



Week 3  
Discipleship Study  
Questions



# Not So Great Expectations

As we step into a new year, many of us carry quiet longings—prayers we’re still waiting on, hopes that feel delayed, places in our stories that haven’t turned out the way we imagined. The writer of Proverbs captures this honestly: **“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.”**

If you’ve ever felt the ache of disappointment or the weariness of waiting, you’re not alone. God sees the longings of your heart, and He cares deeply about the places where your hope has grown thin.

This series, Not So Great Expectations, is an invitation to bring those longings into the light. Together, we will explore the expectations we carry in relationships, in life, and even in our faith—and the ways those expectations can sometimes drain our hearts. More importantly, we’ll look to the One who meets us in that ache with gentleness and grace.

Our prayer for this series is simple: **That you would trade what drains you for the hope that sustains you.**

Wherever you find yourself today—waiting, longing, discouraged, grateful—may you encounter the God who turns deferred hope into new life. He is closer than you think, and He is faithful.

## Read the Scripture:

*Individual:* Read the passage from two or three different translations.

*Group:* Have two different group members read the passage using different Bible translations.

## Speak the Scripture:

*Individual:* Recite the story aloud from memory (as best you can) or tell it to a friend or family member. The goal here is to get the essence of the passage in your heart.

*Group:* Have someone volunteer to recite the passage aloud in their own words, as best they can.

## Understand the Scripture:

*Individual or Group:* Use the Discovery Questions to help ensure you understand the passage.

## Dig Deeper into the Scripture:

*Individual:* Work through the Digging Deeper questions and pray about what God reveals to you through His word. Discuss with a Christian friend or family member if you choose.

*Group:* Work through the Digging Deeper questions as a group, celebrating the work God is already doing in each person’s life, and encouraging each other to trust Him in the places that need growth.

# Small Group Guidelines

## **This is a Safe Group**

Confidentiality is key—what is said in the group stays in the group. Be aware of how you are affecting the environment with your words, actions, and non-verbal communication. This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing.

## **No Crosstalk**

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations, phone time, texting etc.

## **Listen**

Let's value one another by listening to what is being shared. Allow a pause after someone shares to allow them to finish and others to consider what was said. Eye contact and body posture play key roles in creating a positive or negative group environment.

## **No Rescuing or Fixing**

We are not here to fix each other; Jesus does that part. Avoid the tendency to rescue when someone is struggling to get the words out or shares a struggle or conviction.

## **Use "I" Statements**

It's easy to talk about the issues of others, or respond with "we," "us," or "the church," but for us to grow as disciples and build relationships, we want to use "I" statements.

## **Don't Over-Talk**

We want to create time for all members of the group to participate in the discussion. Be careful not to always be the first responder or regularly give long responses.

## **Fight for Relationship**

It's not if conflict or hurt feelings will happen, but when. We commit to fight for relationship with each other. Go to the person and share your struggle or seek wise advice if you are not sure how to handle the conflict.

## Week 3

**Background:** John 11 tells the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, but it is also a carefully structured revelation of who Jesus is. Throughout the passage, expectations collide with Jesus' purposes, timing, and identity. As we read, John invites us not simply to feel the weight of the moment, but to see the glory of God revealed through Jesus as *the resurrection and the life*.

**Read:** John 11:1-7,17-44

### **Discovery Questions:**

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What do we learn about what it means to be a follower of Christ in this passage?

What do you think the Holy Spirit might be teaching you personally through this passage?

Is there anything God is leading you to do after reading this passage?

### **Digging Deeper:**

What details does John emphasize about Jesus' relationship to Mary, Martha, and Lazarus? How does verse 5 shape how we interpret Jesus' decision to delay?

Mary says the exact same words in verse 32 as Martha in verse 21. How does Jesus' response to Mary differ from his interaction with Martha?

What expectations do Mary, Martha, and the disciples have of Jesus?

What does this story suggest about the danger of placing hope in *how* God should act rather than *who* God is?

How does this story challenge the assumption that love always looks like immediate intervention?

***End this time with a prayer.***

*Heavenly Father, we confess that we create expectations for you instead of trusting in your purposes. Even when we don't understand what you are doing, Lord, help us to believe in who you are, not in what we want you to do for us. Thank you, Jesus, for revealing yourself as the resurrection and the life, and not just a quick fix to our circumstances. May we place our hope in the power of your resurrection and not in our own scripts. In Jesus' name, Amen.*