

# Find Hope in Christ by Focusing on His Promises

*A 7-Day Biblical Reading Plan*

*Find hope in Christ as you are reminded of His amazing promises.  
This reading plan is comprised of articles from a variety of Bibles  
by Zondervan, offering insights into having hope during various  
seasons of life.*

# Table of Contents

**Day 1: God Is Bigger Than Your Worldly Troubles**

**Day 2: A Recipe for Hope**

**Day 3: How Can We Hope in a God Who Abandons Us?**

**Day 4: Holding Out Hope**

**Day 5: I Can Do All This**

**Day 6: A Saving Faith**

**Day 7: Hope Out Loud**

# Day 1: God Is Bigger Than Your Worldly Troubles

*“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” – John 16:33*

Have you ever stopped to think how different life would be if we were still living in Eden? No broken relationships. No difficult pregnancies. No squabbles with spouses. No financial woes. No cancer. No feeling far away from God. (And this list doesn't even begin to scratch the surface!)

Instead, we live in a world marred by the effects of sin. We daily face all kinds of pain, trouble, suffering, weeping, loss and despair.

The temptation is to blame our woes on God, but let's be honest: The human race did this to itself. All God ever did was love us, and — when we rebelled — implement a plan to rescue us.

The promise above — a statement by Jesus to his followers — is a sobering assessment of the way things are. But it is also a hopeful reminder of the once and future Paradise for which we were created.

In light of such truth, author Elisabeth Elliot counsels us: “Refuse self-pity. Refuse it absolutely. It is a deadly thing with power to destroy you. Turn your thoughts to Christ who has already carried your griefs and sorrows.”

## **God's Promise to Me:**

- Trials and sorrows are part of living in a fallen world.
- I am bigger and more powerful than any worldly troubles you face.

## **My Prayer to God:**

*Heavenly Father, trials and sorrows are a normal part of life. I don't like this truth, but it reminds me of my need for you, God. I can take heart in the fact that you will have the final word. I praise you because you are powerful and sovereign over my life — even the hard times. Always keep me looking to you.*

# Day 2: A Recipe for Hope

*My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life. – Psalm 119:50*

I remember as a youngster watching my mom make homemade preserves. What that meant for me was that I would see some terrific jam or jelly on the table for dinner.

God will sometimes stir up ingredients in your life like suffering, struggling and pain to remind you to depend on him. Even though it may not seem like it at the time, what God has prepared for you will yield a much sweeter and more desirable person if you can endure the testing and hurt.

God promises he will be with you in it and through it, and he will preserve your life. The process is not always enjoyable in any realm of thinking, but parenting will occasionally test you to preserving moments. In those moments, you must be aware that the promise of his presence on the other side is your hope.

## **Parenting Principle:**

Thank God for his promises as they make the best preserves.

## **Points to Ponder:**

- What has God brought you through?
- How have you learned from that experience?
- What have been some experiences you can share with your children so they can learn in this area?

# Day 3: How Can We Hope in a God Who Abandons Us?

*The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; – Lamentations 3:25*

Jeremiah steadfastly recognized that the Lord had not abandoned his people, despite the pain of their situation. Rather, God's people had abandoned him. Jeremiah, the *weeping prophet*, is also called the *prophet of hope*, because he foresaw a day when the Lord would reign in the midst of a restored, renewed and reconciled people — people who had finally returned to him.

Jesus knew this paradox between abandonment and hope. In the midst of his suffering and death on the cross, he cried, *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* (Mt 27:46). Yet Jesus also knew that he would be resurrected on the third day, opening the gate of eternal life to all believers. The despair of the cross has now become the gift of life to perishing sinners.

Abandonment, sorrow, struggle and pain — all these are transitory. Wholeness, healing, joy and peace are permanent, for they are part of the very nature of God. That is what sustains the believer through difficult times. Although Jeremiah grieved over Jerusalem's destruction, he knew God would prevail.

## Day 4: Holding Out Hope

*How long, LORD? Will you hide yourself forever? How long will your wrath burn like fire? – Psalm 89:46*

...We can't be sure of the identity of Ethan the Ezrahite, the ascribed author of Psalm 89. Perhaps he wrote this psalm in response to this event in the life of Rehoboam. Or the occasion may have come more than 300 years later with the aback on Jerusalem by the Babylonians and the exile of King Jehoiachin (see 2 Kings 24:8–17). At any rate, the psalmist was depressed and mystified as he asked, "Lord, where is your former great love, which in your faithfulness you swore to David?" (Psalm 89:49).

The first half of the psalm reflects on God's promises to David and his royal lineage. But beginning at verse 38, Ethan's tone changes: "You have cut short the days of his youth; you have covered him with a mantle of shame" (verse 45).

Ethan's psalm resonates with some of us with regard to our marriages. Every couple that celebrates a wedding echoes the enthusiasm of the first 37 verses: "God's love endures forever and will shine through our lives!" But too many relationships run into hard times. For example, one couple we know struggled through decades of infidelity. She partied with her friends from work, and he cozied up to other women while on business trips. When the couple finally decided to call it quits, she realized she was pregnant. Unsure of what to do, they put parting on hold. During that time, they fell in love all over again.

Some years later I was part of their 25th anniversary celebration in a rented hall. When the couple stood to thank the large gathering of friends for coming, the tears flowed. They confessed sins. They told of their early hopes and wayward paths. They spoke of losing faith and questioning God's promises.

Then they revealed why all of us had been invited to the party. Each of us, they said, had kept faith in God for them even while they had lost courage and confidence. They had tried, failed, prayed and grown bitter. But we had wrestled with God on their behalf, using both praise and lament, similar to the way Ethan did in Psalm 89.

That night we laughed together in the great joy of God's promises—and we wept together over the pain of lost opportunities and faded hopes. And as we lingered over final good wishes, we recognized that life in all its shades is a faith journey.

—Wayne Brouwer

# Day 5: I Can Do All This

*I can do all this through him who gives me strength. – Philippians 4:13*

## ***I can do all this***

Paul uses a Greek verb that means “to be strong” or “to have strength” (cf. Ac 19:16, 20; Jas 5:16). He had strength to withstand “all this” (vv. 11, 12), including both difficulty and prosperity in the material world.

## ***through him who gives me strength***

The Greek word for “gives strength” means “to put power in.” Because believers are in Christ (Gal 2:20), He infuses them with His strength to sustain them until they receive some provision (Eph 3:16– 20; 2Co 12:10).

# Day 6: A Saving Faith

*For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.  
– John 3:17*

John the disciple records John 3:16, the well-known verse about the core of the gospel message, during a conversation between Nicodemus (a Pharisee) and Jesus about what it means to be born again.

To be saved, we need faith to believe that Jesus is who he said he is—wholly God and wholly man—and that he was a perfect sacrifice in our place on the cross. Jesus reminds us that he came into this world to welcome people, not to push them away. He came to save lost humanity.

This is illustrated with the metaphor about light and darkness. Not only are we to have faith in what Jesus did for us, we must also be willing to step into the light where our sins are exposed. In that vulnerable place, we clearly see our need to be saved—from ourselves, our sin, and the world’s way of doing things.

We continually exercise our faith in God by daring to welcome truth and light in our lives; it’s the way we walk our faith.

## **A Prayer for Today**

Lord, I believe. I believe Jesus was both God and man, and that he lived a perfectly sinless life, offering himself for me on the cross. I believe in the resurrection. I choose today to step into the light because I know I need you. Amen.

## **A Journaling Prompt**

Describe the day (or the time period) when you met Jesus for the first time. How has your understanding of being “saved” changed since then? In what ways?

# Day 7: Hope Out Loud

*He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen. – Revelation 22:20-21*

- What is something that you are confident about?
- What does it mean to be treacherous?

The Bible teaches us in many places and with many different illustrations that God will be faithful to those who faithfully hope in him. This verse tells us that God will not allow shame to come to us.

Sometimes it is difficult to have hope. It can be especially difficult to hope out loud. Sometimes, others are threatened by our hope because they have none, and they work to hurt those who are hopeful. These people are being “treacherous,” which means they are faithless, deceitful, and untrustworthy.

That’s why this verse becomes so important to believers. We need to know that God will not forget us. He will not allow us to be shamed for our hope. When we put our hope in God, we will be victorious.

This should give us tremendous confidence. Believers should not be afraid to hope. We should hope boldly — out loud — because we know that God is real, and our hope in him is real.

## **Prayer**

Dear God, thank you for giving us hope. Thank you for protecting those who hope in you. Let our hope in you give us confidence each day. Amen.