers tangible hope in the midst of loss. It shows how the soul can recover from the hurt inflicted by loss.



SESSION 3

A SOUL'S RECOVERY PLAN

You may know someone who underwent knee surgery. Although the surgery went well, a period of recovery was necessary. Rehab, although painful, is part of the healing process. The patient walked with crutches and then “graduated” to a cane. Finally, the patient was able to discard the cane and walk quite well.

When we experience loss, our souls are injured and need to recover. In this session, you will see what is involved in a soul’s recovery.

When we are hurting from a loss, it is relatively easy to run from God and to blame Him or someone else. Satan wants us to wallow in depression, but God wants us to turn to His Son for hope and recovery.

REVIEW THE TRUTH

1. Read Genesis 3:6–13. What losses did Adam and Eve incur by sinning against God? Where did they place the blame? Our losses may not come to us because we have sinned, but our response to them may be similar to Adam and Eve’s. We try to withdraw from God and blame Him or others for our loss.

2. In *The Way of Hope*, the Weikels observe: “God has a purpose for all we are walking through. It is a paradox, really. Bad things have happened to us, yet God uses these same situations to mold us, strengthen us, and prepare us for a calling that is unique” (p. 84). Why is it wise not to blame God for our losses?

3. Read Philippians 1:12–14. What good things did Paul say had come about because of his imprisonment?

4. How is God using a so-called bad situation in your life for a good purpose?

5. Read James 4:7–8. What will God do if we submit ourselves to Him?

6. Dave Weikel cites staying in the Word as a way for the soul to recover. He says we should draw strength from examples of Bible characters that recovered from losses. Which Bible characters come to mind?

7. In the video, the Weikels recommend praying honestly for the soul to recover from loss. Read Psalm 31:1–5. What designations for God did David use in his prayer for help?

8. How does it help you to view God as David viewed Him?

9. Read Matthew 26:36–42. How sorrowful was Jesus?

10. What evidence of submission did Jesus show?

11. Read Romans 8. Who assists our prayers when we pray honestly and pour out our hearts to God?

12. The Weikels suggest that proper exercise and sleep help the soul recover. On a scale of one to ten how well are you doing each of these things? How can you improve in each area?

13. Read 1 John 4:4. How does this verse help you stay strong in the face of loss?

14. Read Hebrews 12:2–3. Why is Jesus our perfect model of patiently enduring hardship?

APPLY THE TRUTH

Read Psalm 73:21–22. Acknowledge that you felt as the psalmist did. Read Psalm 73:23–28. Make these verses your prayer as your soul recovers from loss.

LOOKING AHEAD

Session 4 uses the analogy of a garden to illustrate the work healing must take in order to gain the beauty and bounty of a thriving life.

4. What experiences have you used as compost in growing a productive spiritual life?

5. How has prayer helped you overcome grief?

6. What toxic ideas can act like weeds to hinder growth in the midst of your loss?

7. How can you become more forgiving, kind, and patient?

8. If forgiveness, kindness, and patience were plants in your garden, how short or tall would they be? Why would they be that short or tall?

9. What suppositions does Beth Weikel cite as harmful?

10. If God leads us in a straight path, why do “bad” things happen along the way?

11. How deep are your spiritual roots?

12. On a scale of one to ten, how motivated are you to get rid of the weeds in your life? Who might help you identify the weeds in your life so you can get rid of them? What steps will you take to get rid of those weeds?

APPLY THE TRUTH

Choose a faithful believer to whom you can be accountable. Meet with that person, identify the weeds in your life, and be accountable for getting rid of them. Meet with your confidant during the week to report on how the weeding is progressing.

LOOKING AHEAD

The final session in this series addresses the issue of applying the recovery plan. It is an excellent and inspiring conclusion to the series.



SESSION 5

A RECOVERY PLAN APPLIED

Every building, whether the Empire State Building or your residence, was built according to an architectural plan. The workers did not simply follow their own devices; they followed the blueprint, the plan. Failure to apply the plan would have been disastrous. Knowing God's plan for recovery from loss is simply not enough. Successful recovery results from the application of the plan.

EMBRACE THE TRUTH

1. How have people hurt you when you experienced loss? How did you respond to those hurts?

2. What is God's role in the restoration process?

3. Why do you agree or disagree that it is hard to surrender your wounds to God?

4. Read Proverbs 3:5–6. How have you applied this passage to your life?

5. Dave Weikel recommends moving from head to heart in the recovery from loss. How does it feel when you trust God with all your heart?

6. Why do you agree or disagree that being thankful for God's actions includes being thankful for your losses?

7. Why are you looking forward to heaven?

8. What things do Christians need to hold loosely?

9. Dave Weikel instructs us to worship by presenting our bodies a living sacrifice to God. What negative influences attempt to pull you off the altar of sacrifice?

10. How can confession of sin and praise help you recover from loss?

11. Who has served as a positive role model that you can emulate as you recover from pain and loss? How has he or she been a positive role model?

APPLY THE TRUTH

As suggested at the end of the video, contact fellow believers with whom you can correspond and share what God has been teaching you about recovering from pain and loss.

LOOKING AHEAD

Loss affects everyone. Remembering what you have learned throughout this series, how will you help others begin to heal? Continually seek God, the true way of hope.