



**2017 Women's Encouragement Day
Session Two - By Sarah Markman**

TEN WAYS TO ACTIVATE HOPE

POETRY READING

I wanted to open this session with a poem. I never cared for or enjoyed poetry, until I started to homeschool. It has unlocked a part of my heart. This a poem that Hannah learned during this term as we have studied Amy Carmichael who wrote 450 poems:

“I Will Refresh You” by Amy Carmichael

“Heart that is weary because of the way,
Facing the wing and the sting of the spray,
Come unto Me, and I will refresh you.

Heart that has tasted of travail and toil,
Burdened for souls whom the foe would despoil,
Come unto Me, and I will refresh you.

Heart that is frozen– a handful of snow
Heart that is faded– a sky without glow,
Come unto Me, and I will refresh you.

Heart that is weary, O come unto Me.
Fear not, whatever the trouble may be ;
Come unto Me, and I will refresh you.”

–Matt. 11:28

“²⁸ Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

INTRODUCTION

I would like to open up with a story-

It's Monday morning, after Christmas break and New Years. Breakfast goes long and everyone is sluggish doing chores. I am still recovering from hosting and long nights of preparations and celebrations. I am sluggish and getting to group time takes everything I have. One of my eldest is mourning the end of the holiday, one woke up a bit grumpy, and my boys just want to play. The phone is dinging with texts with plans for the new year, the house is a mess, and I decide to do a read aloud to just get things rolling. My toddler has an accident in his underwear which takes me away from the others and I haven't thought ahead to what I can assign in my absence. There is now a sibling conflict. It is time for me to initiate discipline and reconciliation. Someone stops by to return the crock pot that they borrowed. This little moment takes 20 minutes and now it is lunchtime.

OK, so not that this has actually happened, but in a variety of forms it has. What can go through my mind is...
Can I really do this? Are my kids going to learn anything? Why can't I seem to keep the schedule running on course!?

This leads me to two tracks of mind- Which will I choose:

“I can't and I quit. Clearly someone else can do this better than I. I am hopeless.”

OR

“I can and I will. I choose not to evaluate on an uphill day or in a challenging season. He is activating hope in me.”

I had a friend come up to meet at church and ask how she could pray for me with my homeschooling. I described having one of those uphill weeks. She said, ‘Sarah, you know, when you are running a race, it is hard to stay in it if you evaluate yourself while running uphill. I want to encourage you to be okay with where you are and evaluate later. You wont always be running uphill, but will reach the top and run at smoother strides, an easier pace.

This little moment of encouragement and prayer helped me to say once again, I can and I will. He is activating hope in me.

The following ten ways came mostly from scripture that I studied about hope. I found a few promises and truths, along with practical encouragement in how to engage with these. I have added a few stories and ideas, but the wealth of equipping to our hearts and minds comes straight from His Word.

1. LOOK TO THINGS THAT ARE UNSEEN

Scripture: *2 Corinthians 4:16-18* “¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart...”

Promise: “¹⁶...though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For this light, momentary, affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison...”

How we engage: “¹⁸as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen...”

Truth: “¹⁸...For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.” -What you are doing is eternal!!!

Idea: As we lean into the unseen:

Look for “God-sightings” with your kids throughout the day.

Stop. Talk. Pray. Sing. Play worship music. When we experience Him together, the atmosphere in our hearts and home shifts!

Dance and Intercession- Samuel praying for Christian pastor Saeed Abedini for 6 or so months. He was freed from Iranian prison after 3 years. This was a God-sighting that shocked us all.

2. EAGERLY WAIT WITH PERSEVERANCE

Scripture: Rom. 8:24-25

Promise: “²⁴For we were saved in this **hope**,...

Truth: ...but **hope** that is seen is not **hope**; for why does one still **hope** for what he sees?

How to Engage: ²⁵But if we **hope** for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.”

Eagerly: a strong desire to do or have something

Wait: To stay in place, remain or rest, in readiness or expectation;

Perseverance: steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose, a state- especially in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement

I found myself asking the question? How do we sustain eagerly waiting with perseverance? How do we maintain that strong desire, while staying in place, with steady persistence?

Idea: Stop and observe the birds. In our homeschooling journey, we took a year of science to identify, learn about and fall in love with birds! I have never been the nature observer, not enough time. This “bird year” changed everything for me. My then, 5 year old son is forever changed, marked by the beauty and fascination of HIM through HIS creation! After two bird feeders as gifts, my back yard has taken on a whole new role. A place to encounter God! While we hope for what we do not see, why not surround our eyes with His glory- encountering the BIG B Beauty! I think seeing Him in creation is one of the most amazing things we can offer our kids, especially when we go there together!

Our most sited MO birds: Cardinal, House Finch, Black-Capped Chickadee, Downy Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, and Dark-Eyed Junco in winter :)

“Not a Sparrow Falls”- Corrie Ten Boom recalled a time when a skylark was sent by God into the Nazi prison camp to keep her from hating and rationalizing her hate. A cruel guard was in the habit of making the prisoners stand for a long, long time in the freezing morning air for roll call. One morning, all the prisoners looked up at a skylark and listened to its song. For three weeks, the skylark’s song came exactly during roll call. It turned Corrie’s eyes away from the cruelty of men to the immensity of God’s love. The bird’s daily visit helped remind her of the words of Psalm 103:11: “For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward those who fear Him.” She thanked God for turning her eyes in the right direction- unto Him. -Taken from Karen Andreola’s “Charlotte Mason Companion”

3. REJOICE IN HOPE

Scripture: Romans 12:9-16

How to Engage: “¹²*serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer.”*

I asked the family at dinnertime, “What do you think that it means to “rejoice in hope”?” One said, to jump on the trampoline, and other said to eat ice cream. John said, “to be glad for the promises of God that are yet to come”. Some of those, are promises that we hope for on this side of eternity, the ultimate promise is to see Big “B” Beauty in all of His glory. Our hope is based on who Jesus is and what He has promised.

John Piper said, “Christ has come and carried our sin and sorrows to the cross and into the grave, and left them there, and He rose so that now we have unshakable hope in suffering, **and this hope gives rise to joy.** That’s why vs. 12 says, “Rejoice in hope”. This joy sustains patient endurance, which is why verse 12 says, “be patient in tribulation”, and why Heb. 12:2 says that Jesus endured the cross “for the joy that was set before Him.” (“Use the Inspired Scriptures to Rejoice in Hope” found at desiringgod.org)

4. CONTINUE STEADFASTLY IN PRAYER

Scripture: *Colossians 4:2 , Rom 12:12 (Previous: “Continue steadfastly in prayer”)*

How we Engage: *“Continue steadfastly (earnestly) in prayer, being watchful (vigilant) in it with thanksgiving.”*

Idea: Stop, drop and pray- think of what can happen in 2-3 min. Prayer keeps us hoping!

- Practical's:**
1. When there is a prayer need, pray it or even sing about it together.
 2. Pray on the way to sports or lessons - for kids hearts toward others and that they might experience Him along the way. (piano lessons)
 3. Pray on the way to grocery for opportunity to minister. (Trader Joe's)
 4. Pray for those you welcome into your home.
 5. At night when a child is anxious or ill, sing a prayer over them. (I was tired)
 6. This scripture could be a good one to memorize WITH the kids and to commit to go after in our homes- together- Mama too!
 7. Have a sacred Mama space where you go to pray...even emptying out your closet! (War Room is a great movie!)

5. CREATE SPACE TO READ THE BIBLE

Scripture: *Romans 15:4-6*

Truth: ⁴ “*For whatever things were written before were written for our learning,*

How we engage: ⁴ “*... that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope..*” -KEY

Promise: ⁵ *Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, ⁶ that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Idea: Creating space to get in His Word- morning, noon, and night! We have the best opportunity to create space for experiences with Jesus, right in our own living rooms. This is a big bonus to saying “yes” to homeschooling! I am growing in this myself. John and I feel very sober about the percentage of the Body of Christ that is reading their Bibles in this hour. With so much shifting in the culture, we feel vigilant about asking God for rhythms in our own lives and those of our children, to literally read the Bible. A common prayer of mine is that God would give us a hunger for Him that is greater than anything the world has to offer us.

Practical's:

1. 10 min to begin a QT: Read it-write it-sing it-say it- pray
2. Kids write songs from the Psalms and sing acappella or at the piano
3. Sing through a verse or chapter as a family at the dinner table
4. Children memorize passages and recite them for family night
5. Paint a passage
6. Listen to scripture on CD in the car- SEEDS, Songs for Saplings, Catechisms
7. Have a sacred Mama space where you go with your Bible, journal, and spot for coffee

6. REMEMBER AND TELL OF YOUR HISTORY (HIS STORY)

Scripture: Romans 15:9-13: This passage reminds us of His faithfulness, causing praise to erupt in our hearts and out of our mouths

Truth: ⁸Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, ⁹and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *His* mercy, as it is written:

How to Engage: “For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name.”

¹⁰And again he says:

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!”

¹¹And again:

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles!

Laud Him, all you peoples!”

¹²And again, Isaiah says:

“There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles,

In Him the Gentiles shall **hope**.”

Promise: ¹³Now may the God of **hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may **abound in hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Idea: Recall markers of experience, when your life was forever changed for His Kingdom, when your eyes were opened and heart awakened. Reflect on these and tell them to your children. This is a source of hope that will never change or go away. Remembering is a way to actively wait and build hope in the process. My kids hearts light up every time I tell them a story of my history, or theirs, in the Lord.

When we are reminded of His faithfulness: CONFESS, SING, REJOICE, PRAISE, LAUD HIM

7. DO NOTHING IN YOUR OWN EFFORT

Scripture: Romans 15:14-21

Truth: *“¹⁷Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God.*

How we Engage: *“¹⁸For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed.”* (Paul speaking- he claimed glory not on his own merits but only as a servant or minister of Christ)

Response: “I genuinely desire to serve Christ, therefore I will focus not on what I am able to accomplish in my own efforts, but rather on Christ who is at work in my life.”-Women’s Study Bible pg. 1464

I seem to come back to the place over and over again of putting my hands in the air and saying, “I have picked this up, and again, I am putting it down.” There is something in me that loves to start and complete a task. I like to figure it out and get it done. His grace and His mercy always guide me back to His perfect leadership. I sign up again to do not a thing in my own effort, but to yield to and trust in him.

8. BUILD AN ALTER OF WORSHIP IN YOUR HOME

Scripture: *Joel 2:15 “Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly;”*

I was awakened one night to a car alarm outside of the window. I got out of bed, grabbed my Bible and looked at the clock. It read 2:15. My first inclination was to open the Bible to Joel 2:15. This was not a common occurrence in my life, but it has marked me. To Joel, in his day, it was a call of urgency to the people, a sounding of the alarm. For me, it has been a constant reminder to be sober in my home and with my children. To create space for His presence, to read the Word, and to be intentional to build an altar of worship and prayer in our home. As we build an altar in our home, hope arises!

How we engage: To create space for His presence, to read the Word, and to be intentional to build an altar of worship and prayer. As we build an altar in our home, hope arises!

All over the earth the Muslims, Hindu's and Buddhists are building alters of worship and prayer in their homes. The hour that the American culture finds itself in is unique, very little Bible and even less prayer.

What an incredible time to take a stand in our homes, and set the stage for worship morning, noon and night!

John and I are launching Praying Families in hopes to encourage and equip families to do this very thing.

Note: The gift of fasting has helped my Mama heart and mind, at times, to sign up again to create space for worship in our home.

9. ASK FOR WISDOM

Scripture: *Proverbs 24:13-14* “¹³My son, eat honey because it is good, And the honeycomb which is sweet to your taste.”

Promise: “¹⁴*So shall the knowledge of wisdom be to your soul; If you have found it, there is a prospect, and your hope will not be cut off.*”

How we engage: Take your little moments throughout the day and ask for wisdom.

Short 30-60 second prayers are powerful and keep us connected to our Lord.

Over the last year, I have really started to ask God for wisdom. He promises to give it when we ask! His promise to us is that when we search and ask for wisdom, it will not only be sweet to our soul, but our HOPE will not be cut off. So hope is directly connected to the pursuit of wisdom. This is not something we can attain, but that we can ask and believe for.

10. PREACH TO YOURSELF DAILY: HOPE IN GOD

Scripture: Psalm 42:4-8

“⁵Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? **Hope** in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. ⁶O my God, my soul is cast down within me; Therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan, And from the heights of Hermon, from the Hill Mizar. ⁷Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; All Your waves and billows have gone over me. ⁸The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, And in the night His song shall be with me— A prayer to the God of my life.”

How We Engage: The most important words you will ever hear are the ones spoken out of your own mouth. Let's be a fierce band of ladies who lay hold of our destinies in Christ! John Piper says: “Hoping in God does not come naturally. We must preach it to ourselves, and preach diligently and forcefully, or we will give way to a downcast and disquieted spirit.”

APPLICATION

- ▶ This time to Selah- pause and reflect- will be a moment to consider what might build or refresh your hope this year. You could choose one of the ten ways we looked at or come up with your own. For me, one thing will be to get out into creation more.
- ▶ The second part is to record 1 or 2 times in your history that you experienced God in a memorable or life-changing way.
- ▶ **What 3 things might refresh your hope in 2017?**
 - ▶ 1.
 - ▶ 2.
 - ▶ 3.
- ▶ **Remember your history. Recall a time or two when you experienced God in a memorable or life-changing way.**
 - ▶ 1.
 - ▶ 2.

APPLICATION-SONG

Reflection: Christy Nockels “Who Can Compare” on Let it be Jesus

Who can compare to You, my King
Who can compare to You, my Lord
Who can compare to You, my Friend
I looked and I found
That there's no one like You in all the earth
You take my hand and You guide me on
You show me the way to life
You lift my head and You give me hope
You show me the way to life

No one compares to You, my King
No one compares to You, my Lord
No one compare to You, my Friend
I looked and I found that You're the one
I needed all along

You are the way
You are the truth
and You are the life

RESOURCES

Poetry

“How Long?” by Amy Carmichael

“O Star, whose sweet, untroubled song
Floats tranquil down the moonlit blue,
Do you not see the ages’ wrong?
Nor hear the cry, “How long, how long,
Till all things be made new?”

The wounded silence aches with prayer;
Do broken prayers not rise so high?
A sound of tears disturbs the air;
Does it not beat upon you there?
Nor pain of human cry?

Lo, Dawn has lit his beacon fire;
The Conquerer rides in his car;
He comes, He comes; yea nigher, nigher,
The nation’s hope, the world’s desire,
The Bright and Morning Star.”

“I Will Refresh You” by Amy Carmichael

“Heart that is weary because of the way,
Facing the wing and the sting of the spray,
Come unto Me, and I will refresh you.

Heart that has tasted of travail and toil,
Burdened for souls whom the foe would despoil,
Come unto Me, and I will refresh you.

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Heart that is weary, O come unto Me.
Fear not, whatever the trouble may be ;
Come unto Me, and I will refresh you.”

–Matt. 11:28

RESOURCES

Books

1. Spiritual Formation

- “My Utmost for His Highest”– Oswald Chambers (Daily Devotions)
- “The Power of a Praying Wife”– Stormie Omartian
- “What Happens When Women Pray”– Evelyn Christenson
- “The Power of Prayer and Fasting”– Ronnie Floyd
- “Audacious”– Beth Moore (This books keeps me dreaming BIG with Him!)
- Joy Manifesto Memo– 10 Points of Joyful Parenting– Ann Voskamp (This is a FREE printable)
- “Mountain Breezes: The Collected Poems of Amy Carmichael”– The Dohnavur Fellowship

2. A Mama’s Encouragement

Sally Clarkson

- “Mission of Motherhood”
- “Ministry of Motherhood”
- “The Life-Giving Home”

Sara Hagerty:

- “Every Bitter Thing is Sweet”
- “Unseen: The Gift of Being Hidden in a World That Loves to Be Noticed”–pre-order for August 2017

- “Loving the Little Years”– Rachel Jankovic
- “Treasuring Christ When Your Hands are Full”– Gloria Furman

3. Homeschooling

- “Teaching From Rest”– Sarah MacKenzie (some of the literature options for children are more liberal than I might choose)

“A Charlotte Mason Companion”– Karen Andreola

Music

Christy Nockels

- “Let it Be Jesus”
- “Life Light Up”

Audrey Assad

- “Inheritance”
- “Fortunate Fall”

Laura Hackett

- “Love Will Have it’s Day”
- “Laura Hackett”