

GROWING HOPE

by Jason Ehmann

HOT
SHOTS

Growing Hope: God's Love in the Message of Malachi
Written by Jason Ehmann

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To the Teacher

Let's face it—we're hopeless. If it all depended on us, our students wouldn't listen to a word we say. Forget difficult topics like grace or love—they wouldn't even listen to our advice on the fun stuff like relationships or college choice.

Yet somehow God expects us to pass on our faith to the next generation. He tells us—no, commands us—to teach them His character, to share with them His works, and to explain what all this means for them. He wants the next generation to remember Him and remain faithful to Him (Ps. 78:5–8). We bear a crushing responsibility, and if we try to carry it alone, we'll fail.

But God gives grace, and one of grace's most beautiful forms is a thing called hope. Hope is confidence in God. It's what lets us see the light beyond the darkness, allowing us to walk forward even though we can't be sure where our next step will land. It animates our faith, magnifying God's love for us until we can't help but love others. We must place our hope in God (Ps. 78:7).

Thankfully, God built a hope circuit into our brains. We can't help but hope in something, but we fry that capacity to hope when we hook it up to the wrong source. Family, friends, money, businesses, governments, even churches and religious movements—they've all burned us. And without God, when we just can't take any more, we simply forget how to hope.

So how do teachers like us regrow hope? I wrote this study to answer that very question. I focused on the Book of Malachi, God's last direct word to Israel before 400 silent years. Before Christ came, Israel needed a message of hope—a deep, sustaining, abiding, growing hope with God alone as its source.

You and I both need that same kind of hope today, and we must live in that hope before we share it with others.

I pray that God would give you grace to magnify Him to your students. I pray that you will find a deep and restful hope in Him and that God will use you to plant seeds of hope in others.

Lesson Format

Hot Shots are written with a firm belief that the Word of God is the primary life-changing element that the Holy Spirit uses to do His work. You can be assured that we will not depend upon psychology, values clarification, touchy-feely questions, or humanistic methods. Instead, we will allow Scripture to reveal God's character to the teens, thereby exposing them to His life-changing power. We stand unashamedly upon the Word of God, which is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.

While the writing staff at Positive Action For Christ understands that all our lessons must be centered in the Bible, we also see the need for helping the teacher by including creative teaching ideas. These creative ideas are simply sermon illustrations taken one step further. Instead of talking about opening a window in an illustration, we ask you to open it. Instead of imagining how destructive the tongue can be, you should present an object lesson to show them. These ideas can enhance your lesson and help teens grasp the truth of God's Word.

Our belief is that through object lessons and illustrations we are better able to imitate the teaching of Jesus Christ. He depended wholly upon the Scriptures for the content of His lessons, but He also used coins, trees, water, and more to illustrate His teaching.

Each Hotshot follows the same lesson format throughout the study.



The Warm Up opens the door of the student's mind to the main lesson. This may include handouts, object lessons, or stimulating questions.



The Bridge transitions the teen from the warm-up into the main text of Scripture that you will be teaching.



The Content is the main body of the lesson, focusing on Bible exposition and application.



The Closing summarizes the lesson and calls for a commitment to the truth.

Before you start the study...

Read the Introduction, Course Objectives and Overview. It is important that you understand the scope of this study before you teach it.

Before each lesson...

1. Read through the lesson and take note of the Lesson Aim, Objectives, and the materials needed for creative teaching segments.



2. Plan ahead to modify the lesson if necessary. Your facilities or equipment may limit you. Substitute your own ideas if necessary.
3. Each lesson can be taught in 20–30 minutes, but preparation can let you shorten or lengthen the lesson as needed.
4. Use excitement when you teach! An excited teacher produces students who are excited about learning. If you don't feel that one of our teaching ideas or warm ups will excite your teens, spend some time and develop one that will work.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course students will:

- Remember God's love, the root of our hope
- Learn how to show hope by their respect for God
- Understand how God's love shines through hopeful lives
- Examine how hope changes their response to God
- Sustain their hope through the knowledge of Christ's return

Overview

Section 1 – Hope's Roots

Lesson 1: Hope Rooted in God's Love

- **Lesson Aim:** To remind students to nurture hope by remembering God's love
- **Text:** Malachi 1:1–5

Section 2 – Hope's Fruit

Lesson 2: Hope Produces Respect for God

- **Lesson Aim:** To demonstrate how hope produces respect and how respect nurtures hope
- **Text:** Malachi 1:6–2:9

Lesson 3: Hope Produces Love

- **Lesson Aim:** To challenge your students to show their hope by reflecting God's love
- **Text:** Malachi 2:10–16

Lesson 4: Hope Produces a Response to God

- **Lesson Aim:** To demonstrate how hope reveals itself in our response to God
- **Text:** Malachi 2:17–3:15

Section 3 – Hope’s Harvest

Lesson 5: Remember God’s Return

- **Lesson Aim:** To encourage students to sustain their hope with the knowledge of Christ’s coming
- **Text:** Malachi 3:16–4:6

LESSON 1

Hope Rooted in God's Love

Scripture is full of hope. Though we don't often think to look for it in the prophets of the Old Testament, Malachi bursts with hope. Its message restores our hope by challenging us to root our hearts, minds, and lives in God.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13 that faith, hope, and love will all abide, but love is the greatest. Malachi agrees—God's love for us nurtures hope. As we meditate on the love of God, as we listen again and again to the ways He's reached out to us in our depravity, as we live by His grace each day, He will grow in us an enduring hope.



To remind students to nurture hope by remembering God's love



Students will . . .

- See the connection between love, hope, and truth
- Remember the promise of God's love
- Understand that God's decision to love is independent of us
- Encourage each other to stop doubting God's love



Malachi 1:1–5

The Lesson



Ask your students what kinds of things people hope for and write their answers on the board. Responses may include a great job, a winning football season, nice weather, and others.



How can we be assured that these things will actually happen? How have you—or someone you know—reacted when something hoped-for didn't happen?

Today we'll be learning about a people who lost their hope and how God gave it back to them.

Historical Background

TAbout 100 years before the prophecy of Malachi, King Cyrus finally allowed some captive Jews in Babylon to return to Jerusalem. Not long after, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, the people of Israel began rebuilding the Lord's Temple. They finished years later under Ezra and Nehemiah, who also restored the priesthood and rebuilt the wall around Jerusalem. There was a small sense of hope that the Israelites might be restored to their God, but nothing they did seemed to recapture the glory of the kingdom under David and Solomon.

Glory seemed to be their only goal, as if God's blessing could be had by expanding a city or rebuilding a temple. A wall wouldn't liberate them from their captors, and a decorated altar wouldn't restore them to their God. By Malachi's day, Israel was again hopeless and disobedient. They wondered if the God of David had finally forgotten them—if they were truly making sacrifices to Jehovah, or just burning animals under an empty sky. They had placed their hope in something other than God.

We can understand this kind of thinking. Sometimes we may wonder—if we can just get morality back into our culture, if we can get politicians to quote the Bible, if we can make Christianity cool again, if we can make everyone else just a little less hostile to our faith, then we would feel comfortable.

But when we don't feel comfortable or blessed, we lose hope. Like Israel in Malachi's day, we can become unfaithful to God, disobeying Him and blaming Him for not honoring the hope we didn't actually place in Him.

Enter Malachi, around 450–420 B.C. He was the final prophet of the Old Testament, and his message would have to last Israel for the 400 years before the coming of Christ. We don't know much about his biography, and other than in the Book of Malachi itself, he isn't mentioned by name elsewhere in the Bible. Only his message is quoted in the New Testament. Unlike Daniel or Elijah, he was a prophet identified only by his words.

Malachi challenged the people to place their hope back in God. Hope won't grow unless it's rooted in a knowledge of Him—specifically, the knowledge that He loves us.

Discussion: What promises of hope have you heard that were not true?

The Soil of Truth

Malachi 1:1

Malachi begins by identifying himself as the messenger and Israel as the target of the message. Malachi also mentions the burden—sometimes translated oracle—of the word of God, which tells us that the prophecy will be difficult, perhaps even threatening.

It wasn't easy for Malachi to deliver this message, but he knew it was true. It didn't include hugs, flowers, or rainbows—it was hard, difficult, direct. But hope can grow only in the soil of truth. Only there will its roots grow strong. Though it may be harder to plant in truth—lies are much softer—nothing else will keep it grounded through the wind, the rain, and whatever else life throws at it. However difficult God's truth may be, we must listen to it, and we must act on it.

Discussion: As we look for hope in God, what parts of His truth can be difficult to accept? Why might we reject His hope?

Hope Rooted in the Promise of God's Love

Malachi 1:2

God loves us. It's a comforting, hope-filled thought. Yet sometimes we forget what makes His love truly great—it's a promise.

God never forgets His promises

God never forgets His promises. It doesn't matter how much time passes. It doesn't matter how little His people deserve it. And it doesn't matter if His people forget it. When Israel forgot about God's love, God reminded them of His promise to Jacob. That covenant was 1,400 years old in the time of Malachi—not exactly new. But in all that time God hadn't changed. He was the same exact God to Malachi as He was to Jacob. He would never forget His word.

Discussion: What tempts us to forget the promises of God? How can it seem like He's forgotten?

God never goes back on His promises

When God remembers His promises, He keeps them. God could have said that since He made the promise to Jacob so long ago, it was no lon-

ger valid. But God's promises aren't coupons—they don't have expiration dates. When He says He gives us grace, He doesn't stop once we move out of our parents' house. When He says He loves us, He doesn't stop once we're married.

God's promises endure. They last through every stage of life, through the good times and the bad. They are as unchangeable as God Himself, and you can trust Him to be the same for you now and always. He has promised it to be so, and He never lies.

Discussion: What are some specific promises from Scripture that we can cling to? How do God's unchanging promises change how we respond to our circumstances?

Hope Rooted in the Independence of God's Love

God's love is also independent. That is, it's not dependent on us. He doesn't love us because we're lovable—we aren't. He doesn't love because we're good or bad or because we deserve His attention. The love God shows us is an extension of His character. God loves because He is a loving God.

God's love is independent of human wisdom
Malachi 1:2–4

Jacob and Esau were the twin sons of Isaac. Esau was born first, and so, in that day, laid claim to the heaviest responsibilities and the greatest blessings in the family. But it didn't work out that way. God chose to extend the covenant He made with Abraham and Isaac to Jacob, not Esau. It was through Jacob's descendants, not Esau's, that God built the nation of Israel and revealed His Son, Jesus Christ.

This is why the passage says that God loved Jacob and hated Esau. It doesn't mean that God felt differently about the two—it means that He chose one to become part of His promise and the other to play a different role. It was through Jacob's descendants that God built the nation of Israel and revealed His Son, Jesus Christ. Esau would found a great nation as well, but it would be a wicked culture that God would use as a foil to His people.

We can compare this passage to Luke 14:26, where Christ said that if we don't hate our families, we can't be His disciples. That doesn't mean we should feel revulsion to our parents and siblings—it means that we should choose Christ to direct our life.

God didn't check with Jacob and Esau before making His decision. The best of human wisdom couldn't have predicted which man would found a

Quotation

“The Hebrew words for loved and hated refer not to God's emotions but to His choice of one over the other for a covenant relationship. To hate someone meant to reject him and to disavow a loving association with him. Nor do these words by themselves indicate the eternal destinations of Jacob and Esau. The verbs refer to God's acts in history toward both of the two nations which descended from the two brothers.”

—Bible Knowledge
Commentary

better people. God graciously chose Jacob to showcase His glory in exactly the way He planned.

God's love is independent of human works

If God's love doesn't match the way we think, neither does it depend on what we do. When God decided to use one brother over another, He didn't compare their character. Before they were born, He knew that Jacob was a swindler and Esau a hairy buffoon. Neither gave God much to work with.

Malachi's point was clear. The people of Israel could not say that God loved them because they deserved it. Yes, they had rebuilt the Temple. They built a wall around Jerusalem and appointed priests and made sacrifices and read the Law and put on a great feast. But their God made all that happen, and He was under no obligation to make their lives more comfortable because of what they thought they did. His love, and how He chose to show it, did not depend on their good behavior.

Esau's descendants, the people of Edom, couldn't change God's love either. They could build their cities, conquer others, and expand their fields and flocks, but they weren't going to subvert Jacob's place in God's promise. They couldn't work their way into favor with God. He would punish them even for thinking they could. He offered a path of redemption to those individuals who would submit to Him, but it wasn't for their own merit.

We can no more change God's love than we can change God Himself. When we've sinned the exact same way a million times, God still loves us. Though grieved, He still provides a way to reconciliation. We cannot change our position as His children.

We may not understand how God shows us love through hardship or through chastening, but remember that His love isn't bound by our understanding. He doesn't stop loving us in the hard times—He just shows us another facet of His love that we wouldn't have seen otherwise.

God loves because He is love. He loves us because of Christ, because of grace, because of His promise. Therefore we have hope—a hope secured by the consistency of His character and the endurance of His love.

Discussion: What misconceptions about God's love do we get from other people? Why do we assume God's love depends on what we do? Where's the hope in knowing that God's love is independent of our wisdom and works?

Hope Rooted in the Assurance of God's Love

Malachi 1:2

Here the people of Israel questioned whether God loved them. Questions are fine—God is bigger than our biggest questions, even if He chooses to

answer only some of them right now. But when He tells us something and we choose not to trust Him, we sin.

Israel had a narrow view of God's love. They thought God could only show love by giving them stuff. They thought God's love came only through crops, through gold, through strong cities and freedom from their overlords. When they didn't see much of that, they doubted God's promise and, naturally, lost hope.

Through Malachi, God assured the people that He still loved them. If they would just look around, they would see His faithfulness and grace everywhere. They could be rejoicing in His provision and deliverance.

Read Malachi 1:5.

Eventually, they would see the greatness and goodness of God—as shown not just to them, but through His plan for all the nations around them.

Before we lose hope, we first doubt God. We lose hope when we don't experience God's love the way we expect, when we don't understand how God shows us love. And without hope in Him, we can quickly find ourselves in an empty, ritualistic religion, not a loving relationship with God. When religion fails, we search for hope in whatever else catches our eye. We live how we want to live, and we lose our desire to trust anyone. Malachi's people took this path, and they started by doubting God's love.

Discussion: Why do we question God's love? How does that questioning impact the way we reflect God's love? What expressions of God's love should we remind ourselves of each day?



Paul Gerhardt was a German Lutheran pastor who lived in the 1600s. Little in his life was pleasant. He endured the Thirty Years' War, when most of Europe fought over land, resources, and religion. In addition to the bloodshed of the day, Gerhardt also faced divisive religious debates. He found himself poor and unemployed for a year, during which time his wife died. All but one of his six children died young. We could understand if he lost hope.

However, Paul Gerhardt wrote over 120 hymns to his God, many during the toughest parts of his life. Here is a stanza from "Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me:"

This love unwearied I pursue
And dauntlessly to Thee aspire.
Oh, may Thy love my hope renew
Burn in my soul like heavenly fire!
And day and night be all my care
To guard this sacred treasure there.

Ask God to renew your hope in Him. Cling to His promise of love. Find that love in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Closing Activity: One of the most difficult challenges in the Christian life is to remember God's love. The following exercise can encourage your group to discover God's love and remind each other of it regularly.

First, ask for volunteers to read each passage of Scripture.

Then ask how God's love was shown in each passage. Write a brief description in the corresponding box.

Finally, ask for volunteers to send reminders of each passage to the entire group via text, email, or whatever platform everyone can access. Assign a volunteer to each day of the following week.

remembering **GOD'S LOVE**

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DAY	PASSAGE:	GOD'S LOVE IS:	REMINDER:
1	Rom. 5:8; 1 Jn 3:1; 4:10		
2	Rom. 8:38-39		
3	Eph. 2:1-9		
4	Ps. 145:8-16		
5	Matt. 9:35-36		
6	Ps. 86:15		

LESSON 2

Hope Produces Respect for God

As we learn of God’s love for us, He plants within our hearts the first seeds of hope. That hope grows as we continue to seek Him, and soon we see fruit. When we trust God, we listen to Him, we obey Him, and we seek His counsel. In short, we respect Him. Those who disrespect God do so because they find no hope in Him, because they have not known Him.



To demonstrate how hope produces respect and how respect nurtures hope



Students will . . .

- Understand why God deserves our respect
- Identify ways to show God respect in many areas of life



Malachi 1:6–2:9

The Lesson



Play a round of charades. Students may use only gestures and expressions—not words—to communicate a word or concept. While one student attempts to communicate, the others guess the message until someone is correct. To make things competitive, divide your students into teams and give their representatives just two minutes to communicate the message. Whichever team successfully guesses the most, wins.

Quotation

“When captured in all of its thrust, the name YHWH SABAOTH is a most exalted title.”

—Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

Examples of concepts:

- A cat stuck in a tree
- A dentist pulling the tooth of a fireman
- A caveman's first ride in an elevator

After the game, talk to your group about how actions communicate as well as words. Mention that certain gestures can communicate respect—like nods, salutes—or disrespect—like pointing or making a thumbs down. Ask for subtler, nonverbal demonstrations of respect in our culture or others. What was the most disrespectful thing ever done to you?



Respect is a house of cards. It can take days, months, even years to build, and then, in one second of carelessness, it can come crashing down. Some people demand respect with their words; others command respect with their character. Still others expect it just because of their position. But regardless of how it's earned or given, respect can evaporate in an instant if it isn't held tightly. Humans are fickle, and once our trust is broken, we don't like to offer it again.

Sometimes we respect God like we respect people. But we can't treat God the same way. We know He controls everything. So if our circumstances don't meet our criteria for trust and respect, we reject Him. If we don't recognize His character or position, we lose hope. We don't see His power or the perfection of His plan for us. We kill hope by pulling away from Him.

God's Nature Commands Respect—He is the Lord of Hosts

T As we learn more about God's character, we can't help but find hope in Him.

Malachi gave his people hope by emphasizing one title of God in particular. Twenty-four times in his prophecy, he refers to God as the Lord of Hosts. Only a few writers in the Bible use this title more often.

Throughout the Old Testament, God revealed His character by giving Himself names. For instance, El Shaddai in Hebrew means "God Almighty;" Adonai means "Master;" Avinu means "Our Father." These names all create pictures of our relationship with God, and when He calls Himself the Lord of Hosts, He encourages hope by showing us a few things about Himself.

Discussion: How does God as Lord of Hosts change how we think about our circumstances?

God's absolute power

God is the mightiest warrior. The title Lord of Hosts combines his covenantal name, Yahweh, and the Hebrew word for armies, Tzevaot.

When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush, He called Himself Yahweh to magnify His self-existence and to distinguish Himself as a God that keeps His promises—as opposed to the false gods of the Egyptians.

When God, through Malachi, declares Himself the Yahweh Tzevaot, He says that He is the Self-Existent Warrior, the first and the greatest. No one can conquer God—no one can defeat Him or even stand against Him. There's simply no competition. He does not merely have the most power—there is no power in the universe that exists without His permission.

Discussion: What do we tell people about God by the way we show hope?

God's absolute control

God exercises His power as the sovereign King. Every army, every force in heaven and earth is subject to His control. No rebellion can continue if He does not permit it.

His control is absolute—He can direct, guide, shape, and completely transform anything He wishes. He is King over both nature and humankind. He is Master over all His creation, and one day He will, by His own hand, secure eternal peace.

The people of Israel in Malachi's day had forgotten that their God was the Lord of Hosts. To them, He wasn't in control—their Persian captors were. The King of Persia ruled the world, not their Yahweh. Persia controlled their flocks and crops, their business and trade, and the armies and mercenaries that harassed them. Israel no longer saw God as the King of kings or the Warrior of warriors. He no longer led them to victory over their enemies as He had done in the time Joshua or David. Solomon's wealth and prestige were long gone.

Malachi again and again writes of his Yahweh Tzevaot, as if nothing is wrong. God was still in control. He still provided for them. This time of trouble, like every time before it, fit perfectly into His plan.

It's tempting to define God by our attitudes. When we feel comfortable and secure, God seems nurturing and fatherly. But when we feel stressed or abandoned, God seems harsh or distant.

However, we must let God's own Word—not our attitudes or circumstances—define Him. He is still the Master of everything, even if your family is facing financial struggles. He is still King, even if you don't understand what happens in this world. If you have a relationship with God through Jesus, then the Lord of Hosts—the Mighty Warrior, the Exalted King, the Sovereign God who was and is and forever will be—is your loving Father.

No despair can survive the light of His truth. When we pull our eyes away from the hopelessness of this life and look to our Father, repenting of our doubt, He will regrow our hope.

God Commands Respect in Every Part of Life

Disrespect wasn't just an attitude problem in Malachi's day—the people had learned to show God disrespect in nearly every part of their lives. Their worship and their lifestyles reflected hopeless disobedience, not reverence.

Respecting God through worship

Malachi 1:7–14

These offenses might not seem like a big deal, unless you consider the God that Israel claimed to serve. Their so-called worship was a slap in the face to their Lord of Hosts.

Disobedient (1:7)

This wasn't an innocent mistake. The people of Israel knew that they were not to sacrifice animals that were blind, lame, or sick—the kind they may have put down or gotten rid of anyway. God required pure, unblemished sacrifices that demonstrated sincerity and repentance.

By offering blemished sacrifices, the people did not merely disobey God—they insulted His character. God is a pure, holy God, and through Christ He offered up Himself a perfect sacrifice for our sin. He instituted sacrifices in the Old Testament to be a picture of the coming Messiah, and Israel's practices tarnished that symbol. The God in Malachi's day was the same exact God that sacrificed His Son—the 400 years in between made no difference to Him.

Malachi's people would have been better off not sacrificing than to offer up a perverted, hypocritical kind of worship. It rejected God's commands and struck at the heart of His gospel.

Disrespectful (1:8)

Through their disobedience, Israel revealed whom they truly respected. In Malachi 1:8, the prophet asks them if their governor would be pleased if he were given what they sacrificed to God. The answer, clearly, was no. If their human captors would have been insulted by these gifts, why did Israel think that they could please God with them?

How often do we worship God with our leftovers? How often does God—who has done more for us than any friend or politician or celebrity—receive only our half-efforts, the change from the bottom of our pocket, the last few tired minutes of our day? That's not all we should offer Him.

He's not a garbage disposal—He's our El Shaddai, our Yahweh Tzevaot, our Avinu.

Our worship reflects our view of God.

Discussion: What influences us to disrespect God? How does respect for God change the way we worship? How is God both approachable and deserving of respect?

Respecting God through lifestyle

Malachi 1:13–14

Israel's failures in worship weren't innocent mistakes—they reflected their true priorities. The people gave God the refuse of their flocks because they wanted the best for themselves. They cared only for prosperity and comfort. God was worth a cheap sacrifice once or twice a year, but He didn't matter in day-to-day life.

No wonder there was such discouragement. The people built their lives around a search for greater wealth and security, around comfort and happiness. They didn't plan on sacrifices or prepare for feasts. Worship was an intrusion, and God was an annoyance felt through priests who had to be placated from time to time. That kind of relationship doesn't grow hope—it breeds resentment.

Discussion: How can we show respect to God in practical ways each day? Why is it difficult to live out respect for God?

God Commands Respect from All People

Malachi 1:11–2:9

Malachi confronted the priests directly in this passage (1:2). God had entrusted them with the responsibility to speak truth to His people and to show truth by their conduct. Instead, they allowed the tainted sacrifices to continue. They made a mockery of their duty, and this stirred God's displeasure.

God's appointed messengers respected Him no more than anyone else, and no one was willing to stand and put an end to it all—to close the doors of the Temple so that sacrifices would not burn in vain (1:10). There wasn't a single light in all the darkness.

This passage challenges pastors and other leaders to communicate the truth of God. We must do so not just in the classroom or in the church, but by the way we live. Anything less is a hypocritical mockery of our sacred duty. We must show respect for God, or we will not encourage others to find hope in Him. We must obey God, or we will tell the entire world that we don't have a God worth respecting.

This doesn't apply just to pastors. As New Testament believers, we are all priests of God, thanks to the sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 4:14–15; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6). We all have a responsibility to teach and share our faith, and we must all back up that teaching with personal submission and obedience.



Thomas Carlyle, a Scottish writer and philosopher from the 1800s, said, “Show me the man you honor, and I will know what kind of man you are.”

We place our hope in those whom we respect. Does your life show a respect for God? Does your worship and your lifestyle demonstrate that you place your hope in Him alone?

If not, look around you. Is God using circumstances in your life to drive you back to Him? What do you trust that keeps failing you? Why do you keep going back to it? God used the Persian army to teach Israel to rely on Him, and He can use great forces to get your attention as well.

Respect God for who He is. Ask Him to renew your hope in Him.

Closing Activity: Respecting God flows naturally from knowing God. The more we know God, the more we will respect Him.

Divide the students into four groups. Ask them to read the passage assigned to their group and discover what character quality of God deserves respect. Also, ask them for at least one practical way to demonstrate their respect for that quality. Ask a representative of each group to share their thoughts with the rest of the class.

Group 1

Passage:
Job 37:14-24

Question 1:
What part of God's character demands respect from me?

Question 2:
How can I show God that respect?

Group 3

Passage:
Neh. 1:15; 9:32; Dan. 9:4

Question 1:
What part of God's character demands respect from me?

Question 2:
How can I show God that respect?

Passage:

Rom. 11:33-36

Question 1:
What part of God's character demands respect from me?

Question 2:
How can I show God that respect?

Group 2

RESPECT

Respecting God flows naturally from knowing God. The more we know God, the more we will respect Him.

Divide the students into four groups. Ask them to read the passage assigned to their group and discover what character quality of God deserves respect. Also, ask them for at least one practical way to demonstrate their respect for that quality. Ask a representative of each group to share their thoughts with the rest of the class.

Passage:

Rom. 3:9-31

Question 1:
What part of God's character demands respect from me?

Question 2:
How can I show God that respect?

Group 4