

Capstone Essay

Scott L. Thompson

Light University Online

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Jesus stated, “These things I have spoken to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33 NKJV). With this one statement of truth, Jesus says that every one of us *will* have difficult times in our lives, but he also gives us hope. This is a great scripture and example for me as a hope coach. I must be realistic with clients and not sugar-coat their problems while at the same time giving them encouragement and building their confidence and giving them hope. I am called and anointed to be a hope-giver. In this paper I will discuss and explain 5 concepts concerning hope coaching and detail how I will use them in practical ways with my clients.

The first concept has to do with activities of hope. This is where I would guide my client to do activities or exercises that give them hope. I am a task oriented person, so doing certain activities has helped to give me hope. Not everyone is motivated in the same way, so I would need to make sure that I know my client’s personality and be careful to find something that works specifically for them. I would chose this particular concept because I have personally done the following things in my own life when things seemed hopeless and I have had success in doing so: 1) I have kept a folder of encouraging letters and notes that people have sent me and read them when I am discouraged. 2) I was deeply touched by a movie in which I saw a painting by Rembrandt of the prodigal son. It so moved me that I bought and read a book by Henri Nouwen (*The Return of the Prodigal Son*) detailing his similar encounter with the painting. 3) I have kept journals in which, at the end of the day, I write down specific things that I am grateful for. This has helped to improve my perspective when I feel hopelessness creeping in. I know that a lot of men do not like to read or write out their thoughts and feelings but there are other things that I can suggest that may help regain their hope. These would include watching a video on YouTube (Such as “I am Second”) of someone who has overcome great and similar difficulties as my client. Also, they may find healing through music or I may ask them what is encouraging to them and then have them do it.

The second concept is explaining to my client the value of true intimacy with God and people during times of crisis, difficulties, trauma, and loss in their life. The first thing that I would do in explaining this to my client would be to listen to my client's story. I would then be able to assess their relationship with God or lack thereof and the strength or weakness of their support system. Whether they are a Christian or not, I would make it clear that I am a Christian Life Coach and that my coaching is based on Biblical principles. I would also explain how my relationship with Jesus has helped me greatly during difficult times. I would explain the dangers of isolation and how a good support system and a close relationship with God are vital in moving forward and being able to enjoy life again and to have hope. It is important that the client knows that they are supported and that they do not need to go through their difficulties alone because depression can creep up on anyone. It is okay and even healthy to ask for and receive help from others. Men especially can have issues with asking for help so I would share with them how God has gotten me through difficult times and how my relationship with Him has grown during those times and

that part of that process included asking for help. I would use scriptures that are applicable to the particular client and his needs.

The third concept has to do with the truth that God meets us where we are and not where we wish we were. Understanding this truth can bring great hope to someone who is going through a tough time and feels unworthy and maybe even ashamed of where they find themselves in life. Romans 5:8 says that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. The value of something is determined by what someone is willing to pay for it. God values us so much that He gave His Son to die for us. In addition, Jesus loves us so much that He willingly did so. The Bible also says that we are His workmanship (Ephesians 2:10 NKJV). This literally means that we are His poem and His work of art. We can't hide anything from Him. Yet in spite of the fact that He knows every dark, hidden, unholy thing in our hearts, He loves us anyway. And with a love that is greater than we can comprehend. Every client needs to be told these truths and understand them so that they can have a proper perspective and hope for their future.

The fourth concept is about how God has a passion for relationships. When a client knows and understands this it can provide great hope for their suffering. The Bible makes it very clear that God is passionate about relationships. To prove it, He doesn't just talk about it. He has gone to outrageous lengths to show us by sending His Son to come and die for us so that we could receive an acquittal for our sins (John 3:16). The story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15 is the story of God the Father and His amazing love and grace for us and how He never, ever gives up on us. He has been called the "Hound of Heaven," and rightly so. He never, ever stops perusing each one of us. In Song of Solomon 7:10 it says that we are our beloved's (Jesus), and his desire is toward us. The creator of the universe says that His desire is for me. Every client needs to know this truth! In the book of John chapter 21, Jesus intentionally seeks out Peter after Peter had denied him 3 times, and makes sure that Peter knew that he was loved. This provides hope for every person because we can know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God is very fond of us. Jesus said that there would be trials in this life for every person, but He also said that He would never leave us or forsake us. He will go through every trial with us and because of our relationship with Him we will have the opportunity to grow in Him because of the trials, if we will allow it.

The fifth concept has to do with a statement that Dr. Tim Clinton makes: "Our past isn't our past if it's affecting our present." When a client comes to me, they need to fully understand and buy in to this statement. Until we effectively deal with our past, then those undealt with issues we have will continue to influence who we are today. Those things will cause us to see things through the lens of our past and it may not be a clear and true perspective. A personal example of this would be our son, whom we adopted when he was 8 years old. He had been abused and neglected before coming to our family. He is now 20 years old and is just beginning to realize the truth and importance of this statement. Even though he had received counseling from 9 different professionals when he lived in our home, he was never actually able to be honest with himself or his counselors in dealing with his past issues. Now, after being incarcerated for 2

years, he is beginning to deal with his past through a prison counselor. If he would have dealt with his past when he was younger he would probably not be in prison today. However, it is never too late to make changes in your life!