



We all love to add some extra decorations at the Christmas season. This series wants to add some extra characters to the Christmas story who can add some needed “extras” to our own faith journey.

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.

**1** What has been your experience with “waiting” (is it easy or hard for you)? Follow up: In what ways is waiting a critical part of our relationship with God?

**2 LIFE REMINDS US THAT... hope is hard.** Rick said, “When God makes a promise it usually doesn’t come with a timeline.” How have you experienced this to be true and what happened during the waiting period? Follow up: **Read Luke 2:25-38.** What stands out to you about how Luke describes Simeon and Anna? What else did you notice in their story?

**3 KEEP HOPE ALIVE! Meet regularly with other waiters.** Rick reminded us that “Hope cannot survive on just a ‘personal relationship with Jesus.’ It is sustained through the practice of gathering with others to recall God’s track record of faithfulness.” **Read Hebrews 10:23-25.** What motivation do you find in these verses to place a greater emphasis on the next step *Worship Regularly* as we move into a new year?

**4 KEEP HOPE ALIVE! Listen to the Holy Spirit.** Simeon and Anna were very attentive to the Holy Spirit. Rick said, “No one is able to see Jesus for who he is apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.” How attentive have you been in listening to the Holy Spirit in your life recently? Follow up: **Read Romans 5:5** In what ways does an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit fill us with hope? How has that worked for you?

**5 KEEP HOPE ALIVE! Put your hope to praise.**

The first response of both Simeon and Anna was to praise. The same should be true of us. **Read Psalm 33:20-22.** With this in mind, share some of the lyrics to the Christmas songs that provide hope for you during this season of life. What role does praise play in your relationship with God? What could you do to make it more prominent?

**6 KEEP HOPE ALIVE! Remember what God is doing in Jesus. Read Luke 2:29-32.** Rick pointed out that “The great temptation of Christmas is to reduce the King to a baby. But Simeon and Anna placed their hope in the promise of a coming Messiah who was going to make everything new.” What are some of the ways you’ve seen and are seeing Jesus make everything new even in this “in-between” time? Share some stories of how you’ve seen this in the lives of the people in your group or family.

**7 CHRISTMAS REMINDS US THAT hope is real!** Rick said, “Fear exists when what you have set your hope on is threatened.” In what ways does Christmas announce the coming of a salvation that cannot be threatened? **Read Psalm 27:14.** What is one thing you can do this week to continually remind yourself that hope is real?

