

SESSION NINE

Joy Is Coming Soon

KEY STORY:

Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene
(JOHN 20:11-18)

GOD'S PROMISE:

Weeping may last through the night,
but joy comes with the morning.
(PSALM 30:5 NLT)

MY PROMISE:

I will praise God before my prayer is answered.

GROUP STUDY

GETTING STARTED

Welcome to session nine of *Unshakable Hope*. Open the session with prayer, and then ask one person to share a brief three-minute version of his or her spiritual journey. Following this, read this session's God's Promise and My Promise aloud as a group (see page 115), and then answer one or more of the following questions:

- How would you describe Mary's transformation in this story?
- In what ways have you recently moved from sorrow to joy?
- How can you learn to truly watch and wait for joy?

VIDEO TEACHING

As you watch the video for session nine, use the following outline to record any additional takeaways from the teaching.

At times we may wonder if God has any word for the dark nights of our soul

When Mary Magdalene met Jesus, he completely restored her to life

Mary's devotion led her to stay in Jerusalem as Jesus was crucified and buried

In the midst of Mary's darkest moment, the Son came out

Jesus has power over death but also a soft spot for the Mary Magdalenes of the world

GROUP DISCUSSION

Take a few minutes with your group members to discuss what you just watched and explore these concepts in Scripture.

1. What statement in the video teaching affected you the most? Why?

2. How does the joy Mary Magdalene found that morning she encountered the risen Jesus encourage you to endure any sorrow you are facing?

3. How does it impact you to know the risen Jesus was not too holy, too otherly, too divine, or too supernatural to receive a hug from Mary?

4. Why do believers in Christ so often withdraw from community when they are in the midst of sorrow? How can your group create an atmosphere of acceptance for someone to share when dealing with sorrow or struggles?

5. What is your specific action step to live out this promise of God this week?

PRAY

Close your time together with prayer. Remember to share prayer requests and review how God has answered past prayers and fulfilled his promises. Use the questions below to shape and grow your group's experience during this time.

- What joys did you experience this week for which you would like to give God praise?
- What sorrows or struggles are weighing on your heart for which the group can pray?
- Are there people in your life who are struggling with sorrow and pain? How can the group pray for them?

NAME	REQUESTS AND PRAISES

NEXT WEEK

Next week, you and your group will look at God's promise that you will receive power when you look to him for strength. Be sure to complete the personal study before you attend the group meeting.