

An 8 day devotional



A LIVING
HOPE

by TWR Women of Hope



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WOMEN
OF HOPE

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A LIVING HOPE INTRODUCTION

Our prayer is that you will find hope within these pages. As you set aside time over the next 8 days to read the scriptures, encouragement and prayers to follow, may this devotional serve as the ignition that sparks your passion to search out the hope that is only found in Jesus, *A Living Hope*.

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01



A PROMISED HOPE

Titus 1:1-2

“Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness — in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time ...”

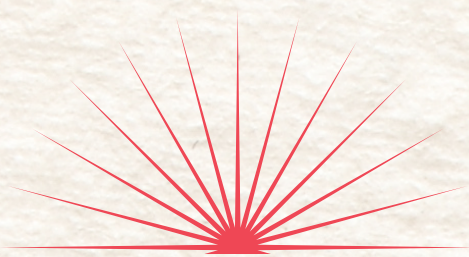
A promise is only as trustworthy as the one who makes the promise. This is not a uniquely Christian concept; rather, it is one that we encounter when making most big life decisions.

Whether you are taking out a student loan, renting an apartment, or making a big purchase such as a car or a house, it is common practice for the other party to request your credit score. The person you are doing business with wants to know your history of keeping promises and paying in full. How much more necessary for us as believers to understand the trustworthiness of the God who promises eternal life!

As with most relationships, trust is built over time. Thankfully, when it comes to God, he has no shortage of time. When our hearts begin to question the promises of God, we can look to Scripture and be reminded of the promise child with whom God blessed Abraham and Sarah, the promises of victory against enemies as the Israelites went to war, and the promise of a coming Messiah sprinkled throughout the Old Testament and carried out in the New Testament.

Furthermore, we can cling to the promises made to us in Scripture: the promise of a future and hope, the promise to never be alone and the promise that all things work together for good. We see these promises on the pages of our Bible, but when we experience them, they come to life in our own stories, and we are reminded that our God keeps his promises.

His promises never fail. So when he promises hope of everlasting life, we can live with great expectancy knowing that this existence is not the end. Even when the world around us is in turmoil, chaos and despair, we can hold on to his promises knowing that the best is yet to come. May we cling with great confidence to this promised hope because our God is faithful.



Faithful Father, thank you for being reliable in an everchanging world. Help me to cling to your promises as truth no matter what I face. Please remind my heart to hold onto hope of the eternal life to come, and not to live only for the present. Amen.

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02



HOPE INSPIRES ENDURANCE

1 Thessalonians 1:3

“We remember before our God and Father your work
produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and
your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus
Christ.”

Keep going. Don't give up. Endure.

Maybe you've spent time training for a marathon or prepping for a big exam. Maybe you've faced a hard season and had to push through, despite not knowing if or when it would end. Maybe you've heard someone say these things to you: Just keep going. One more step. Don't give up. Endure.

Easier said than done, right?

It's our natural inclination to try to get by on our own – to conquer things with our own strength and our own physical, mental and emotional capabilities. But when we do this, we run into a problem. When we're pushing through and fighting to endure on our own strength and desires alone, we will fail. If the only thing we can hope in – the only thing we look to for inspiration to endure – is ourselves, we lose faith.

Hope is a powerful thing, so where are you placing it? When hope is fully realized in the knowledge of who God is, what he's done and how he loves us, it's as powerful as it can possibly be. Powerful enough to inspire endurance. 1 Thessalonians 1:3 reminds us of this truth. Hope is what we can cling to and rely on when we face that giant mountain that seems impossible to climb on our own. Hope that God is with us, that he is for us and that his strength through the power of his spirit is what overcomes, is the ultimate source of inspiration when it comes to enduring. Hope in Christ – not in ourselves – is what should encourage us to keep fighting the good fight and keeping the faith.

We are not alone. We are not blindly enduring. We are taking that one more step, not giving up, and are moving forward because of where we have placed our hope.



Lord, we praise you for the gift of hope, the power of the gospel, and for your ever-present help in time of need. Thank you that we can have endurance to face various trials because of your Son and the work he did on the cross. Help us to rely on your strength to see us through every trial we face. Amen.

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03



HOPE IS OUR INHERITANCE

Ephesians 1:18

“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people.”

When Paul wrote those words, he was addressing Christians in Ephesus, but his words were as impactful to them then as they are to us today.

As believers in his gospel and by his sacrifice, we are reconciled into a kinship with God from which we were once hopelessly separated. We are his children, and as his children, we find ourselves heirs to a kingdom we could never have hoped to receive by our own merit. It's an estate only the Lord himself could craft and freely give by his grace — one of wisdom and love, of profound communion with God, and one that grants us an inheritance few will know completely: hope.

Where we were once blinded by the earthly confines of this life, our eyes have now been opened to enduring life with God. We know that this is not our home, that we belong with Christ in eternity, that we are made to reflect the Lord in all our wanderings here on earth until he calls us home. Our story does not end here. While we toil in shadows that will someday cease and the world will pass away, we are called to a light that will never be extinguished. [And more than that, we know that the very strength that sustains us is of the same God and by the same God who resurrected Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand. Think about that!

Paul's prayer for the Ephesians was that they would know this truth deeply and without reserve, and that is our prayer for you: that you would be awakened to the immeasurable hope the Lord calls us to spread all over the world! And that, dear sisters, is richness indeed!



*Lord, we pray that the breadth of your hope would not be lost on us,
that we would pursue this calling with open eyes and willing hands,
and that you would work in us to make your hope known
to all the world!*

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04



HOPE BRINGS STRENGTH

Isaiah 40:31

“Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not
grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

A quick internet search of the Merriam-Webster dictionary provides three main definitions for the word **strength**:

STRENGTH

(noun)

1. the quality or state of being strong; capacity for exertion or endurance
2. power to resist force
3. power of resisting attack

Each of these definitions leads us to think that strength has everything to do with our physical state. To be strong, we must put in the daily work of going to the gym to lift weights or do a cardio workout so we can endure, resist or restrain. Without this daily diligence in building strength, we will lose muscle or a physical battle against someone stronger. While physical strength training is certainly important, this view of strength leads us to rely on ourselves. It's a continual striving that we do on our own; it leaves God out of the picture.

Isaiah 40:31 points us to a different kind of strength, a spiritual strength that can come only from the daily practice of putting our hope in the Lord. It's a strength that comes when we cease striving through our own efforts. It's a strength that comes when we surrender to the Lord of Life and trust that his strength will be our renewal.

When we put our hope in the Lord daily, we are strong in him (which is so much better than our own strength). When we hope in the Lord daily, we can endure persecution, suffering, sickness and grief because we know God has a perfect purpose and plan. Putting our hope in the Lord gives us power to resist forces of evil and to resist the attacks of the Evil One himself.

So, at our next gym workout, let us be reminded to practice hoping in the Lord. We can build physical strength while building spiritual strength. When we do this, we will not grow weary. We will not grow faint. We will be able to endure, resist and fight every spiritual battle that comes our way because we rest in the strength of God himself.

Dear Christian, "let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful" (Hebrews 10:23). He is faithful to hold us and strengthen us, even in the darkest of days.



Yahweh, we praise you that our strivings for spiritual strength can cease. Our own strength can be replaced with yours by simply putting our hope in you. Forgive us, oh Lord, when we try to be strong by our own doing. Help us to trust that your strength and power are enough in every circumstance. Carry us, Lord Jesus, by your strength. Amen.

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05



TRUSTING THE GOD OF HOPE

Romans 15:13

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Hope is a concept that is incredibly interesting to ponder. It is not a tangible object that can be plainly seen. Nor is it an article that one can physically pack up and carry with her wherever she goes. Because hope may not be something that individuals feel or think they interact with on a daily basis, it is easy for its influence to go unnoticed and its value to be ignored. But if ever someone experiences the absence of hope, the pain she will find is devastatingly palpable.

About six months ago I experienced the loss of my father. He was a God-fearing man who dedicated his life to serving the Lord and raised me to do the same. I have always believed in the Scriptures and the promises God made, but in this time, I found myself heartbroken and terrified. For days my mind was spinning and flooded with doubt and questioning. What if we got it wrong? What if there is no God and there is nothing that comes after this life? What if that really was the last time I will ever see my dad? On top of the immense grief I felt for the loss of my father I started to feel a hopelessness that comes without the promise of new life. I cried out to the Lord daily and hourly, "I believe, I believe, God help my disbelief" (Mark 9).

In my pain, my only comfort was Scripture and specifically the passages that reiterated God's promise. I read them over and over as I came to find they are my only hope, the hope I must cling to and the hope I believe my dad abounded in. I praise the Lord that he is a God of hope and that we, his children, can find hope in the life, death and resurrection of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Even in my sadness the past few months, I have found a joy and peace that surpasses all understanding, one that can come only through believing in the Messiah.



God of hope, I pray that no matter the circumstance, we as your children would turn to you so that we do not experience hopelessness. Instead, may you fill us with all joy and peace, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, may we abound in hope. Amen.

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A LOVE LETTER OF HOPE

John 19:30

"When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, 'It is finished,' and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."

My sweet daughter,

Today, you are in my heart as I give up my life for you. I came to this earth because I love you. I love you more than anything else in the world. I want you not to be discouraged.

Don't worry – you will see me again. Keep your heart pure and your life focused on what I am calling you to do. You are beautiful and amazing! You are smart and compassionate. I know everything about you and will never forget you or leave you. You are in the palm of my hand, and nothing can pull us apart.

Be watchful, always showing my love to those who do not know me yet. Remember, you are mine! I am near to you, and I can hear your prayers. Open your heart and trust me. My relationship with you is not like any of your other relationships. Our relationship is eternal. I know what you need even before you ask me. I will protect and provide for you. You can depend on me.

When you are lonely, look to me for companionship. When you are confused, look to me for wisdom. When you are discouraged, look to me for your hope. When you suffer and go through pain, know that I am with you and will comfort and guide you.

I gave up my life on the cross and bore your sin because I want you near me for all eternity. I have paid your debt, and it is finished.

Eternally yours,
Jesus



Dear Jesus, help me to trust you with all my heart. Thank you for paying the price of my debt with your life on the cross. You are the only reason I am alive today and will have life with you for all eternity. I live, study and serve for you alone. You are my love, my life, my Lord.

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06



WHEN ALL HOPE SEEMS LOST

Proverbs 13:12

"Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life."

As Christians, our lives can be filled with the joys of a loving community, songs that make us feel free and verses that bring comfort and hope. However, if we're honest, there are also times when trials come flooding in. We wake up feeling lost, overwhelmed and as if we are miles away from God's path, unsure of how to get back on track. When all hope seems lost, first, know with confidence that our good God is still at work. We serve the God of both the roaring mountains and the dark valleys, and the God who brought hope and restoration to Job, Ruth and Paul is the same God that hears your cries and is reaching out to carry your burdens today. When you are brokenhearted and desiring some sort of peace, take a moment to ask yourself, "Who is the Lord to whom I pray?" As you cry out to God, remind yourself who is hearing those pleas. Remember his provision in your life and in the lives of other believers. Remember his grace and mercy on display in Jesus. Sing and proclaim Eliza Hewitt's song with the assurance that he is just the same for you today.



Jesus, let your peace wash over us. Restore our hope, renew our spirits and help us find rest in who you are, who you have been and who you always will be.

The God who led His people thro'
the parted sea,
And from Egyptian bondage, set
His children free,
Who rain'd down bread from
heaven all the pilgrim way,
Is the God to whom I pray.

CHORUS

Just the same today, just the
same today,
As when He led His people thro'
the sea;
His trustful child I'll be,
For in His word I see,
The God who doeth wonders
Is just the same today.

The God who rescued Daniel from
the lion's den,
And from the fiery furnace, sav'd
the three young men,
Who speaks, and constellations
will His voice obey,
Is the God to whom I pray.

The God who stills the tempest
with a word divine,
And on the clouds of sorrow,
makes His rainbows shine,
Who from the tomb of Jesus
rolled the stone away,
Is the God to whom I pray.

The God who clothes the lily in
its robe of snow,
Who in the barren desert makes
His rivers flow;
The God who lifts the sinner from
the miry clay,
Is the God to whom I pray.

The God to Whom I Pray
by Eliza Hewitt

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08



A LIVING HOPE

1 Peter 1:3

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

Hope. It is the one thing that we humans cannot live without. When hope dies within us, many simply give up or allow their souls to become numb or bitter. Hope is what gives us strength not only to exist but also to flourish in life. It is the promise that there is something better on the horizon, something worth all the effort in our daily struggles.

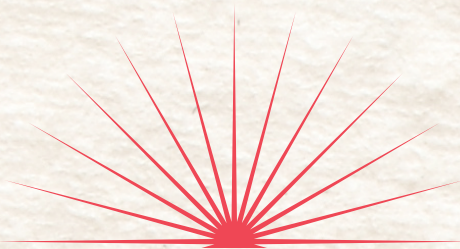
But hope is not wishful thinking or sheer willpower to push through challenging times. It is completely dependent upon the object of our hope. For the Christian, hope is not based on anything material; nor is it an emotion or an expectation. Rather, it is a person – Jesus Christ, our living hope.

And “living” is the amazing key to our hope. Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, everything has changed. His defeat of death has made possible a new life that he offers to all who put their trust in him. Gone is the striving to do enough good deeds to outweigh our sin. The reality is that we are dead in our sin without Jesus.

But God in his mercy came up with a plan to reconcile us to himself. When we choose to follow Jesus and trust that his sacrifice is complete payment for our sin, the Father who raised Jesus from the dead promises also to raise us to new life. We, too, are born into this living hope.

Many things in our lives are beyond our control, but the one thing we do have control over is our attitude toward our life and circumstances. God calls us to join him in embracing his perspective by living with eternity in mind – an eternity that affects our present and future. Because of Jesus’ resurrection, the Spirit of God lives inside you, Jesus intercedes for you and he is preparing a place for you in heaven. Jesus offers a hope that no person or circumstance can take away! In Christ, we can persevere, find our strength in him and have a joy-filled, hopeful spirit.

Would you join me in living a life of praise to God, a life whose focus keeps our eyes and heart on Jesus Christ, our living hope?



Father, it is with joy that we thank you for the living hope that you have birthed within us. The resurrection of Jesus has allowed us to be freed from sin and to embrace life with you. We are eternally grateful!

Amen.



LET GOD'S HOPE LIVE IN YOU

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. " 1 Peter 1:3-5

What is "living hope?" The New Testament idea of living hope is very different from our own ideas of hope. Peter tells us in this verse that God has "caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Our living hope is found in Jesus alone – he is our hope for today and for eternity. In Jesus we can have hope despite our anxiety, we can have hope despite our trials, we can have hope despite the present circumstances and our concerns about the future.

I pray that you have been encouraged through the devotionals in *A Living Hope*. Today, may you continue to seek his guidance and have courage to believe that you are not alone. God knows what you need even before you ask him. He loves you and wants you to know his love, grace and mercy. May you walk in the peace of Jesus, finding your living hope in him.



In Him our hearts rejoice,

Dr. Peggy Banks



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a product of TWR Women of Hope