

# WHERE IS YOUR HOPE?

The Necessity of Confident Expectation

Second Edition

BY JEREMY L. GOLDSMITH

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# FORWARD

Jeremy L. Goldsmith has indeed captured the revelation of the power of hope in this book which clarifies the necessity of hope in a world that is experiencing tremendous moral, social and economic decline.

Many people have found themselves mired in adverse circumstances that have brought them to the point of despair and gloom. Feeling that they are in this world without hope, some have resorted to alternatives that can only worsen their lives. There must be a revelation that there is no substitute for hope. Hope is from God and His Word!

Jeremy states, "The Bible is not a big book of bedtime stories...The Bible is a living testament to what God has done, is doing, and will do." If the Word of God is alive—and indeed it is—then it can truly produce a hope that is also alive! People must embrace the Word of God. They must read it, study it, and apply it. The Word of God is our hope for today and tomorrow.

Scripture says, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13, KJV).

God can fill you with joy and cause you to have faith. Faith that produces peace and increase in hope by His Spirit, or, as the Amplified Bible, Classic Edition states, “be overflowing [bubbling over] with hope.” I believe that the Word of God produces such faith and hope!

When we read the testimony of Abraham, the father of faith, who hoped against hope and became the father of many nations, how can we not be encouraged and stirred to hope in God, who is faithful to His promises? "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4, KJV). I believe that the word of God is our manual for living and that it reveals the reason we can have hope when it may appear all hope is lost.

*Where Is Your Hope* is well-written and full of encouraging testimonials. It is an inspiring composition and an excellent tool that will strengthen and stir the hearts of all, especially those who have fallen prey to hopelessness and despair in a world they believe to be without hope and redemption.

This book will give those who have abandoned their relationship with Christ, the hope of glory in us, an

opportunity to trust Him again, and those who need to be introduced to Christ the opportunity to be reconciled to harmony and favor with God, their true hope. I pray that as you read this book that your search for hope will end because you will have found and embraced the truths which have pointed you to the God of hope!

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# INTRODUCTION

## **What is hope?**

Hope is what drove the great Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to amplify an already growing civil rights movement that brought about social change in America and across the world. Hope is what urges scientists to discover cures for fatal diseases. Hope is what motivates firefighters to run into burning buildings and save lives.

Sadly, the current political, social, economic, and moral conditions of the world have caused many, including Christians, to question their hope and future. In the past few years our world has seen an increase in mass shootings, racial tensions, and most recently, worldwide pandemic. Many have placed their hope in politicians, entertainers, spiritual gurus, athletes, economic giants, doctors, scientists, and even radical social movements. When the next catastrophe happens and these substitutes fail or fade away, people slowly fall back into a hopeless state.

There is a hunger for hope that none of these alternatives will fill. Those temporary substitutes were never designed to fill the gap. Who and what you place your hope in will make a huge difference in what you expect in your life and the level of peace that you will experience. Only the true source of hope can fill the void.

The purpose of this book is to help you understand the necessity of hope: Not just any hope, but a lasting hope that can only be found in Jesus Christ alone. In this book, I will give a clear and simple definition of hope, reveal its origins, specify its necessity, expose hope blockers, and teach you how to activate hope. This book will also point you to the true source of hope, and discuss the fruit that accompanies the life of a person who embraces true hope. After reading this book, you will have a better understanding of the necessity and the power of hope.

**Where is your hope?**

# HOPE DEFINED

*But I will hope continually,  
and will yet praise thee more and more.*  
-Psalm 71:14, KJV

## **My life began with hope.**

I was born April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1981, prematurely, at 28 weeks. I spent the first three months of my life in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. The doctors told my mother and father that I might not live and if by some miracle I did live, I would be developmentally delayed. They said that wouldn't learn like a "normal" child.

I am now thirty-nine years old. I've served my country, graduated from college; I've become an author, speaker, entrepreneur, multimedia artist, a husband, and a father.

Based on the doctors' prognoses, I should not have accomplished half of what I have accomplished in my life. I give much credit to my parents because they never accepted the doctors' grim forecasts. After hearing this story I realize that they were not operating on an average

level of expectation: They had what I call confident expectation. They had hope! Furthermore, I believe that God Himself placed a spark of hope on the inside my fragile, premature body that sustained me all those nights inside the NICU. I believe that hope allowed me to fight for my own life and for my future, even as a fragile newborn.

Psalm 22:9 reads, “But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts” (KJV). This is why hope is so important to me. It literally saved my life and shaped my future. Hope is a necessity in life for all who desire peace, productivity, prosperity, success, personal fulfillment, and purpose.

Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary defines “hope” as "to cherish a desire with anticipation; to desire with expectation of obtainment; to expect with confidence." In short, **Hope is confident expectation.**

Sadly, there are countless numbers of people in the world today who don’t have that type of expectation. There may be legitimate reasons and circumstances that have caused them to lose what little hope they once had. But, instead of simply losing hope, many have exchanged their hope for hopelessness.

# HOPELESSNESS DEFINED

Merriam-Webster defines “hopelessness” as **“having no expectation of good or success; giving no ground for hope; incapable of accomplishment.”**

A person who is in a state of hopelessness lives with the mindset that nothing good or successful will happen in their life. Even when a promising opportunity comes their way, they will focus on the possibility of failure more than the possibility of success. They will rarely venture out and try new things because they believe they are incapable of accomplishment. Hopelessness is a very dangerous state of mind to be in because it automatically sets you up for failure. You become more vulnerable to negative circumstances than to positive ones. You allow fear to enter in; and that fear will produce the negative results that you are expecting. Job 3:25 reads, “For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me” (KJV). **In essence, fear is a great expectation of loss or failure. Fear is expecting the worst.**

Now I don’t want to sound insensitive because everyone experiences things in their life that was not part of

their original plan. You may have lost your home to foreclosure, or you may have gone through a divorce. Maybe you received a diagnosis of a terminal illness. Maybe you have an addiction that you feel like you will never overcome. Whatever your situation, dwelling in hopelessness will only hinder your progress. It will take you deeper into your pit of depression and uncertainty.

But, hope will not allow you to stay there. **Hope will snatch you from the pit despair and give your life new meaning and purpose.** Hope is necessary! Where is your hope?

# ORIGINS OF HOPE

*“Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.”*

-Psalm 119:49–50, KJV

Psalm 119:49-50 reads, “Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me”(KJV).

Want to know a secret? Here it is.

**Hope doesn't come from within us. It flows through us.** This would indicate that any measure of hope that we have is not produced by our own will power but is deposited in us to fulfill a higher purpose in our life. This would also indicate that hope comes from a higher power; a higher entity. Something or someone divine. Something or someone who can create and distribute it inside a human being to accomplish a specific purpose. The writer in Psalms 119 says that he was given a hope, a confident expectation, by a higher power. The hope that he was given

gave him a measure of comfort and peace, even during pain and suffering. I believe that higher power is God almighty.

The writer literally holds God responsible for his expectation. Based on a few key terms in this Scripture, I imagine that without this **“word”** or **“promise”** from God, the writer would have fallen into hopelessness. An affliction would have overcome and overtaken him. But because God made a promise, he expected God to follow through on His word. The first key term that we will consider is **word**, which we will equate to as a **promise** from God. The writer says to God, “Remember thy word.” He is in reality reminding God of a promise that was made. Pretty bold huh! Reminding God? Well, let’s look at it from a human to human perspective.

When my wife and I stood at the altar, and I pledged to love her in sickness and health, I gave her hope that I would do just that. Therefore, if she happens to get sick, and I fall short on my promise, she has every right to remind me of what I promised at the altar. Likewise, the writer had every right to remind God of His promise.

Another key term that the writer used is **comfort**—not just any comfort, but specifically, comfort during affliction. If I were to become fatally ill, God forbid, I am

confident that my wife would still be by my side and not abandon me during my affliction. Why? Because she made a promise. Likewise, the **word** or **promise** that God made to the writer gave him the ability to endure his momentary affliction.

The last key term is “**quicken**ed.” **The word quicken means to stimulate or become stimulated.** God’s promise **stimulated** and **energized** the writer. It raised his level of expectation. It gave new life to his dry bones! Because I know that my wife would be by my side, should I become fatally ill, it would give me the strength and endurance and fight for my healing. Her commitment to her promise to love me in sickness and in health would give me strength to live.

What is it that God has promised you? Whatever it is, if you hold on to that promise, and remind God of what He said, it will in return give you strength to endure during your affliction. Where is your hope?

# HOPE IN GOD'S WORD

*“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.”*

-Romans 15:4, NIV

When my niece was just a toddler, she loved to eat bananas. She used to call them “beannas.” One night as I was about to put her to bed, she asked for a “beanna.” Considering the hour, I told her that it was too late and politely said “No.” As you can already guess, that didn’t go over well. She began to pitch a fit and refused to go to sleep. I was torn: Should I give in and risk her getting a stomachache, or should I put my foot down and stand by my word? I decided to make a deal with her.

“DeAra if you go to sleep, I promise I will give you a banana when you wake up in the morning.” Surprisingly, she said ok and went to sleep right away.

Early the next morning as I sat down on her bed, I gently shook her awake. Her body sprung forward quickly and the first thing I heard was “Beanna”! As funny as it was at the time I now see it as a great example of real hope and faith. You see, I gave her a promise the night before, and she woke up expecting me to do exactly what I said I would do. I had no choice but to keep my promise.

Now, if a child can have this much hope and confidence in a flawed man like myself, surely, we can have hope in God and His promises. This is a great illustration of how we should place our hope and faith in God and His promises. We should have confident expectation that God will do exactly what He has promised in His Word. Romans 15:4 reads, "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope"(TNIV).Therefore, we have to grow in our thinking concerning Gods word and his promises.

The Bible is not a big book of bedtime stories. It's not just a historical document for educational research. The Bible is a **living testament** to what God has done what He is doing, and what He will do. We should consciously view

the Bible (God's Word), as it is described in Hebrews 4:12, as **“living and active.”** This means that it is always moving and looking for something or someone to attach itself to so it can manifest itself and accomplish its task here in the earth. Isaiah 55:10–11 reads, “The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it” (NLT).

God cannot lie! He is not like mankind, who may say one thing but mean another. Neither is He confused about what He said. He does not second-guess Himself or over analyze His own thoughts. God speaks, and that's it! When God's word leaves His mouth, it travels about, seeking a heart that is fertile enough to produce the fruit of His words.

If God's Word were to return to Him without accomplishing its task, this would disqualify God as a reliable source of hope. The same words that have led millions to salvation in Jesus Christ came from the same Bible that offers us words of healing, prosperity,

deliverance, and peace. We cannot confidently receive and maintain that we have salvation and yet fail to believe that God's word will do the same in other areas of our lives. We cannot afford to have confidence in only some of God's Word. We must have faith in God's entire Word. Where is your hope?

# MISPLACED HOPE

*“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.”*

*Psalm 20:7*

What happens when we place our hope in the wrong things? The answer is that we are often left disappointed when those things fail us. Whether it's placing our hope in money, relationships, education, or even in ourselves, understand that these things are temporal and fragile. They will eventually fade away. Colossians 3:2 The Passion Translation (TPT), reads “Yes, feast on all the treasures of the heavenly realm and fill your thoughts with heavenly realities, and not with the distractions of the natural realm.” Wow! Isn't that a powerful?

Why is it important that we think on heavenly realities instead of natural realities? Because, heavenly realities are eternal and will always work because they are not bound by temporal restraints and temporal conditions. But, those things that are below in the earth are based on times, seasons, and conditions.

For example, when we place our hope on money, we are putting our confidence in something that runs on man's schedule. If your paycheck come like clockwork every Friday, then you might look to Friday as being your day of prosperity. But what happens if you get furloughed or laid off by your job before Friday? Now the conditions have changed and now your hope has been interrupted. But, if you instead, place your hope in Gods eternal Word that says, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus," then you have placed your hope in a heavenly (eternal) reality that will work no matter what day of the week. **When we have a misplaced hope, hope in temporal realities, it keeps us from discovering eternal opportunities.** A biblical example of someone who placed their hope in eternal realities instead of natural realities is found in the story of David and Goliath found in 1 Samuel chapter 17.

King Saul and the Nation of Israel were at war with the Philistine army. The Philistines has chosen one of their champion fighters to challenge anyone from Israel's army to battle him. This giant of a man insulted Gods people and taunted them day by day. There was no man, not even the king, who had enough courage to face Goliath.

As the young shepherd boy David, who had already been anointed the next King of Israel, arrived on the scene, hearing the blasphemous words of Goliath. Then David assures the people that they have nothing to be afraid of. He explained to the King that although he was young and was not trained in traditional weaponry, that God had supernaturally enabled him to kill a lion and a bear. He assured King Saul that Goliath would fall.

As he approached Goliath, the Giant, was amused by Israel's choice to challenge him. In verses 43, Goliath says to David, "Am I a dog that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!"

David responds with, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. 47 All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or

spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands." In the end, David slays the giant with a sling shot and a single stone.

While Saul and Goliath looked at the temporal conditions of the situation, David turned his focus to the heavenly realities of the situation. What looked hopeless to the nation of Israel was an opportunity for a heavenly disruption in the earth.

This is why it is so important that we do not misplace our hope. Not that we ignore the facts of our situation but we look to the truth that is found in God's eternal word that has the final say so about the situation. Some trust in horses, chariots, money, and education, but we are encouraged to "look to the hills from which cometh our help. Our help comes from the Lord." **Where is your hope?**



# THE HOPE & FAITH RELATIONSHIP

*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.*

*-Heb. 11:1–2, NIV*

Hope alone will not cause everything that you desire to happen in your life. There is another ingredient that is needed to bring about the manifestation of what you hope for. That ingredient is **Faith**. Hope needs faith and faith need's hope. Hope gives faith something to work toward, and faith serves as the confirmation that your hope will manifest.

Consider this exchange: Your friend says, "I have great faith!" and you ask, "What do you have faith for?" He responds, "Oh, I don't know. I just have faith." His words wouldn't make much sense, would they? Faith needs a beginning and an ending point. **Faith without hope is nothing but unguided anticipation and hope without**

**faith is nothing more than wishful thinking.** Hope provides both the beginning of what you're expecting and how you want it to end, establishing a **target** for your faith.

In the book of 1 Kings, when God says to Solomon, "Ask what I shall give you" (3:5, AMP), Solomon was not vague in his request. He was very specific, saying, "So give your servant an understanding mind and a hearing heart to judge your people that I may discern between good and bad. For who is able to judge and rule this your great people?" (3:9, AMP).

Because his requests was specific, God granted Solomon that and much more.

*Behold, I have done as you asked. I have given you a wise, discerning mind, so that no one before you was your equal, nor shall any arise after you equal to you. I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor so that there shall not be any among the kings equal to you all your days. (3:12–13, AMP)*

Likewise, God wants us to be specific and descriptive when we make our requests. This lets God know whether it is unguided expectation, wishful thinking, or true faith and hope.

# RESERVATION

2 Corinthians 3:12 (ASV) reads, "Having, therefore, such a hope, we use great boldness of speech."

When you call a restaurant to make a reservation, you are doing so in hopes that you will have a table available when you arrive. When you give the host your name, he/she, in turn, will confirm your reservation. When you reach the restaurant, you have a confident expectation that you will be seated without a wait. This is the same way that hope and faith work together for everything else in your life: that is, everything that is according to God's plan and his will for your life.

If hope is never given the opportunity to partner with faith to produce a physical manifestation, it will transform into regret, bringing with it spiritual, emotional, and sometimes even physical sickness (see Prov. 13:12). There are things that God has promised us that are reserved specifically for us. There are things that God has prepared for us that when the time comes will be given to us. Having confident expectation is knowing that when the time arrives, God will seat us in the place that He has promised us; the place that has been reserved specifically for us.

*“But just as it is written [in Scripture], “Things which the eye has not seen and the ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him [who hold Him in affectionate reverence, who obey Him, and who gratefully recognize the benefits that He has bestowed].”*  
*I Corinthians 2:9 (AMP)*

Where is your hope?

# HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you,  
says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to  
give you a future and a hope.*

-Jeremiah 29:11, NKJV

Hope is at the center of God's plan for your life. Without hope, you will fail to believe that life can be better—that it should be better. You may feel as if your efforts are futile and without meaning, when in reality they are producing a hidden harvest. In Jeremiah 29:11, God tells the young prophet that He intends to give him a future and a hope. Jeremiah 1:5 reads, "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born, I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations" (NLT).

Even after this word from God, Jeremiah still tried to convince God that He had chosen the wrong guy for the

job. In Jeremiah's mind, he was too young to be a prophet: he didn't have the training nor the skills to do the job. He didn't believe that anyone would take him seriously. God said, "Look, I have put my words in your mouth! Today I appoint you to stand up against nations and kingdoms. Some you must uproot and tear down, destroy and overthrow. Others you must build up and plant" (Jer. 1:9–10, NLT). God gave Jeremiah exactly what he needed to accomplish his task. God made sure to inform him that his credibility and training came from God, not from man.

God has done the same for you. He has given you a hope and a future. He has equipped you with the tools necessary to bring about the very thing you are hoping for. The very hope that he put on the inside of you. But it is up to each person to embrace that hope and to trust that God has equipped him to see that hope come to fruition. This is where we must take our eyes off our present condition and our past failures and catch the vision of God.

## VISION

Pastor Andy Stanley, the founder of North Point Ministries, defines vision as "a clear mental picture of what could be, fueled by the conviction that it should be; that it is a preferred future." The late Dr. Myles Munroe of

Bahama Faith Ministries defines vision as “a glimpse of our future that God has purposed.”

My personal definition for vision is: “**a divine revelation of a potential future.**” It is **divine** because it is from God. It is **potential** because it requires faith and obedience. Having a clear vision for your life is an important part of the **hope/faith equation**. Staying focused on your vision ensures that you will reach your destination.

God ask the Prophet Jeremiah: “What do you see?” Jeremiah responded by telling God the vision he saw through divine revelation. Then God stated: “You have seen well.” How do you see your life three, five, or ten years from now? Do you see it as being well or do you see it as being ill? Are you always questioning what God has called you to do? Are you always giving excuses as to why you can’t do what God has created you to do? Are you relying on your own strength? Are you looking at what you can do in your power, or do you trust in the power of the word and the Holy Spirit within you? What do you see?

One way to stay focused on your vision is to write it down. Writing it down in a sense makes it legal. Habakkuk 2:2 reads, “Write down the message I am showing you in a vision. Write it clearly on the tablets you use.” (NIRV).

Like a map, a written vision makes it clear where we are and where we're going.

When I was in the Army, I was required to have land and navigation training. The purpose of this training was to learn how to use a compass, how to read a map, and most importantly, how to get from one point A to point B. One of the most important things I discovered during this training was how accurate you must be to reach your destination. One degree off course can lead you miles away from your destination. The further you are from your destination, the longer it will take you to get back on course. The longer it takes you to get back on course, the darker it gets. It then becomes harder to see, minimizing your chances of reaching your destination safely.

There are a few techniques we were taught to use if we got lost. The first thing we were trained to do is to stop moving and reorient your current position with the map. You can't get to where you are going if you don't know where you are. Next, after you have located where you are on the map, you must refer to your compass and reestablish your direction. Third, you should pick a landmark in front of you and walk to that landmark. Once you reach that

point, refer to your compass and pick another landmark. Repeat these steps until you reach your destination.

When it comes to reaching the vision that God has given you, you can use those same skills. If you find yourself far away from what you know God has put in your heart concerning your life, the first thing you need to do is stop. Look back at the vision that God has shown you concerning your future. Is where you are part of the vision and plan for your life, or are you entirely off course from where of God intended? If you are, then you should go back to God's Word (your life map), and reorient yourself. When you get off course from His Word, you will soon discover that you are lost.

You should then get direction from the Holy Spirit (your spiritual compass), as to what you should do from this point forward. Should you just stay still and wait, or should you move in a specific direction? It's important that you not be in a hurry and move too quickly. Don't move until He gives you clear direction. This doesn't mean that you are wasting time or doing nothing. You are being actively patient with the Holy Spirit. He will never leave you or forsake you. He will lead you in the path of righteousness for his namesake. His name is on the line.

Once you have received guidance from the Holy Spirit, look for marks (landmarks) (goals) to keep you focused and on track to your destination. Then, track those goals to verify that you are still on course. For example, if God has given you hope of being debt free, then one way to manifest that is to create financial goals and then check your bank statements, credit card bills, and other financial markers to see if your debt is increasing or decreasing? These land marks (goals) will let you know if you're on or off course.

The question is, how do you see your life ten years from now? Have you spent enough time with God and His word to capture an accurate vision of your future? If so, could you give Him an adequate description of what He has shown you? Just like Jeremiah, God has plans of peace and hope for your future. If we stick to the vision that God has mapped out for us and stay focused on the direction that He takes us, we will reach the destination he has prepared for us. Have you written down Gods vision for your life? Where is your hope?

# HOPE OF THE CALL

*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.*

-Ephesians 1:17-19, KJV

What does it mean to be called?

This is a question that I have been asked on many occasions. Growing up Pentecostal, whenever I heard someone say that they were called by God, it usually meant that a person believed they were to serve God in ministry in some form or fashion. Although there may be a measure of truth to this there is a higher calling than simply working in ministry.

## CORPORATE CALLING

From a biblical perspective, **to be called is to receive an invitation to join Gods family and to partner with him in His work.** But the former must come before the latter. But this is not just an invitation to show up. It is an invitation to **come out of, come into, and to become.**

As a Christian, the first and most important thing that God invites us to do is to come **OUT** of darkness, **INTO** his marvelous light, so that we **BECOME** a Kingdom of Priest. 1 Peter 2:9, reads, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Salvation through Jesus Christ is the path that we take to transition out of the world(darkness) and into the Kingdom of God (light) so that we are no longer sinners but become Sons and Kingdom citizens. Again, this is the first and most important calling or invitation that every believer must accept.

Once we accept this invitation we become a member of the corporate church or his *ekklesia*, meaning **the called out ones.**

# INDIVIDUAL CALLING

Now when it comes to your individual calling God definitely has a plan and a process for that as well.

It is very common to hear inspirational and motivational speakers say, "You can do anything that you put your mind to" or "You can be anything you want to be." As good as this may sound, however, please understand that there are things we can do, and then there are things that we were created, called, and commissioned to do for God.

Throughout my adult life I have wanted to be a psychologist, a teacher, a real estate agent, a project manager, a military chaplain, and a music producer. I have jumped from college to college and from major to major. I've spent a lot of time, energy, and money on things that looked good, but in the end, I didn't have a real passion or potential for. I found myself always frustrated and unable to make up my mind about anything. I had no definite vision for my life. But then God gave me a hope, a future, and a definite calling, which gave me a vision for the future.

Ephesians 1:18 reads, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is

the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (KJV).

To be called by God as an individual member of the body of Christ is to be separated by God for a specific assignment. The Apostle Paul was specifically set apart by God to serve as an Apostle to the Gentiles, while Peter was set apart to be an Apostle for the Jews. God called both, but they had very different assignments.

Paul prayed that the Ephesian Church would come to the full knowledge of what God had called them to do. To Paul it was about more than just going to church, tithing, receiving communion, and being baptized. People can go to church their entire life and still miss their calling. Sometimes, the calling of God will come in the form of a burden for something. If you have a burden for the homeless, then God might be calling you to help homeless people in some way. Sometimes your calling comes through a problem. If you discover a problem in your community that negatively impacts the residents in that community, then God may be calling you to provide a solution. One of the things that I know God has called me to do is to help build up and bring out the best in others: To help people discover their purpose and to fulfill their God-

given assignment. That is what I hope to do through this book.

One way to know if your calling is from God is to determine if it connects to God's overall call for every believer of Jesus Christ. Because we are all part of God's family, He has called us all to one mission. Ephesians 4:4 reads, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (KJV). That corporate calling is to spread the gospel and to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Whatever your hope is, if it is from God and if you are a born-again believer in Jesus Christ, then it will be connected to God's hope of preaching the gospel, making disciples, and expanding His kingdom here on the earth.

As I've heard Pastor Jentzen Franklin state, "If what you want to do is connected to the harvest, then God can get involved in it." Your hope and calling should in some way bring people closer to Jesus. This in return will build up the body of Christ. We, as a body of believers, become increasingly like Jesus. Another reason why it was so important to Paul for each believer to know their calling, was so that God could demonstrate His power through them. Ephesians 1:19 reads, "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according

to the working of his mighty power” (KJV). There are great things that God wants to do through us, but we will never walk in His greatness until we become obedient and get in alignment with what He has called us to do as a corporate body. When we get busy doing what God has called us to do He can demonstrate His supernatural power through us. When the world see’s us operating in the supernatural power of God they will become curious about where this power comes from. That will then open the door for us to share who that power comes from. It opens the door for us to share Christ.

It is my hope that as you increase in hope and faith that you would also increase in your awareness of what you have been uniquely called to do for the Kingdom of God.

# HOPE BLOCKERS

*When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.*

-Pro. 11:7, KJV

Hope is a spiritual concept, and God is a spiritual being. God often extends His hope to unbelievers—by means of hope filled words and acts of kindness through believers as evidence of His existence—that unbelievers might turn from their sins and trust in Jesus Christ. But there are **Hope Blockers** that can keep both unbelievers and believers alike from experiencing all that God offers.

What is a hope blocker? **A Hope Blocker is anything that is contrary to and gets in the way of your hope, making your efforts ineffective.** Here are some examples:

## THE STUNTING OF SIN

**Sin is disobedience to God that separates us from the presence of God. It is missing the mark.**

Remember when you were young, playing chase in the back yard? Did you ever find yourself caught in a spiders web or briar patch? What happened? The briars or web not only slowed you down and kept you from moving forward but they also scraped, poked, and pinched you, causing a measure of discomfort and pain. Sin, like a briar patch, tends to do the same thing. It stunts slows down your progress. Stunts your growth. It keeps you from moving forward and keeps you from everything God has in store. Sin scrapes, pokes, and pinches at your conscious, making you feel shame and condemnation. That shame then makes us feel unworthy of approaching God.

In the book of Genesis, when Adam and Eve sinned against God by eating the forbidden fruit, they immediately hid from the presence of God. Adam hid not only because he was physically naked, but also because he was emotionally and spiritually naked. His emotional nakedness made him feel shame and guilt. And his spiritual nakedness separated him from God. **God's spirit and sin cannot occupy the same space.**

**Merriam-Webster defines sin as "a vitiated state of human nature in which the self is estranged from God."** Sin disconnects you from God. Adam and Eve's

spiritual nakedness and disobedience brought on the judgment of God. Genesis 3:23 reads, “So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken”(TNIV). Although their sin caused them to be disconnected from God, God still showed grace and mercy by providing them garments of animal skins to cover their nakedness. This was an outward expression of what God would do for all mankind spiritually through His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus covered our sins (nakedness) when He shed His blood on the cross. Now, we can stand before God without shame or fear of judgment. *Hebrews 12:1 reads,*

*"Let us also, therefore, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, laying aside every weight, and sin which so easily entangles us, run with endurance the race that lies before us"(Darby).*

God did not leave us hopeless in our sins! As 1 John 1:9 reads, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”(NKJV). If you feel entangled by sin in any way and feel like you have no hope, confess your sins today and get your hope back. Lay aside every weight of

sin, and run the race that is set before you! Don't let sin block your hope.

## THE SNARE OF FEAR

**Merriam-Webster defines fear as “to be afraid or apprehensive.”** Fear will paralyze you and keep you from acting on what you hope for. **If the devil can keep you in fear, he can hinder your progress. If he can't kill you, he will try his best to slow you down.** One example of this is found in the book of Nehemiah.

God had placed the burden of rebuilding the temple walls of Jerusalem in the heart of Nehemiah, who was the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes. The rebuilding of the temple walls was more than just a physical reconstruction. It served as a sign of spiritual restoration for the nation and kingdom of Israel. The people of God had been in captivity for a long time, and it was time that they became a nation once again. But, the enemies of Israel attempted to put fear in the heart of Nehemiah and the people.

*“Now when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that there was no breach left in it, although at that time I had not set up doors in the gates, Sanballat and Geshem*

*sent word to me, saying, "Come, let us meet together at Chephirim in the plain of Ono." But they were planning to harm me." (Neh. 6:1-2).*

Nehemiah was able to discern Tobiah and Sanballat's goal to hinder the reconstruction of the temple walls. He understood that the work had to continue despite the threats being made against his life. He did not let fear paralyze his progress! Likewise, you should not let fear hinder you from reaching your place of hope.

*"For they all would have made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. But now, [O God], strengthen thou my hands" (Neh. 6:9, ASV).*

Some of you may want to start a business. **Fear** will say that you don't have the education or the know-how to run a business and that the economy is too bad for you to launch a business now. Some of you may want to go back to school and finally get that degree. Fear will say that you are too old to go back to school and that you will never be able to afford tuition.

On the contrary, **hope** says that the world is waiting for your business and that there is a demand for what you have to offer. Hope says that you are not too old; in fact,

you are mature enough now to get that degree you've been hoping for. When fear rises against you, daring you to run away, be like Nehemiah and refuse to flee. Don't let fear block your hope.

## THE FOLLY OF UNBELIEF

**Unbelief is defined as “incredulity or skepticism especially in matters of religious faith.”** Unbelief keeps you from trusting in God's Word and in the hope that He has given you. Hebrews 3:17-19 reads,

*But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And, to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them, that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief (KJV).*

Unbelief kept the children of Israel from entering the Promised Land.

Of the twelve spies that Moses sent out to survey the land, only Joshua and Caleb believed that they could succeed. The other ten spies gave Moses an evil report, saying, “We are not able to go up against the people” (Numbers 13:31, NKJV). This evil report stirred up the

wrath of God! Why? Because these same people had just witnessed God bring them out of slavery and part the Red Sea. They had witnessed miracle after miracle and still managed to doubt God. In response, God judged the people. Numbers 14:11 reads, *“And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?’”(KJV).*

Every time we doubt God and His Word, we are provoking Him by not trusting Him to do what He said He would do. This, in turn, pushes us even further away from our hope (Numbers 14:22–23). Only Joshua and Caleb and an entirely new generation were able to inherit the land that God had promised. These two had what God called "another spirit," which I interpret to be a spirit of hope and faith in God's word (Hebrews 3:12–14).

If God has promised you anything in your life, then do not doubt Him. Don't have an evil heart of unbelief and provoke God. Hold the beginning of your confidence steadfast to the end.

# THE PRISON OF UNFORGIVENESS

**Unforgiveness is defined as “having a grudge against someone who has offended you” or “not having the compassion to forgive.”** When we fail to forgive others, we tie God's hands and limit His involvement in our lives. Holding on to unforgiveness keeps us from being in good standing with God. Our prayers will go unanswered, and most importantly, our sins will not be forgiven. Jesus explains this when He tells His disciples about the unforgiving debtor (Matt. 18:21–35, NLT).

In this parable, Jesus taught His disciples that you couldn't put a number on forgiveness. You may say, "But you don't know what they did to me" or "You don't understand how I feel." According to this scripture, forgiveness is not about how you feel. It is a command from God. We forgive others for their sake and our sake as well. Forgiveness helps us in several ways:

- It puts us in a position where we can be sure that God will forgive our sins.
- It allows God to answer our prayers.
- It frees us from bitterness, anger, fear, and stress.

- It frees the other person from our snare.
- It allows us to move forward in life, letting go of past disappointments.

Unforgiveness will keep you from being successful in other areas of your life. **The seeds of success that you have planted in your heart will be choked out by the weeds of un-forgiveness you allow to remain.** If this is you, I encourage you to let go of the past and ask the Holy Spirit to help you forgive and move forward.

The situation might have happened this morning, last month, last year, or even ten years ago. Nevertheless, forgiveness is crucial to maintaining hope. It doesn't matter whether the other person has asked you to forgive them. It doesn't matter if they have even acknowledged that they've wronged you. Your responsibility to God is to forgive. Your willingness to forgive is the key that will release the blessings that God has for you. Don't let unforgiveness block your hope!

# DOUBLE-MINDEDNESS

**Double-mindedness is just what it says it is. It's having two minds or two opposing ways of thinking.**

*James 1:6–8 (KJV) reads,*

*“But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.”*

Double-mindedness keeps you from making progress in life! This has been my personal struggle of mine. In the past, this mindset has spilled over into other areas of my life, including my relationships with others.

Whenever I was in a dating relationship, I would be so indecisive and double-minded that I would end up hurting those who were committed to me because I failed to commit myself to them. One minute I would talk about the potential of marriage. The next minute I would say that I was never getting married. I was unintentionally playing with their hearts because I neglected to be clear as to what to call the relationship and where the relationship was

going. Thus, I prevented myself from receiving the very things I was hoping for: commitment, trust, and respect.

Spiritually, being double-minded kept me from walking in my destiny and the will of God for my life. I was so divided in my spirit that I couldn't discern between my inner voice, Satan's voice, and the voice of the Holy Spirit. I often found myself walking in confusion. I would start everything but finished nothing. I was a jack-of-all-trades but the master of none. I couldn't receive the blessing of God because I didn't give Him a reason to trust me with the responsibility of the blessing. But, the moment I made up my mind that I wanted what God wanted for me, and I accepted His plan, purpose, and call on my life, God began to open doors for me that I never knew were there.

James 4:7–8 reads, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded” (KJV). In this verse, the writer puts the double-minded man in the same category as a sinner. This is because being indecisive in your relationship with God and with others is just as bad as having no relationship with them at all. It would be better to choose one or the other, to commit to the

relationship or turn away from it altogether. In Revelation 3:15–17, Jesus says to the church in Laodicea, “I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth!” (NLT). **Jesus does not like to be tagged along!**

God does not want to be involved in just some of your life. He intends to participate in every area of your life: your relationships with others, finances, health, occupation, education, recreation, entertainment, children, and so on. He wants to give you a clear mental picture of his plan for these areas of your life, and He wants you to be decisive in each of these areas.

What is keeping you from deciding and moving forward on what you know God wants in these areas of your life? **Indecisiveness will keep you from being used by God because serving God sometimes requires making hard decisions.** Seek God and ask Him to give you a sure heart and a made-up mind. Don't let double-mindedness block your hope. Let your “yes” be “yes” and your “no” be “no.” This is the type of person God can use. Where is your hope?

# HOPE IN THE MIDST OF LOSS

*Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face. Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance, for no godless person would dare come before him!*

*-Job 13:15–16, NIV*

Everyone has experienced loss. Some have lost jobs. Some have lost loved ones. Others have lost their homes or businesses. Many of those things can never be replaced. In these seasons of loss, we are at risk of losing much more if we don't maintain hope. Nevertheless, God will not leave us in this state of loss forever. He will restore what was lost and or bring new things into our lives.

When it comes to unexpected loss, we can find no greater example than in the book of Job. Job's story of hope amid loss is most important because not only did God allow

Job's loss and suffering, but he also instigated it (*Job 1:1–5, NLT*).

The first thing we discover about Job is that he was a man of integrity. He was the type of man who did the right thing because it was the right thing to do. We also learn that he was a wealthy man who loved his family, and most of all loved God. Job made offerings to God not only to protect himself or his wealth but also to protect his children, just in case one of them had sinned or offended God in some way. Job's hope was not in his wealth; his hope was in God. But Job's world would change dramatically (*Job 1:6–12, NLT*).

God allowed Satan to wreak havoc on Job's life. In a very short period of time, Job lost all his children, his possessions, his physical health, and even the support of his wife. His closest friends and companions didn't give him the support he needed; rather, they accused Job of some hidden sin. It's one thing to suffer with the support of your friends and family. It's another thing when those closest to you ridicule you and amplify your suffering. It makes your pain that much more unbearable. But, here is the amazing thing! Even amid his pain, Job kept his integrity and did not sin! After hearing that all his children had died and that

everything he owned was gone, Job still blessed God, saying, “I came naked from my mother’s womb, and I will be naked when I leave. The LORD gave me what I had, and the LORD has taken it away. Praise the name of the Lord!” (Job 1:21, NLT). Through all his suffering, Job did not sin by blaming God.

Why was Job so confident in God? It was because he and God had such a deep and intimate relationship that made it natural for Job to trust God. As a result, the favor and blessings of God were extended toward him. He knew that everything he had originated from God. Of course, there were moments when Job complained, vented, as anyone would in his position. Yet, Job was so confident in God that even in the midst of his suffering, he worshiped Him.

Scripture says this:

*And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven’s Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God’s house, let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood to*

*make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water. Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise (Hebrews 10:19–23, NLT).*

In the end, Job got God's attention, and although God's answer was firm, it revealed that Job's hope paid off. Job received much more than he lost, all because of his confident expectation in God.

# HOPE FOR THE UNSEEN

*“For in hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, [then] do we with patience wait for it.”*

-Romans 8:24–25, ASV

When I think about someone who had hope for the unseen, I think about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Dr. King hoped for social change not only in America and not only for African Americans, but equality and equity for all people.

His hope for America specifically was that it would "be true to what you said on paper," that all men and women would be treated as equals. His speeches reflected his belief that what he hoped for would inevitably happen. His hope was so strong that it eventually evolved into a faith that would surpass his life span. This is evident in the

remarkably prophetic speech he made just hours before his death:

*Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountain top. I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He has allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the Promised Land. So I'm happy tonight. I'm not worried about anything; I'm not fearing any man! Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord!*

Today, we see the fruit of Dr. King's hope for a nation that was racially, socially, and economically divided. Many have followed in his footsteps to keep the dream alive. One of the most important keys to seeing our hope manifest is how we conduct ourselves during the waiting period.

When it comes to answered prayers and receiving from God, some things manifest overnight while others

manifest over what feels like an eternity. In this waiting period, it is of vital importance that we maintain the hope that we profess and not to grow weary. Romans 8:25 says it this way, "But if we hope for what is still unseen by us, we wait for it with patience *and* composure" (AMP).

**As believers, we are to keep our composure before God first, and then before men.** We are to stand firm and let nothing change our minds about what we are expecting from God. The waiting may be a test to see if our hope is genuine or if it's short-lived. If you are looking for a job and keep getting turned down, what do you do? Do you compromise your integrity by doing something illegal? No! You keep your composure and keep searching. If you are believing that you and your family will be debt free one day but your spouse in a moment of doubt says, we will always be in debt, do you now agree with them and cast away your confidence? No! You keep your composure.

If someone challenges your faith in something that you've been waiting on for years. You don't have to argue with that person or try to convince them that what you are hoping for will come to pass. In most cases God didn't reveal the promise to that person; He revealed it to you. Therefore, you are the only one responsible for maintaining

your hope for that specific promise. **Like a pregnant woman, the hope that is inside of us must grow and mature. And the birthing of that hope is for an appointed time. If it comes too early, it may come underdeveloped or premature** (*Rom 8:24–25, MSG*). The only person who is responsible for birthing the baby is the mother and only the mother knows when the baby is coming. The nurses and doctors can give their professional opinion and advice but ultimately the mother is the one who has to carry the baby and push it out of her womb into the world for the people to see what's been living on the inside of her the entire time.

I am reminded of a verse in a song by Joe Pace that says, “While you’re waiting on your promises to be fulfilled in your life, remember God’s never late, so just praise Him while you wait.” In the words of Psalms 27:14, “Wait on the Lord: Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord” (KJV). Keep your composure. Where is your hope?

# HOPE OF THE PROMISE

*Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises.*

*-Rom. 4:20–21, NLT*

In today's society, promises are often made but rarely kept. But, God is not like man. If God makes a promise to you, He is sure to keep it. God made a promise to Abraham that He would make him the father of many nations. But, because both Abraham and his wife, Sarah, were well past childbearing age, it was highly unlikely that they would pull this one off on their own. So Abraham, against hope, believed in hope. Instead of putting his hope in his ability, he placed his hope in the promise of God. At one hundred years old, Abraham knew that it would take a miracle from God to see that hope come to pass.

Even after Abraham received the promise through Isaac, God continued to test his faith by asking Abraham to sacrifice his promised child. With confident expectation, that God could and would raise Isaac from the dead, Abraham obeyed God and prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac. And in the nick of time, God stopped Abraham and offered him a ram to sacrifice instead (Hebrews 11:17–19).

Was God messing with Abraham's head? Not at all; God was merely testing Abraham's confidence in what He had promised him. Seeing that Abraham obeyed God, even at the expense of giving up His promise, God discovered that there was not anything that Abraham would not do for Him.

What has God promised you? Can you believe God enough to sacrifice your will and the confidence that you have in yourself and fully depend on the word that He has promised you? God is a just God and will never rescind. If He did, that would make God a liar, and we know that God can't lie. In 2 Corinthians 1:19–20 reads, “‘Yes,’ he always does what he says. For all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding ‘Yes!’ And through Christ, our ‘Amen’ [which means ‘Yes’] ascends to God for his glory” (NLT).

King David said it best when he said, “*I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living*” (Ps. 27:13, KJV). There are promises in the written Word of God that we fail to receive every day—promises of healing, deliverance, prosperity, and reconciliation. We should take advantage of all the promises that God has made available to us, placing our hope in their fulfillment.

# HOPE IN CHRIST ALONE

*[even] the mystery which hath been hid for ages and generations: but now hath it been manifested to his saints, to whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

*-Colossians 1:26-27, ASV*

The hope that God gives us for our daily life is what keeps us confident in challenging times. The hope that He gives us to accomplish visions and goals in our lives is also critical in discovering who we are and what we are on this earth for. But, there is hope from God that exceeds all other hope, even the hope of our destiny here on earth. The hope that I have discussed throughout this book is encouraging and reviving, but it is still temporal and limited to this human dimension. **There is a hope that moves beyond**

**this physical realm and into the heavenly. It is the hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ.**

From the beginning of time, since Adam and Eve fell into sin, until now, man has hoped to be redeemed from the law of sin and death. It was never God's intention to leave mankind in his sinful condition. We see the first sign of hope from God concerning a plan to redeem man from sin in Genesis 3:15: "And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel" (NLT). Several more signs of hope for a coming redeemer were revealed throughout the pages of the Bible.

- Genesis 6-9 foreshadows Him as the ark of safety.
- In Genesis 14, He is foreshadowed as Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a high priest of the most high God.
- In Genesis 22, He is seen as a ram in the bush.
- In Job 9:33-34 and 19:25, He is an arbitrator and a redeemer.
- In Psalms 110, He is Lord.
- In Isaiah 53, we see His suffering and His reign prophesied.
- And in Isaiah 11, He is the root of Jesse.

These were signs of a coming redeemer. He would be born of a virgin and raised as a carpenter's son. At the appointed time, He would be baptized by a prophet named John the Baptist, who described Him as "The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (NKJV). He would take His rightful place and declare to the world that their hope had come. He would read from the book of Isaiah concerning Himself, saying:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18-19, KJV).*

He would go about teaching and preaching the kingdom of God. He would heal the sick and raise the dead, forgiving men their sins and women their trespasses.

Betrayed by one of His disciples, He would be delivered unto Pontius Pilot to suffer. He would take 39 strikes upon His back for all our diseases, be crucified for

your sins and mine, and become the perfect and final sacrifice for sin on behalf of mankind. He would rip the temple veil, which, because of sin, had kept us separated from God, providing forgiveness and reconciliation for all humanity. But, He would not stop there! In three days, He would be raised from the dead and reveal Himself to witnesses. He would commission His disciples to spread His message of hope to every part of the world. He would die as a lamb but return as a lion! We will reign with Him in His kingdom for eternity. His name is Jesus Christ! He is our hope!

## DESPISING THE SHAME

It is a great and exciting feeling to pursue a hope. It gives us a reason to wake up in the morning and gives us significance in our daily activities. When we see others who have reached their dreams and goals, we may watch with envy. We may even say things like, “I wish I were as successful as they are” or “If I had what they have...” or “If I could do what they are doing...” We often say these things without considering what it may have cost them to reach that place of success. We don’t consider the challenges they may have overcome in the process.

**When it comes to pursuing your dreams, goals, and all that you hope for, you can rest assured that it will come with a price.** Nothing worth pursuing comes easily. We must have the type of hope that will sustain us through the rough times and the so-called shameful times. The thing that you are hoping for might even single you out among others. You may be the first member of your entire family to apply to college, but because your family members are unfamiliar with this type of hope, they may try to “protect” you from the disappointment and shame that they feel surely lies ahead. They may warn you that nobody from your family has ever finished anything and that you need to stop chasing fantasies. They may tell you to get a real job. In reality, their warnings may serve as distractions.

My father dropped out of school at a young age, but wanted to go back to school and get his diploma. Instead of making excuses for why he dropped out in the first place, he chose to despise the shame of his past and press on toward his hope for the future. It took him several years of night school, but in 2001, my father walked across the stage to receive his high school diploma. It was one of the proudest moments of his life. He had a hope and set out to

obtain it. At that moment, the shame of his past had been erased.

You may want to open a business when the economy seems to be at its worst. Your friends may try to “protect” you from the impending failure and shame. Thus, you lose your hope and return to your previous life, devoid of hope and full of shame. Your shame now keeps you from pursuing what you were expecting.

Jesus is our example of what it means to despise the shame. Although Jesus was God in the flesh, that did not exempt Him from suffering and experiencing shame. While in the Garden of Gethsemane, in great distress, contemplating the suffering He would soon endure, He knew that crucifixion would look shameful in front of His disciples and in front of those whom he claimed to be the Son of God to. His disciples would abandon and reject Him, and the people He had come to save would demand His crucifixion. *Hebrews 12:2-3 reads,*

*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of*

*sinner against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds (KJV).*

Jesus knew at that very moment that He could have called down legions of angels to come and rescue Him. Nevertheless, His purpose was greater than their plans. The Bible says that "He despised the shame," meaning that beyond the abandonment, beyond the embarrassment, beyond the suffering and distress, even beyond the cross, Jesus set His hope in accomplishing what His Father had sent Him to do on earth. In the hours preceding His death, He prayed, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42, KJV).

Jesus made up his mind that no matter the cost He would reach that for which He had hoped. Because Christ despised the shame and endured the cross, He is now seated at the right hand of the Father, and all power and authority has been given to Him in heaven and on earth. He left as a sacrificial lamb but He will soon return as a ROARING LION.

Are you willing to endure the things that you may endure to reach all that you are hoping for? Are you prepared to choose the harder right instead of, the easier

wrong, even if it means suffering and shame for doing the right thing? Whatever you are hoping for today, be sure that you are able and willing to accept not only the good that comes with it but also the challenges that may follow, despising the shame because you know that the promise outweighs the problems.

# GOD'S SOVEREIGN WILL

*Many plans are in a man's mind, But it is the  
Lord's purpose for him that will stand.  
(Prov. 19:21, AMP)*

Up to this point, we have discussed the meaning and necessity of hope, its connection to your faith, speaking and acting in accordance with what you are hoping for, having a vision, knowing your calling, and much more. You may already have understood and practiced some of these principles before reading this book, but you have yet to receive what you are hoping for. Maybe the period for what you were hoping for may have already expired.

I know that many people who read this book will disregard it as typical, charismatic Christian literature. Some may even challenge my view and interpretation of hope, saying, "I've tried that hope and faith stuff before, and it's useless. I've tried that faith and speaking thing, and

it didn't work for me. I wrote my vision down on paper and accepted God's call on my life, but nothing happened."

I won't even try to give you an answer as to why things didn't turn out the way you expected they would. I could easily say that you didn't exercise enough hope or faith, but who am I to judge? Only God knows why He allows certain those things to end the way they do. But, if we spend our entire lives trying to find the answers to these complex questions, we'll never be able to move on and pursue greater things in life.

I don't claim that this book is the cure-all for your hopes and desires. I don't have a ten-step process for success. I didn't write this book as a manual on how to make all of your problems and issues disappear. This book is a testament of how having hope has impacted my life personally, and maybe, just perhaps, some of these principles and practices will work for you as well.

Beyond our wants, needs, desires, and hopes, nothing overrides God's sovereign will. What is God's sovereign will? The sovereignty of God is His absolute right to do all things according to His good pleasure. There have been many things that I have hoped and planned for in my life.

Over time, I have come to understand that although I had great faith in those things, ultimately, they were not part of God's purpose, will, and plan for my life. Proverbs 19:21 reads, "Many plans are in a man's mind, But it is the Lord's purpose for him that will stand" (AMP). We can be optimistic about many things in our lives, but God knows what's best for us. He knows what will lead us to our destiny and what will deter us from it. Many of those things I wanted were good things, but looking back, I see that God had a greater purpose and a greater hope.

Jesus understood this experience more than most of us. Looking again at Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, we see that He hoped the Father would rescue Him from His impending suffering. He prayed, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but [always] Yours be done" (Luke 22:42, AMP). We sometimes forget that Jesus, though fully God, was also fully man. He did not enjoy suffering any more than the rest of us. He felt pain like anyone else, but most of all, He understood that submitting to the Father's will was far more important than escaping the cross. For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross. He did not let His temporary feelings deter Him from His eternal purpose.

If Jesus had rejected the suffering and forced Himself away from the cross, there would have been no perfect sacrifice for man's sins. There would have been no resurrection. There would be no gospel. There would be no reconciliation between God and man. There would be no salvation! Because Jesus submitted to the sovereign will of the Father, God raised Him from the dead and placed all power and authority in heaven and on earth in His hands. That is why Jesus told us to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven" (Matthew 6:10, KJV).

We should always want God's will to be done above our will. We humans make poor decisions all the time. I think most people will agree with me that if they knew "then" what we know now in life, and if we could go back in time, we would do a few things differently. So, the best thing for us to do considering our future is to be aware of and open to God's will. We may not understand it when God allows us to experience loss, suffering, pain, and shame, but we can believe and know that He always has our best interests at heart. The more we submit to God's will, the more our will becomes His will. We will begin to

hope for what He hopes for and begin to desire what He desires for our lives. Where is your hope?

# CONCLUSION

In the hit song “Gotta Keep Ya Head Up,” rapper Tupac Shakur says, “Say it ain’t no hope for the youth, and the truth is there ain’t no hope for the future.” I of course disagree with this statement. I know and understand that things seem to be getting worse in the world, and quite honestly, the closer we get to the return of Christ, tribulation will only escalate. But, Proverbs 23:18 reads, “Surely there is a future [and a reward], And your hope *and* expectation will not be cut off” (AMP).

Because God has promised that our expectation shall not be cut off, we can rest assured that if we put our trust and confidence in His Word, we will not be disappointed. When difficult and challenging situations develop in your life, you must believe that all things work together. You must believe that God has given you a hope and that it will never fail. He has given you His Son, Jesus, who has become your hope.

Do you have this hope in Jesus today? If not, then receive that hope now, and He will deposit in you a greater hope for your life better than anything you could have imagined. As 1 Corinthians 2:9 reminds us, “But as it is

written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (KJV).

Without Jesus Christ, our hope and our future are limited to the things of this world and our limited abilities. But, with Jesus, all things are possible to him who believes. Christ can give us hope that we could never have experienced outside of His power. Outside of Christ, we may attain and accomplish many good things, do many good deeds, and see ourselves as good people. But, at the end of the day, we would still be separated from God due to our sin. Remember that sin is a hope blocker that separates us from God and from our purpose in life. But, the blood of Jesus can cleanse us from all sin and it has the power to reconcile us with God, who calls us to a hope and a future.

*If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved (Romans 10:9-10, NLT).*

As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced” (Romans 10:11, NLT). If you do

not have this hope and wish to receive it, then I offer you this suggested prayer:

*“Lord Jesus, I confess that I am a sinner and am in need of Your forgiveness and salvation. I repent of all my sins. I believe that You are the Son of God and that You died on the cross for my sins. I believe that God raised You from the dead, that You still live, and that You are soon to return. I receive Your forgiveness and ask You to come into my heart. I declare with my mouth that You are Lord over my life. Lead me by Your Holy Spirit into Your will for my life so that I may honor You. I place my hope in You today. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.”*

If you prayed this prayer by faith from your heart, then you are saved! I encourage you to build a genuine relationship with Jesus through prayer and biblical study. Commit yourself to a Bible-believing church and expect God to change your life for the better. There will be challenges along the way, but hope and faith will bring you through them all. So, where is your hope? I think you just received it!

# HOPE & FAITH ACTIVATIONS

*The tongue has the power of life and death,  
and those who love it will eat its fruit.*

*Proverbs 18:21*

In law, a **declaration** is an **authoritative establishment of fact**. Merriam-Webster defines a declaration as the act of making an **official statement** about something: the act of declaring something. : Something that is stated or made known in an official or public way. The purpose of this section is to provide you will a list of scriptural statements that will activate your hope and faith. These statements are not original and are not my own but have been compiled for your benefit. I will provide this source of these declarations at the end of this section. My encouragement to you is to visit this section as often as necessary to maintain a high level of hope and faith in your life. Speak them out loud and with confidence until they become full in your heart and evident in your life.

There is surely a bright future for me and my hope will not be cut short (Proverbs 23:18).

I am anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving I let my requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard my hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7).

I am steadfast of mind. He keeps me in perfect peace because I trust in Him (Isaiah 26:3).

I receive an abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness. I reign in life through Jesus Christ (Romans 5:17).

My prayers are powerful and effective (James 5:16)

I am confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in me will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6).

I hold fast to the word of life. In the day of Christ's return, I will have reason to glory because I did not run or labor in vain (Philippians 2:16).

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13).

I look forward to my future and the Lord says it is bright, it is beautiful and it will glorify God. I will walk along the paths set before me and I will not faint, I will carry my cross and run the race ahead of me and I will not be weary because the Lord fills me with new hope for the journey ahead (Isaiah 40:31).

God richly supplies all my needs (Philippians 4:19)

I let the peace of Christ rule in my heart. As a member of one body, I am called to peace and I am thankful (Colossians 3:15 NIV).

I declare that God's plan over me is filled with hope and a bright future. I will not despair for He shall bring to pass His plans for me speedily (Jeremiah 29:11).

I am being strengthened with all power according to His might. I have great endurance and patience (Colossians 1:11 NIV).

As I speak God's word, He sends it to heal and deliver me from my destruction (Psalm 107:20).

I declare that my confidence is in the God of my salvation. The good work He has started in me will be accomplished until the day of Christ (Philippians 1:6).

God has not given me a spirit of fear. He gives me power, love, and self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:7 ESV).

I walk in ever-increasing health (Psalm 103:1-3)

I declare that as I trust in the Lord, He fills me with joy and peace. Henceforth I will overflow with hope, peace and joy by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).

God forgives all my iniquities and heals all of my diseases (Psalm 103:3).

God loads me daily with benefits. He is my salvation (Psalm 68:19).

I live under supernatural protection (Psalm 91:1-2)

I declare that I will put my hope in the Lord who created and formed me in my mother's womb. He is my redeemer and the one who called me by name. When I pass through the waters He is with me. When I walk through the fire I will not be burned, the flames will not set me ablaze. I will hold my head high, stay strong and keep my focus on the Lord who will see me through. (Isaiah 43:1-2).

Christ bore my sins in His own body on the cross and I am healed by His stripes (1 Peter 2:24).

God makes all grace abound toward me so that I always have all sufficiency and an abundance for every good work (2 Corinthians 9:8).

Angels are carrying out the Word of God on my behalf (Psalm 103:20)

I declare that what is going on around me is temporary and it is not the end of my life. I will set my eyes on God who gives me hope and my mind on the Lord who gives me strength. I will not allow the temporary situation to distract me from what The Lord has in store for me. My hope is in the Lord and my faith is filled with expectations till the Lord shall fulfil His purpose for me. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

God satisfies my mouth with good things and renews my youth like the eagles' (Psalm 103:5).

I experience all blessings as I obey the Lord my God (Deuteronomy 28:2 NLT).

I honor the Lord with my wealth and the first fruits of all my produce. Then, my barns will be filled with plenty. My vats will overflow with new wine (Proverbs 3:9-10).

All attacks that were headed my way are diverted right now by angelic protection in Jesus' name (Psalm 91:3-5)

I speak to every mountain of discouragement, stress, depression, and lack, and cast it into the sea in Jesus' name (Mark 11:22-24)

I speak to this day, and I call you blessed. I declare I serve a mighty God who today will do exceedingly and abundantly beyond all that I can ask or think. (Ephesians 3:20)

The Lord of peace is peace. In every way, He always gives me His peace (2 Thessalonians 3:16).

I expect that today will be the best day of my life spiritually, emotionally, relationally, and financially in Jesus' name. (Romans 15:13)

<https://dailybibledeclarations.com/2019/03/13/hope-in-god/>

<https://godtv.com/word-of-god-declarations/>

<https://ignitinghope.com/uncategorized/75-biblical-declarations/>



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jeremy Goldsmith is a graduate of American Military University where he received his degree in business management, and has a Graduate Certificate in Organizational Management and Executive Leadership from Liberty University. He is also a former student of Destiny Bible College and has received a certificate in Biblical Leadership from [biblicaltraining.org](http://biblicaltraining.org).

Jeremy and his wife Onisha are the founders of Commissioned School of Creative Purpose. A school of ministry located in Greenville, SC. They are a prophetic and apostolic ministry team, dedicated to equipping the body for the work of the ministry. The Goldsmiths have over 30 years of combined ministry experience, serving in multiple roles including Youth Pastors, Creative Arts Ministry Directors, and Praise & Worship Leaders.

From 2009 to 2015 Jeremy and Onisha hosted Dance Crucifixion, an annual arts, worship and business conference, that served the needs of movement artists, musical artists, visual artists, marketplace ministers and creative entrepreneurs. These arts and business conferences

laid the foundation for what is now Commissioned School of Creative Purpose. The Goldsmiths were commissioned into apostolic ministry on April 23rd, 2017, and received ordination on July 7th, 2017. Their overall mission is to Teach biblically and Train Creatively. To Develop, Design, and Deliver the most creative and engaging live and online ministry raining experience possible in the areas of worship, arts, and business.

**For more information about Jeremy and Onisha and  
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[www.commissionedscp.org](http://www.commissionedscp.org)

