

Ray Johnston – Living with Hope

Ray opens his session by asking what he says is one of the most important questions you need to answer: What is the most important thing you need to do as husband, parent, worker, and Christian? Ray's answer to this question is to make sure you stay encouraged. Ray clearly explains the importance of encouragement in defining a way of life that allows God to work in it.

Discussion Questions:

1. Ray tells us that when you are discouraged, you can never be what God intended you to be. Each of us has at one time or another experienced this emotion. Did a particular experience affect how you interacted with the world around you? If so, describe that experience to a group of men who can also share their experiences with you.
2. Ray described the importance of recharging your spiritual batteries. Ray emphasizes the importance of 'cracking open your Bible.' He described the decades from the 1950s to the present as a time in which many Americans have spiritually lost their way. He spoke of a loss of AUTHORITY, a loss of VALUES, a loss of SECURITY and a loss of HOPE for the future. In the concordance in the back of your Bible, look up each of those words and write down a verse that addresses each of them.
3. In 1 Corinthians 13:13, Paul wrote of the three most important things in a Christian's life: Faith, Hope and Love. Because we tend not to emphasize hope in Christian circles, we can be less inspired and become more opinionated. On which end of the spectrum are you?
4. Ray spoke of the importance of being future-focused and letting go of the past. "The past will never take you where you want to go." What is holding you back from being future-focused?
5. Ray spoke of living to make great things happen, and the tendency of our culture to play it safe in a variety of ways. "This mindset wrecks a Christian's faith and impact." Ray described his experiences with God's faithfulness when he did not play it safe. In what way are you prepared to take a risk for God?
6. The last words of Ray in this session were: "Every time you trust God, every time you launch out and serve, every time you let go of fear and serve God, you wake up and discover that you have become the answer to someone else's prayer." Do you believe these words?