

DEVOTIONAL

Hollywood Prayer Network

HOPE

This week we're celebrating a topic that runs through the entire Bible – God's life-changing promise of HOPE. God tells us to hope in Him, to not put our hope in the things of this world, that suffering produces hope, and that hoping in our wealth is worthless, but hoping in Him will never disappoint us. These commands and promises are thrilling, but so hard to do. Begin this week by letting go of what's comfortable and embrace God's promise to put all of your hope in Him!

DAY 1

RENEWED BY HOPE

"DARKNESS COMES. IN THE MIDDLE OF IT, THE FUTURE LOOKS BLANK. THE TEMPTATION TO QUIT IS HUGE. DON'T. YOU ARE IN GOOD COMPANY... YOU WILL ARGUE WITH YOURSELF THAT THERE IS NO WAY FORWARD. BUT WITH GOD, NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE. HE HAS MORE ROPES AND LADDERS AND TUNNELS OUT OF PITS THAN YOU CAN CONCEIVE. WAIT. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING. HOPE."

-JOHN PIPER

New International Version

Isaiah 40:31

But 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.

DAY 1

PRAY: Lord, thank You for giving me strength each day. Help me to hope completely in You so that I will soar on wings like eagles. I need Your help to keep me from growing weary or getting faint. I know that life is hard, but I want to learn to hope in YOU in order to soar. I cry out to You today to show me how to put ALL of my hope in You and not in other people, my circumstances, or me. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

REFLECT: How would your life change by putting all of your hope in God, in Jesus, and in the Holy Spirit? Do you ever feel like you are soaring on wings like eagles? What would that be like? Has He renewed your strength? Do you run with vigor and not grow weary, or walk and not be faint? Or are you discouraged, weak and worn down? Do you believe it's possible to soar through life? God tells us that it is so. The goal is to "hope in the Lord."

ACT: Evaluate the areas of your life where you are weary, or where you are growing faint. It could be because you don't have your hope in the Lord. Choose to focus on one area where you want to soar – regardless of the circumstances – and choose what you need to do to experience that freedom that only comes from hoping in the Lord. How thrilling it will be to soar through life as if on wings of eagles and to be full of hope, regardless of your circumstances! How awesome it would be to never grow weary and never faint!

DAY 2

LONGING FOR HOPE

“WHEN WE HAVE LOST EVERYTHING,
INCLUDING HOPE, LIFE BECOMES A
DISGRACE, AND DEATH A DUTY.”

-W.C. FIELDS

New International Version

Proverbs 13:12

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

Psalms 42:5-6a

Why my soul, are you downcast? Why so
disturbed within me? Put your hope in
God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior
and my God.

DAY 2

PRAY: Dear God, I need You to protect my heart and soul. I don't want a sick heart or a downcast soul. I want to hope in You now and have my longings fulfilled, for I know that hope deferred makes my heart sick. So, I praise You, my Savior and my God. Don't let me get downcast or to be disturbed within me. I need to put my hope in You. Will You help me to praise You more, my Savior and my God? Thank You for fulfilling my longing so that I can stand in this world as a tree of life! Amen.

REFLECT: Hope is an intangible emotion and yet we all have to choose what to put our hope in. God tells us that without putting our hope in Him we will have a sick heart and a downcast soul. Is your hope in anything other than God? Are you trusting God to fulfill your deepest hopes? Can you think of anything or anyone else in which you are putting your hope?

DAY 2

ACT: Write down one thing you are hoping for that you are not yet getting and believe that it is a longing that will be fulfilled. Is this one disappointment giving you a downcast soul? A deferred hope makes your heart sick, so ask God to help you turn that desire over to Him and instead put your trust in Him. If we put our hope in God, instead of man, events, dreams or circumstances, we will be as strong as a tree of life, even in the face of disappointment! In whatever area today that you are losing hope, or feeling disturbed, choose right now to give this one thing to God, and then focus your heart on praising your Savior. Putting your hope in God can take away your downcast soul, will lift you up, and fulfill your deepest longings.

DAY 3

PUT YOUR HOPE IN GOD

"ONCE YOU CHOOSE HOPE,
ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE."
-CHRISTOPHER REEVE

New International Version

Lamentations 3:25

The Lord is good to those whose hope is
in him, to the one who seeks him.

Psalms 25:21

May integrity and uprightness protect
me, because my hope is in you.

DAY 3

PRAY: Lord, I ask that You help me to put all of my hope in You and to seek You first in my life. I believe that You will make me a person of integrity and uprightness and that You will protect me from the fiery darts of the enemy. But I know it will only happen when my hope is in You alone. Would You transform my heart and my thoughts today as I seek You? I thank You, in Jesus' name. Amen.

REFLECT: What is your greatest obstacle to letting go, and giving God control of everything in your life? What would it take to put all of your hope in Him and not rely on other people, circumstances or resources that you are in control of? Would your thoughts and actions change today if you honestly believed that you would be full of a supernatural hope by seeking Him first and putting all of your hope in Him? Can you believe that your integrity and uprightness will protect you, once your hope is in Him?

ACT: Play a mind game today! Every time you start to worry or seek after some earthly thing, STOP and PRAY, asking God to be the one you are seeking. Ask Him to make you a person of integrity and righteousness, and to change your immediate thought to one of hope in Him. As you do this, at the end of the day ask yourself: How many times today did I have to STOP and PRAY? Then do it again tomorrow and see if you do better...

DAY 4

DON'T HOPE IN WEALTH

"HOPE IS THE STRUGGLE OF THE SOUL,
BREAKING LOOSE FROM WHAT IS
PERISHABLE, AND ATTESTING HER
ETERNITY."

-HERMAN MELVILLE

New International Version

1 Timothy 6:17

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

DAY 4

PRAY: Father, I come to You seeking humility and vulnerability as I ask You to reveal to me where I may be arrogant, and in what material wealth do I put my hope? Please show me areas of my faith where I have bought into the cultural belief that earthly wealth is important, powerful, and freeing. I know that You are the one who will richly provide me with enjoyment and everything I need and want, but I ask You to show me how to really live that out. Amen.

REFLECT: Can you recall the times when you have judged a rich person for being cheap, stingy, or arrogant? Did you ever consider that they were struggling with a spiritual battle, and that it is often more of a curse to be rich and not necessarily a blessing? What a thought to realize that the rich often depend on an uncertain faith in their money and don't realize that it will, at some point, disappoint them. Or does that describe you? Do you believe it when God says to put your hope in Him, not in money, and He will richly provide your every need for your enjoyment? That's a wild but freeing promising!

ACT: Be radical with your wealth today – regardless of whether you have a lot or a little. Give something away; give money to someone in need. Bring joy to someone else through your generosity, trusting that God is not only supplying for them through you, but He will give you everything that you need as well, including a richer hope in Him. Trust Him today to provide you with everything for your enjoyment. You can't out-give God.

DAY 5

SUFFERING PRODUCES HOPE

"WE MUST ACCEPT FINITE DISAPPOINTMENT,
BUT NEVER LOSE INFINITE HOPE."
-MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

New International Version

Romans 5:3-5

...We also rejoice in our sufferings,
because we know that suffering produces
perseverance; perseverance, character;
and character, hope. And hope does not
disappoint us, because God has poured
out his love into our hearts by the Holy
Spirit, whom he has given us.

DAY 5

PRAY: Jesus, I want to boast about You and the hope of Your glory! I also want to embrace my sufferings, knowing that they are a part of life. I want to believe that my sufferings produce perseverance, and by persevering I am building a Christ-like character, and that strength of character will give me a hope that will never disappoint me. Thank You for loving me SO MUCH and even giving me Your Holy Spirit. Thank You for answering my prayer! Amen.

REFLECT: Are you afraid of suffering? When have you ever thanked God in the middle of a crisis or looked back and thanked Him for how He turned your difficult season into good? Do you feel like you are a stronger Christian because of the suffering you have experienced? Like Job, allow yourself to wrestle with the question of whether you believe that God causes suffering or allows it for your own good. Ponder today's scripture in Romans 5 as you reflect on your own life experiences with suffering. Has your suffering given you hope?!

ACT: Thank God right now for every difficult thing you're going through. Look at how your suffering is building your Christian character and thank Him that He loves you so much that He'll push you beyond your comfort zone in order to give you hope that will never disappoint you! And thank Him for giving you the Holy Spirit to hold you up through every hard day. Thank Him for loving you that much!

DAY 6

MISPLACED HOPE

“OUTSIDE OF THE CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST, THERE IS NO HOPE IN THIS WORLD. THAT CROSS AND RESURRECTION AT THE CORE OF THE GOSPEL IS THE ONLY HOPE FOR HUMANITY. WHEREVER YOU GO, ASK GOD FOR WISDOM ON HOW TO GET THAT GOSPEL IN, EVEN IN THE TOUGHEST SITUATIONS OF LIFE.”

-RAVI ZACHARIAS

New International Version

Proverbs 11:7

Hopes placed in mortals die with them; all the promise of their power comes to nothing.

Jeremiah 14:22

Do any of the worthless idols of the nations bring rain? Do the skies themselves send down showers? No, it is you, O Lord our God. Therefore our hope is in you, for you are the one who does all this.

DAY 6

PRAY: Dear Heavenly Father, show me who and what I am placing my hope in that will lead to emptiness and death. Let me see the reality of Your creation and Your hand on everything in my life so that I can put my hope in You only. Remind me that the promises of this world are meaningless and that I am surrounded by worthless idols telling me that they can fulfill me. I want my hope to be in You and to see the world through Your eyes. Amen.

REFLECT: How much of your faith is cultural and how much of your faith is biblical? It's easy to live out a Christian existence, thinking that we're doing all right, when our focus and our choices are dictated by the world around us. Even the church has accepted cultural beliefs that are not biblical. Seeking false idols can slip into our priorities and worshiping people over God can lead us astray. No idols can bring rain. Hope placed in mortals dies with them.

DAY 6

ACT: Hollywood is the most powerful influence in our lives and we don't even know it. The messages and role models we embrace from Hollywood seep into our hearts. Without noticing, we seek worthless idols over seeking God, believing cultural truths that come from our earthly influencers instead of God's biblical truths. Choose one entertainment celebrity that you look up to and instead of trying to be like them, would you pray for them? Ask God to transform their lives into His image and for them to embrace His hope for humanity – the Cross – because their power by themselves comes to nothing! Pray for their hope, and yours, to be only in Him.

DAY 7

SUFFERING PRODUCES HOPE

"HOPE IS BEING ABLE TO SEE THAT THERE IS
LIGHT DESPITE ALL OF THE DARKNESS."
-DESMOND TUTU

New International Version

Hebrews 10:23-24

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we
profess, for he who promised is faithful.
And let us consider how we may spur one
another on toward love and good deeds.

DAY 7

PRAY: Lord, You say that if we profess our hope in You that You are faithful to fulfill that. So, I ask You now to help me hold unswervingly to the hope You offer me. And please use me to encourage others so that I can be a part of Your work, to spur on others to also love and do good deeds. I look forward to what You're about to do. In the name of Jesus I pray. AMEN.

REFLECT: This verse brings up some great questions to reflect upon: Am I holding unswervingly to God's hope that will not disappoint me or am I holding on to the world's false hopes? Am I actually professing God's eternal hope to others? Am I spurring on others to love people and to do good deeds? Do I believe I can actually be used by God to impact others to be more Christ-like? Do I believe that He who promised is faithful?

ACT: As the last day of our week on HOPE, today is your chance to spur on someone in your life to love more, to do good deeds, and to hold on to hope, all in the name of Jesus. Choose one person to pray for, and to reach out to with encouraging words. Maybe even challenge them to walk with you as a follower of Jesus, and make an eternal difference in their world. You can do it! Spur them on to hold unswervingly to the hope you profess, to love and to do greater things for God's glory. For He who has promised is faithful!