

THE THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS SERIES

# HOPE

*The Anchor for Your Soul*



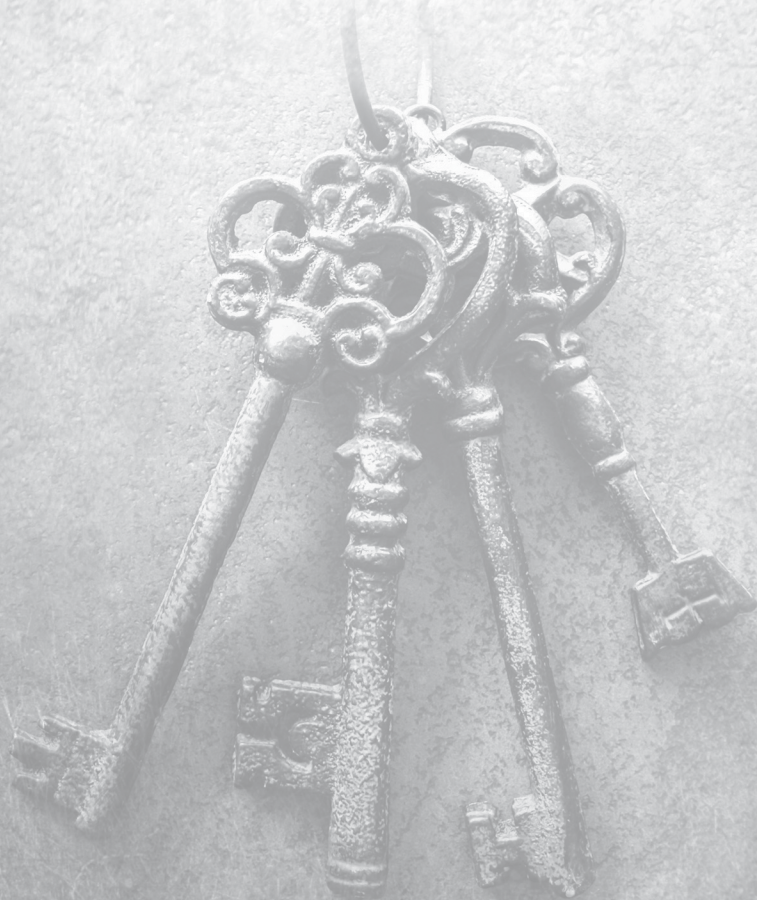
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION** ..... 1

## DEFINITIONS

What Is Hope? ..... 9

What Is Hopelessness? ..... 10

What Is the Connection between Anchors and Hope? ..... 12

What Is the Christian’s View of Hope? ..... 15

What Are the Key Differences between Cultural Hope and Christian Hope? ..... 17

What Is the Difference between Faith and Hope? ..... 24

What Is God’s Heart on Hope? ..... 27

## CHARACTERISTICS

What Are Inner Feelings of Hopelessness? ..... 36

What Are Outer Evidences of Hopelessness? ..... 38

What Is the Downward Spiral of Despair? ..... 39

What Is the Upward Spiral of Hope? ..... 42

What Are Different Types of Anchors? ..... 45

## CAUSES

What Are Unreliable Anchors? ..... 55

Where Is Hope When “It” Doesn’t Happen? ..... 58

Why Do People Drift without Direction? ..... 62

|   |    |
|---|----|
| What Is the Root Cause of Hopelessness? .....   | 66 |
| How Can You Have Hope That Lasts Forever? ..... | 69 |

## **STEPS TO SOLUTION**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Key Verse to Memorize .....   | 79  |
| Key Passage to Read .....   | 80  |
| How to Have a Transformed Life.....                                 | 81  |
| Guilt . . . How to Plug the Holes in the Hull .....                 | 87  |
| Grief . . . How to Stand against the Storms .....                   | 90  |
| Bitterness . . . How to Bear Biting Winds .....                     | 93  |
| Negativity . . . How to Hold on to the Lifelines .....              | 96  |
| Drifting . . . How to Have an Anchored Life.....                    | 98  |
| Ingratitude . . . How to Thank God for the Hope<br>He Gives .....   | 100 |
| Despair . . . How to Help Those Who Feel Hopeless .....             | 102 |
| Uncertainty . . . How to Grab Hold of the<br>Benefits of Hope ..... | 105 |
| Conclusion: Your Anchor Holds .....                                 | 110 |

## **SCRIPTURES TO MEMORIZE** .....

111

## **ENDNOTES & BIBLIOGRAPHY** .....

117

# INTRODUCTION

When someone needs help in life, a struggler veering off course, what is most important: truth, compassion, hope, mercy? Initially I assumed truth, yet later I experienced how truth can be rendered ineffective without the essential element of hope.

Case in point: Sandra, a medical professional in her 30s, attended my home Bible study with a group of 40 other single adults. She was smart, serious, but also stuck. Having lost both of her parents to alcoholism, her life was adrift in a sea of insecurity. Yet within our group, she responded to scriptural truth like a duck to water.

Fast-forward two years. Sandra began experiencing a flood of flashbacks—lewd, unnerving flashbacks of sexual abuse with increased intensity. Late one evening, she realized the offender was her own father.

Sandra became so despondent she wanted to die. She cried out, “I can’t take it anymore!”

“Yes you can,” I responded. “As hard as this is, in the strength of Christ, you can. I want you to claim Philippians 4:13, *‘I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.’*”

The more she focused on the incest, the more fragile she felt. She couldn’t read God’s Word; she couldn’t take in truth; she couldn’t see the light; she couldn’t hold on to hope.

The hope she needed, however, wasn’t just any kind of hope. It’s not wishful thinking, as in “I hope I can arrive in time—maybe yes, maybe no.” Actually, two kinds of hope exist. I use the terms “Cultural hope” and “Christian hope.”

**Cultural hope** is an *optimistic desire* something will happen (but not guaranteed due to changeable people and circumstances). **Christian hope** is an *optimistic assurance* something will happen (a guarantee based on our unchangeable God and His unfailing promises). The Bible says, “*We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure*” (Hebrews 6:19).

Though she clearly had truth in her head, she had no hope in her heart . . . saying, “June, it will work for you, but it won’t work for me.”

“That’s not true,” I objected. “Would God ever lie to you? Would the Bible lie to you?” She answered *No* to each question. Although she agreed, she stopped coming to times of spiritual fellowship. Cutting herself off, she began to drown—drinking heavily to numb her pain. Ultimately, she felt helpless, knowing she couldn’t erase the past and she felt hopeless, believing she had no future.

The day came when I received a call from the hospital where she worked—from the psychiatric unit. Sandra had attempted suicide—and almost succeeded. She had lost all hope.

Immediately, I rushed to the hospital. Speaking heart-to-heart, I shared, “My friend, there are no hopeless situations, only those who have grown hopeless. Sandra, you have all the hope in the world—you have the God of all hope indwelling you.”

We talked candidly—about her attempt, her pain, her past. As I left her room, I thought, *She’s in a safe place. They’ll help her.* Unfortunately, a few months later there was no inner change. Then when her insurance ran out, Sandra was moved to the state hospital 30 miles away.

The very next day she called me. “June, you’ve got to get me out of here!” I’ll never forget the intensity of her words. “I’m not like these people—they are walking zombies. I am not a zombie! I don’t belong here! You’ve got to get me out of here!”

I explained, “I don’t have that authority.”

“Oh yes you do! Just come and get me. You drive here, come to the front, and we’ll walk out together. They cannot hold me against my will!”

I persisted, “Sandra, I don’t think I can do that.”

Later, she called again—speaking calmly. “June, you must get me out. Actually, I’ve been thinking about what you said: *‘I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.’*” (What a surprise, she was quoting Scripture!) “And, I know that’s true.”

“And I’ve been thinking, God does promise to give me *‘peace that surpasses all understanding’* and He promises *‘never to leave me nor forsake me.’*” (I could hardly believe my ears, hearing these words from Philippians 4:7 and Deuteronomy 31:8.)

Sandra repeated back what I'd been saying to her. Yet all along I thought my words weren't even reaching her ears—much less residing in her heart. However, her hopelessness had blocked the truth from taking hold.

“I do need to trust in the Lord with all my heart and not rely on my own understanding. He promises to direct my path.” (Amazing. Proverbs 3:5–6 is exactly what she needed to do!)

So the next day, I prayerfully arrived at the hospital, signed her out, and we rode to our scheduled Bible study retreat. The weekend was a rich time of renewal and fellowship for us all.

However, Sandra still needed wise counsel to help her process the past and present hope for the future. So, on Monday morning, Sandra met with a renowned Christian psychiatrist who immediately took her off several strong medications and set her up with a Christian counselor. Also, a caring Christian friend (a doctor's wife) came alongside to walk with her daily. What a changed heart when she experienced renewed hope!

When people need help, they must receive hope. If truth is only in their heads without hope, they can still walk away from your compassion, truth, and mercy. They can literally give up on life.

My prayer is that you will fully take hold of the hope God has for you. By yielding your life to Jesus, He will be your Savior, your Healer, your Redeemer.

The Lord says, *“I know the plans I have for you . . . plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”* (Jeremiah 29:11). What a promise! This is extraordinary. Just realizing God has a plan for your life with the power to fulfill it will give you hope for your heart, hope that lasts a lifetime.

June Hunt  
*Founder, Hope for the Heart*





# HOPE

## *The Anchor for Your Soul*

The day is bone-chillingly cold. The date . . . January 25, 1736.

Two gale-force storms have already shattered the main mast of the ship. In the third month at sea, yet another terrifying storm—a “nor’easter”—causes the Englishman to fear for his life—so much so, that he writes, “The sea broke over, split the mainsail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up.” Yet on the same ship during the same storm, a group of German Christians appears completely calm as each person quotes the Psalms. According to young John Wesley, their lack of fear unsettled him more than the storm itself!<sup>1</sup>

Young Wesley wonders, *How can they remain calm in the face of catastrophe? How can they be at peace when their lives are in peril? What makes their hope so strong . . . and mine so weak?* All on the same battered ship, all weary from the same raging storms, all tossed by the same crashing waves—yet while one man is frantic, the others are free from fear. Why? Simply put: *Their lives were anchored in Christ and they knew their anchor would hold.*

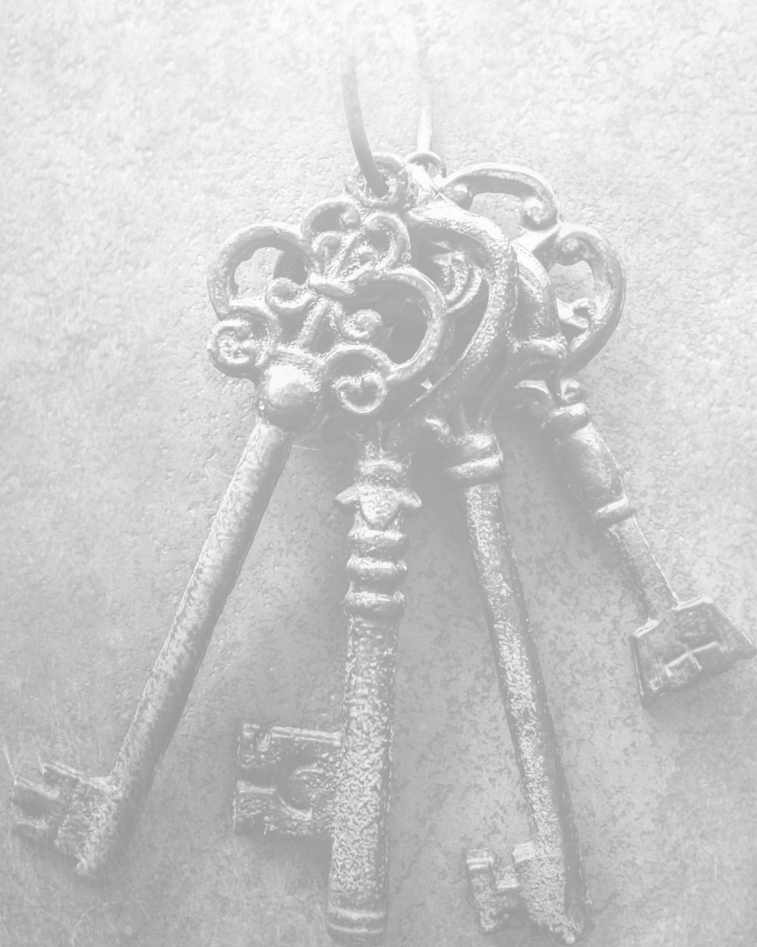
Almost three centuries ago, these Morovians clearly had a peace that passes all understanding. They displayed their hope as though they were speaking directly to the Lord, “*When I am afraid, I put my trust in you*” (Psalm 56:3). Not *if* I am afraid, but *when* I am afraid . . . I will trust in you.

What an anchor is to a ship, hope is to the soul. They both stabilize whatever needs to be held steady during the storms of life. Every Christian has been given a secure anchor in the person of Christ. The Bible says about Jesus:

*“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.”*

(HEBREWS 6:19)

# DEFINITIONS



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*“God is the  
God of hope.”*



We have all been “in the same boat” with cloudy thinking about hope. The *common view* of hope in our culture is quite different from *Christian hope*. If you live by *cultural hope*, you will have a boat full of wishful thinking, and what you hope for will sometimes happen and sometimes not.

However, *Christian hope* is based on the Bible—God’s unchanging Word. By patiently relying on what God says, you will have all the hope necessary with all the certainty you will ever need. The apostle Paul states the source of our hope:

*“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)

## What Is Hope?

When we live with biblical hope, we have an anchored life. We are held steady in the midst of any storm. Because hope is often misunderstood, an accurate understanding of the meaning of hope is crucial. The Bible says that when our hope is anchored in God, He teaches us His truth and guides us in the way we should go. This prayer is yours to claim:

*“Guide me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are God my Savior,  
and my hope is in you all day long.”*

(PSALM 25:5)

**Hope** identified as *cultural hope* is an *optimistic desire* that something will be fulfilled. This hope is *not a guaranteed* hope because it is subject to changeable people and circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

**Hope** identified as *Christian hope* is an **optimistic assurance** that something will be fulfilled. This hope is a *guaranteed hope* not subject to change, but rather anchored in Christ, the Son of God and every promise in the Word of God.<sup>3</sup>

**Hope** in the New Testament is conveyed by the Greek word *elpis*, which means a “favorable and confident expectation” relating to the future.<sup>4</sup>

Although the Bible uses the word hope in both the secular and the spiritual sense, the focus of Christian hope is always based on the *guaranteed* promises of God. Thus, this hope will never be a disappointment. As Christians, we are promised peace with God.

*“We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials,  
for we know that they help us develop endurance.*

*<sup>4</sup> And endurance develops strength of character,  
and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.*

*<sup>5</sup> And this hope will not lead to disappointment.*

*For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us  
the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.”*

(ROMANS 5:3–5 NLT)

## What Is Hopelessness?

When zealous religious leaders sought to kill the apostle Paul, he—a Roman citizen—appealed to Caesar. Soon Paul found himself a prisoner on a ship headed to Rome. A treacherous storm arose, and eventually everyone on board lost hope. Everyone believed they would die. Everyone saw the situation as *hopeless*. Paul admitted,

*“When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days  
and the storm continued raging,*

*we finally gave up all hope of being saved.”*

(ACTS 27:20)

**Hopelessness** is characterized by absolute despair with no expectation of good.<sup>5</sup> The Bible refers to those who have a hope that perishes:

*“Such is the destiny of all who forget God; so perishes the hope of the godless”*  
(JOB 8:13).

**Hopelessness** in the New Testament is conveyed by the Greek word *apelpizo*, which is also translated “despair.” (*Apo* means “away from” and *elpizo* means “to hope.”) When combined, this word literally means “to be away from hope.”<sup>6</sup> Paul describes his feelings of hopelessness to the church in Corinth at a point when he felt his life was nearing its end:

*“We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself”*  
(2 CORINTHIANS 1:8).

**Hopelessness** can result in a desire to die. Those who feel hopeless are unable to envision any viable option for their problems—death seems the only solution. But the Bible says there is always hope:

*“Anyone who is among the living has hope”* (ECCLESIASTES 9:4).

A ship without an anchor is vulnerable on the open seas, and those on board can lose their hope of surviving when the storm is severe. But, in the midst of personal storms, rather than drowning in a sea of hopelessness, the Lord calls us to put our hope in Him—to allow Him to be our anchor and rely on His promises. Let this be your personal prayer:

*“Sustain me, my God,  
according to your promise,  
and I will live;  
do not let my hopes be dashed.”*  
(PSALM 119:116)



## What Is the Connection between Anchors and Hope?

For centuries, anchors have been a symbol of hope. This emblem was especially significant to the early persecuted church. Many etchings of anchors were discovered in the catacombs of Rome, where Christians held their meetings in hiding. Threatened with death because of their faith, these committed Christians used the anchor as a disguised cross and as a marker to guide the way to their secret meetings.

Located beneath the ancient city of Rome, 600 miles of these tomb-like burial chambers served as a place of refuge during perilous times of persecution. Thus, the anchor—found even on some tombstones today—has become the symbol of guaranteed hope for the eternal security of Christians. The Bible says,

*“You will be secure, because there is hope;  
you will look about you and take your rest in safety.”*

(JOB 11:18)

**Anchors** are objects typically connected to a boat or ship by a long chain or a heavy line with a short chain for the purpose of holding a vessel in place. Some anchors are fastened securely to the water’s flooring to hold down a large object (such as an oil rig). Other anchors are like large sheets or parachutes thrown into deep water in order to slow down or stabilize a vessel.

“**Anchor,**” the English word, is a translation of a Greek word derived from *ankos*, which means “curve.”<sup>7</sup> Anchors were usually curved so they could hook onto a solid base.

**Anchors** are a symbol of the sea, and represent *hope* and *security*.

**Anchors** are often a Christian symbol that represents Christ, who provides security for believers. Christ, our anchor, holds us secure—no matter how severe the storm.

In Paul's terrifying time at sea, his ship encountered hurricane-strength winds, and the crew used not just *one*, but *four* anchors in an attempt to save both their ship and their lives.

*“Fearing that we would be dashed  
against the rocks,  
they dropped four anchors from  
the stern and prayed for daylight.”  
(ACTS 27:29)*

## God and the Storms of Life

**Question:** “Where is God when I need Him the most? I don’t see Him at work in my life, especially when I’m suffering.”

**Answer:** Have you ever seen an anchor on the deck of a ship? It’s massive, huge, impressive! But it’s really serving little purpose just sitting there on deck. If the anchor is doing its job, you won’t see it.

Likewise, when Jesus is “doing His job,” you often won’t “see” Him either. But He is there, ever present, always holding you secure in the midst of the storm. Keep looking to Him and to His Word, trusting Him to help you and even give you joy in your trials. The Bible says,

*“There is wonderful joy ahead, even though  
you must endure many trials for a little while.  
. . . Though you do not see him now, you trust him;  
and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy.  
The reward for trusting him will be  
the salvation of your souls.”  
(1 PETER 1:6, 8–9 NLT)*

## **Anchoring Your Hope Keeping an Even Keel<sup>8</sup>**

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If you ask any mariner, “What is the most important part of a sailboat?” you might get a variety of answers: “A sound hull for staying afloat.” “A mast and a sail for catching the wind.” “A rudder for steering the right direction.”

But to keep the boat upright during a storm, there is one indispensable part . . . the keel. It is unseen and hidden below the surface of the water, but without it a brisk breeze can blow a large sailboat over on its side or force it to stray off course. When sailing in a strong wind, you need a sturdy keel.

On many boats, the keel resembles an upside-down shark’s fin that slices through the water beneath the hull. When a forceful wind on the sail causes the craft to heel, to lean to one side, the keel provides a counterforce that prevents it from flipping over. It also keeps the boat moving forward instead of drifting sideways across the water’s surface.

Finally, the keel gives structural strength to the entire boat, holding it together when the swirling action of wind and waves could tear it apart. Traditional boat builders always begin construction with the keel because of its importance to the ship’s overall design and integrity.

Storms are inevitable in life. But when the winds begin to blow, your hope in the living God is your “keel” to keep you upright and moving in the right direction. Just like a boat’s keel, hope isn’t optional but rather is an essential part of the Creator’s design for your life.

The following prayer in the Bible reflects a heart of hope based on God's promises: "Sustain me according to your promise, and I will live; do not let my hopes be dashed" (Psalm 119:116).

You may not always feel that hope is at work when blustering waves are battering you on every side. But when your hope is in God, you can know He is holding you together . . . keeping you on course . . . assuring your safety . . . just as He promised.

## What Is the Christian's View of Hope?

Many people do not understand why their hope fails. But the truth is, their concept of hope is based on the world's view of hope rather than on the biblical or God's view of hope.

The world sees hope as the desire a person has for a particular outcome, while having no real control over that outcome. They want something to happen but lack the power to make it happen.

The Christian's view of hope is based solely on God and His power and promises. He is able not only to desire something to happen but to actually cause it to happen—to bring it into existence. Therefore, the only sure place to put your hope is in the Lord.

*"And so, Lord, where do I put my hope?  
My only hope is in you."  
(PSALM 39:7 NLT)*

**The Christian's view of hope is . . .**

**Not dependent on** another person or a group of people

— but rather is dependent on the Lord alone.

*"Hopes placed in mortals die with them; all the promise of their power comes to nothing" (PROVERBS 11:7).*

**Not wishful thinking**, vague longing, or trying to fulfill a dream

— but rather is assured, unchangeable, and absolute.

*“Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love” (1 CORINTHIANS 13:13 NLT).*

**Not determined by** circumstances, events, or abilities

— but rather is based on what God has secured and promised.

*“So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us” (HEBREWS 6:18 NLT).*

**Not merely a desire** or man-made plan

— but rather the delayed fulfillment of reality.

*“We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don’t need to hope for it. But if we look forward to something we don’t yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently)” (ROMANS 8:24–25 NLT).*

**Not relying on** the stars, skies, luck, chance, or timing

— but rather rests in God’s sovereign, providential care.

*“Do any of the worthless idols of the nations bring rain? Do the skies themselves send down showers? No, it is you, LORD our God. Therefore our hope is in you, for you are the one who does all this” (JEREMIAH 14:22).*

**Not hoping good deeds** will outweigh the bad to get you to heaven

— but rather is knowing you’ll go to heaven because of God’s grace—receiving Christ as your Lord and Savior.

*“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life” (TITUS 3:5–7).*

God’s Word repeatedly contrasts worldly, cultural hope against godly, Christian hope. Worldly hope rooted in people, power, plans, or desires is futile and leads to disappointment because it does not have a strong foundation.

For the Christian, however, hope has the strongest foundation possible—God Himself. The Creator of the universe can do all things, and the Lord always keeps His promises. His hope is certain and secure—and it leads to joy. The Bible tells us:

*“Don’t put your confidence in powerful people;  
there is no help for you there.*

*<sup>4</sup> When they breathe their last,  
they return to the earth,  
and all their plans die with them.*

*<sup>5</sup> But joyful are those who have  
the God of Israel as their helper,  
whose hope is in the LORD their God.*

*<sup>6</sup> He made heaven and earth,  
the sea, and everything in them.  
He keeps every promise forever.”*

(PSALM 146:3–6 NLT)

## What Are the Key Differences between Cultural Hope and Christian Hope?

*Cultural hope* is riddled through and through with problems because it is based on changing values, circumstances, and beliefs. *Christian hope* is securely anchored in place with the eternal, unchanging promises of God. The Bible says,

*“God is not human, that he should lie,  
not a human being, that he should change his mind.  
Does he speak and then not act?  
Does he promise and not fulfill?”*

(NUMBERS 23:19)

## Cultural Hope vs. Christian Hope

### Cultural Hope Is Changeable

#### Hope in society's values

**PROBLEM:** Your sense of right and wrong can slowly change over time. Social standards change as cultures change.

#### Hope in legal justice

**PROBLEM:** Your sense of justice will not always be upheld. In legal courts, the *justice system is not always just.*

#### Hope in people's promises

**PROBLEM:** Your faith can become fractured when people *break their promises.* People you look up to can let you down.

#### Hope in an organization's integrity

**PROBLEM:** Your faith in any organization (even a church or ministry) can be destroyed as a result of *unrighteous behavior*—not doing what is right in God's sight—a *lack of integrity.*

### Christian Hope Is Unchangeable

#### Hope in God's unchanging values

**PROMISE:** *"All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal. . . . Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble"* (Psalm 119:160, 165).

#### Hope in God's unchanging justice

**PROMISE:** *"He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he"* (Deuteronomy 32:4).

#### Hope in God's unchanging promises

**PROMISE:** *"If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself"* (2 Timothy 2:13).

#### Hope in God's unchanging righteousness and integrity

**PROMISE:** *"Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, your justice like the great deep. You, LORD, preserve both people and animals"* (Psalm 36:5–6).

**Hope in your education for wisdom and understanding**

**PROBLEM:** Your education and the educational system do not guarantee wisdom and understanding. Wisdom is knowing how to apply your knowledge with godly insight.

**Hope in your job to provide purpose for life**

**PROBLEM:** Your work is not your purpose in life, nor is it your identity, because *your work could come to an end*. Then, if you lost your work, you've just lost your purpose for living.

**Hope in your own physical abilities**

**PROBLEM:** Your physical body deteriorates with the passage of time so that you are physically unable to do all that you previously could do. Your body could become permanently disabled because of an accident or unexpected illness.

**Hope in your financial resources**

**PROBLEM:** Your plans can be *financially shattered* because of an economic crisis or personal failure.

**Hope in God's unchanging wisdom and understanding**

**PROMISE:** *"He made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding"* (Jeremiah 51:15).

**Hope in God's unchanging purpose for your life**

**PROMISE:** *"I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. . . . For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds"* (Psalm 57:2, 10 ESV).

**Hope in God's unchanging abilities**

**PROMISE:** *"God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work"* (2 Corinthians 9:8).

**Hope in God's unchanging provision**

**PROMISE:** *"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"* (1 Timothy 6:17).



### Hope in your plans for the future

**PROBLEM:** Your *personal plans* for the future may be unfulfilled, because your life could be cut short at any time.

### Hope in God's plans for your future

**PROMISE:** *“For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’”* (Jeremiah 29:11).

## Guarantee of Christian Hope

**QUESTION:** **“As a Christian, how can I be certain hope is guaranteed and God will fulfill His promises?”**

**Answer:** Christian hope can sound beyond belief, unreal, far-fetched. But there are reasons to have assurance in God's promises. Consider:

- **The character of God:** You can have absolute confidence in the promises of the Bible because they are the promises of *God*. They are not the promises of a finite, frail, ever-changing human being, but the promises of an infinite, all-powerful, unchanging God. The Lord not only tells the truth but He is the truth (John 14:6); He cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18); nothing is impossible for God (Matthew 19:26); and He is always faithful to do what He says (Psalm 33:4). The Bible says,

*“The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises  
and faithful in all he does.”*

(PSALM 145:13)

- **The fulfillment of His Word:** He has proven Himself time and time again—the Lord always fulfills His Word. Hundreds of prophecies in God’s Word have been fulfilled in the past, especially in and through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The past fulfillment of His promises shows that His Word will be fulfilled and can be trusted. To help us be assured of our hope, the Lord encourages us to remember and reflect on His work in the past to remind ourselves that He will fulfill His plans for the future.

*“Remember the former things, those of long ago;*

*I am God, and there is no other;*

*I am God, and there is none like me.*

<sup>10</sup> *I make known the end from the beginning,*

*from ancient times, what is still to come. I say,*

*‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’*

<sup>11</sup> *... What I have said, that I will bring about;*

*what I have planned, that I will do.”*

(ISAIAH 46:9–11)

## **Anchoring Your Hope A Map to Navigate By<sup>9</sup>**

Taken from: HOPE FOR YOUR HEART  
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**NOTE:** The first person voice (“I, me, my”) in this story refers to June Hunt, founder of Hope for the Heart.

Imagine you’ve planned a trip to a part of the country you’ve never visited before. You hear it is a tropical paradise . . . beautiful . . . bountiful . . . well worth the journey. However, between here and there lies a vast, treacherous area with no landmarks for guidance. Deadly obstacles are hidden from view. Severe storms can throw you off course. Countless others have set out before you . . . never to return.

But the most significant problem is this: You have no map! Nonetheless, if you are determined to go, consider this: How much would you be willing to pay for an accurate map? What would you give to pinpoint where to find the pitfalls? What would it be worth to know which paths lead to safety and which to disaster? What would you give to get firsthand advice from those who have gone before you?

I already know the answer: *a lot!*

Now you have a taste of what it was like to be a European mariner at the dawn of the Age of Discovery. Standing on shore and contemplating sailing out into the churning, choppy waters of the Atlantic Ocean had to have been a harrowing experience. Any shred of tangible information was treated like a golden key for unlocking the great mysteries of the deep.

Even as early as the sixth century B.C., when Darius the Great ruled the Persian Empire, mariners were recording

details about landmarks and coastal features in written records called “*peripli*.” Sea charts, which historians of cartography consider the first true maps ever made, did not appear until the 1300s when captains “first laid down any considerable part of the earth surface from close, continuous, and what we may call scientific observation.”<sup>10</sup> They became known by their Italian name, *portolano* or “harbor guides.” These early maps preserved the collective experience of generations of sailors, for the benefit of all.

Today, maps are as valuable as ever. Modern mariners have volumes of information at their disposal—detailed data about depth levels, currents, weather histories, and forecasts. No sea captain would venture an ocean voyage without the best maps available.

Facing the future for your own life could feel like looking out on a vast expanse, where tropical storms and hurricanes can stir up at a moment’s notice. What hope is there that you will safely reach the other side to experience the abundant life God has promised? The answer is, none . . . if you set sail without the map He has already provided for your journey. Proverbs 16:25 (ESV) says, “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”

We have at our disposal the inspired written testimony of those who have gone before us. Their words, inspired by the Spirit of God, identify the treacherous rocks beneath the surface and point the way to the sometimes difficult route we must take, but it’s a route that is always right.

At times we find ourselves at the crossroads, and we want to go the right way. This is what the Lord says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls” (Jeremiah 6:16).

When you are searching for hope, look no further than the map of God's Word. The insights and inspiration offered there will lead you to the abundant life Jesus promised. Let this be your prayer, "Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my *hope* is in you all day long" (Psalm 25:5).

Without His map, you not only lose your way in life, but you will also lose something vital along the way: *hope*.

## What Is the Difference between Faith and Hope?

Sometimes two words can be so intertwined that it is difficult to distinguish between their meanings. Such is the case with *faith* and *hope*. Although aspects of the two overlap, the Bible does differentiate between them.

One of the most famous verses in the Bible lists *faith* and *hope* together with *love*. While most people think they understand love, they cannot clearly distinguish between faith and hope. Exploring the ways these two words are used in Scripture will shed light on both their differences and similarities.

*"These three remain: faith, hope and love.  
But the greatest of these is love."  
(1 CORINTHIANS 13:13)*

### Differences between Faith and Hope

**Hope** is based on an assured promise, whereas **faith** is acting on that promise. **Faith** is hope put into action. To help explain the difference, consider the following illustration. . . .

### Imagine a ship floating in the water.

The **Water** represents the sea of people floating through life.

The **Ship** represents you as a believer in Christ safely on board.

The **Anchor** represents the guaranteed hope that Christ will hold you secure—keeping you from drifting dangerously off course or crashing into destructive rocks.

The **Rode** is the strong chain that has one end connected to the ship and the other to the anchor. The rode represents an action—acting in faith that Christ will hold you secure. The act of “anchoring” (dropping the anchor and rode into the water) is based on the guaranteed hope that the anchor will hold.<sup>11</sup>

**Example:** Peter had hope in Jesus . . . thus in faith he stepped out of the boat onto the water.

Ultimately when we act in faith on the promises of God—believing they will work for us—we experience something no person or situation can ever take away—an anchored life.

Christ has set you on His course for your life—first to save you and then to conform you into His character. Having the assurance of hope is necessary before you can act in faith. Then, you act in faith because of your hope. Hope is the catalyst that produces your faith:

*“For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus  
and your love for all of God’s people,  
which come from your confident hope  
of what God has reserved for you in heaven.  
You have had this expectation ever since  
you first heard the truth of the Good News.”*  
(COLOSSIANS 1:4–5 NLT)

## Similarities between Hope and Faith

**Hope and faith** are integral to salvation.

- *“In this hope we were saved”* (Romans 8:24).
- *“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God”* (Ephesians 2:8).

**Hope and faith** are Christian virtues.

- *“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love”* (1 Corinthians 13:13).
- *“Since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet”* (1 Thessalonians 5:8).

**Hope and faith** involve the unseen.

- *“Hope that is seen is no hope at all”* (Romans 8:24).
- *“We live by faith, not by sight”* (2 Corinthians 5:7).

**Hope and faith** require trust.

- *“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit”* (Romans 15:13).
- *“To the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness”* (Romans 4:5).

**Hope and faith** please the Lord.

- *“The LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love”* (Psalm 147:11).
- *“Without faith it is impossible to please God”* (Hebrews 11:6).

The anchor of hope and the rode of faith can be seen as one. In boating, the rode is so securely connected to the ship and to the anchor that it can be considered “one” with them. This is the case in the Christian’s relationship with Jesus Christ. We have become one with Him, so that our *faith* and our *hope* are entwined like a braided rope—separate yet working as one, tethering us to our Lord. The Bible says,

*“Your faith and hope are in God.”*

(1 PETER 1:21)

## What Is God's Heart on Hope?

The world cries out for hope. From individuals and families to cities and nations, the cries for justice, for peace, for *hope* ring out around the world. We cry out for answers, for guidance, for comfort . . . to make it through one more season, to overcome one more tragedy, to persevere one more day.

But there is only one hope that will satisfy our longings and our cries, one hope that will anchor us during the storms of life—the hope of Jesus Christ.

From His first cry as a baby to His last cry on the cross, Jesus Christ came to give us hope. The Bible says of Jesus:

*“In his name the nations will put their hope.”*

(MATTHEW 12:21)

**God is** the God of hope.

*“I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit”* (ROMANS 15:13 NLT).

**God is** the only lasting hope for everyone.

*“You are the hope of everyone on earth, even those who sail on distant seas”* (PSALM 65:5 NLT).

**God wants** your hope to be in Him.

*“O Lord, you alone are my hope”* (PSALM 71:5 NLT).

**God wants** His Word and His promises to be your source of hope.

*“You are my refuge and my shield; your word is my source of hope”* (PSALM 119:114 NLT).

**God does not want** you to put your hope in people or leaders.

*“It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in humans. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes”* (PSALM 118:8–9).



**God does not want** your hope to be in money or wealth.

*“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”* (1 TIMOTHY 6:17).

**God has** a plan for your life that is filled with hope.

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’”* (JEREMIAH 29:11).

**God wants** you to have hope all day—every day.

*“Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long”* (PSALM 25:5).

**God gives** you hope during times of trouble and suffering.

*“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”* (PSALM 42:5).

**God strengthens** you with His hope.

*“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”* (ISAIAH 40:31).

**God keeps** you anchored with His hope.

*“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure”* (HEBREWS 6:19).

**God wants** you to know that no matter what happens—there is always hope.

*“There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off”* (PROVERBS 23:18).

## **Anchoring Your Hope** **Anchored in “Iceberg Alley”<sup>12</sup>**

Taken from: HOPE FOR YOUR HEART  
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“Everybody’s lost hope,” confessed Councilman Jay LaFont of Grand Isle, Louisiana, following the worst environmental catastrophe in United States history. On April 20, 2010, BP’s Deepwater Horizon drilling rig exploded off Louisiana’s coast, killing eleven people. The mile-deep well then began spewing millions of gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico . . . unchecked for months . . . closing the area’s beaches and crippling its fishing industry. “As long as you have something to look forward to, a little glimmer of hope, you can move on,” LaFont told reporters. “But this just drained everything out of us.”<sup>13</sup>

Fortunately, the scenario couldn’t be more different for individuals living near . . . and working on . . . the oil platform Hibernia off the coast of St. John’s, Newfoundland, Canada. Residents and workers there are filled with hope, aware of the enormous amount of time and resources invested to build a structure that is said to be virtually indestructible.

The Hibernia’s meticulous design incorporates a GBS (gravity-based structure) system that anchors it to the North Atlantic seabed two hundred and sixty-five feet below the water. The total structure from the ocean floor to the top of the derrick is 738 feet high, with construction costs of over six billion dollars.

Simply stated, the structure is *immovable*. It has to be! It sits in the middle of “iceberg alley,” where icebergs can be as large as ocean liners. Sixteen huge concrete “teeth” surround the Hibernia. These teeth were expensive additions, designed to distribute the force of an iceberg over the entire structure and into the seabed, should one ever get close.

Radio operators plot and monitor all icebergs within twenty-seven miles of the oil rig. Any icebergs that come close are “lassoed” and towed away from the platform by powerful supply ships. Smaller bergs are simply diverted by using the ship’s propeller wash or high-pressure water cannons. As rugged and as strong as this platform is, and as prepared as it is for icebergs to strike, the owners have no intention of allowing an iceberg anywhere near Hibernia.

But if something unpreventable comes its way, the Hibernia is anchored, rooted, and ready. Built to withstand a million-ton iceberg, designers claim it can actually withstand a six-million-ton iceberg, and even then it will still be functional. (Statistics indicate that a million-ton iceberg occurs only once every five hundred years, and supposedly one as large as six million tons comes around once every ten thousand years.)<sup>14</sup>

As sturdy and secure as the massive Hibernia is, know that you have a source of protection that far exceeds any defense built by human hands. When storms rage in your life, the Lord Himself is your Anchor . . . your staunch and steady hope. When trouble like a massive iceberg threatens you, remember this: Because Jesus is your Anchor, He will give you *an anchored life*.

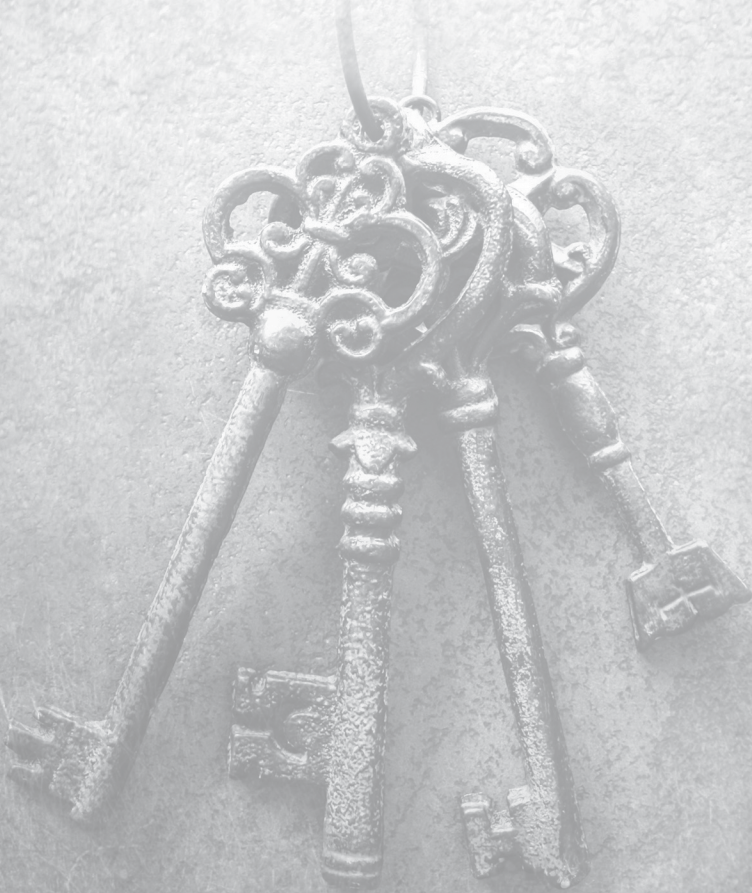
He is your help and your hope. He will sustain you, and He will hold you . . . safe and secure. The Bible promises:

*“You will be secure, because there is hope;  
you will look about you and take your rest in safety.”*

(JOB 11:18)



# CHARACTERISTICS



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*“When you have  
Christ as your anchor,  
you are held secure  
with His hope.”*



Anchors, which come in all sizes, shapes, and weights, are used to stabilize different objects in water. When properly used, a relatively small anchor will successfully stabilize a large ship. For example, a 45-pound anchor can be used to stabilize a 4,000-pound ship.<sup>15</sup> However, each anchor must be chosen based on the size and weight of the ship as well as on the anticipated weather and water bottom conditions.

Typically, ships set sail with different types of anchors on board. Though terminology differs from place to place and from person to person, some refer to three anchors as *lunch*, *working*, and *storm* anchors.

The ***lunch anchor*** is dropped into the water of a bay to keep the ship in place for a short period of time.

The ***working anchor*** is the ship's main anchor.

The ***storm anchors*** (at both the bow and stern) are put out when the ship encounters a severe storm.<sup>16</sup>

We all need a storm anchor for our lives. At different times we will be going into a storm, coming out of a storm, or finding ourselves in the throes of a storm. When you have an anchored life—a life anchored in Christ—the Lord will keep you stable as the storm passes.

*“When the storm has swept by,  
the wicked are gone,  
but the righteous stand firm forever.”*

(PROVERBS 10:25)

## **Anchoring Your Hope Caught in the Rip Current<sup>17</sup>**

Taken from: HOPE FOR YOUR HEART  
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In the Hawaiian Islands, a beach called Hanakapi'ai is located on the coast of Kauai. Here jagged volcanic mountains covered in lush tropical foliage rise from the blue Pacific Ocean, but powerful ocean currents also flow immediately offshore due to the absence of protective barrier reefs.

Over the years these currents have shaped the beach and mountains into breathtaking landscapes that adorn gift books, travel guides, and postcards. In winter the sand disappears from shore, carried away by the water. In spring the sandy beach returns.

Imagine that on a summer day you are hiking in the tropical heat for miles through the rugged volcanic terrain. Then at last you come upon the beautiful water at Hanakapi'ai Beach. It looks irresistible!

Of course you see the signs posted on the trail: "Do not go near the water! Unseen currents have killed many visitors." Obviously those unwise tourists made the mistake of swimming in bad weather. But today there's not a cloud in the sky! You clearly see the calm pools of water that are far from the churning waves. Eager to feel refreshed by a short swim, you rush toward the water's edge and run in.

Suddenly you are knocked off your feet and pulled away from shore. You've just come into direct contact with a rip current, a narrow, powerful current of water that is pulling you out to sea. Typically, "rips" measure less than thirty feet wide. But this super highway of rapid water can extend from two hundred to twenty-five hundred feet.

Do you wonder why rip currents even form? Picture the wind and waves pushing water inland on your right and left sides as you are standing in the shallow waters. Obviously, the water must flow back out.

In front of you is a long sandbar running parallel to the beach that has a large section missing, and in that section is the rip current. That “rip” allows the currents coming toward you from both sides to push straight back out . . . and also to drag you out at top speed! On the surface of a rip current, the water appears calm and inviting, but below the surface the water flow is like a rapid river surging toward the open ocean. Even if you are an Olympic swimmer, you physically cannot swim back to shore against it. Instead, you must turn out of it by swimming parallel to the coast and then swim to shore.

By not believing those clear words of warning, your life is endangered. If you survive, you are fortunate, and you will never forget to take a written warning seriously—it can be a matter of life and death. The Bible says, “We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away” (Hebrews 2:1).

Let’s be honest: We’ve all done it! We have all ignored clear warnings found in God’s Word and walked into water that looked harmless. We trusted our *own* eyes and our *own* knowledge and not God’s truth. We didn’t want to believe that warning applied to us.

Life is full of precarious unseen currents that can pull us swiftly away from God’s perfect will. That’s why it’s vital to first see what the Lord says and then to take His words seriously. He knows what lies beneath. He sees the currents we cannot see. He will chart our course.

As long as your hope is anchored in the Lord, you will not drown. He will guide you from harm, teach you His truth, and give you His hope. Just as David prayed, you, too, can pray:



*“Guide me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are God my Savior,  
and my hope is in you all day long.”*  
(PSALM 25:5)

## What Are Inner Feelings of Hopelessness?

Have you ever felt like you were caught in an unrelenting rip—like you’d been knocked off your feet and were being pulled away from the safe shore toward a deep sea of destruction? No refuge in sight, no anchor within reach, you are overcome by feelings of helplessness . . . and hopelessness.

Who of us hasn’t experienced sinking feelings like these at one time or another when we find ourselves feeling emotionally overwhelmed in turbulent times?

If we are not anchored in the promises of God, catastrophic events can send us sinking into a sea of hopelessness. Our commitment should be this:

*“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess,  
for he who promised is faithful.”*  
(HEBREWS 10:23)

### Do you feel . . .

- **Deceived?** .....Duped by someone you trusted
- **Disliked?** ..... Deeming yourself unwanted by others
- **Dejected?**..... Despairing and emotionally sunk
- **Deadened?**.....Desensitized and numb
- **Disqualified?**..... Discounting your true value
- **Degraded?** ..... Demeaned and belittled by others

- **Detached?** ..... Discarded and isolated
- **Doomed?** ..... Determined there's no way out
- **Deprived?** ..... Discriminated against and disenfranchised
- **Downcast?** ..... Downhearted and dismal over circumstances

*"I will remember them,  
and my soul is downcast within me."  
(LAMENTATIONS 3:20)*

## Longing for Hope

**Question:** "So many people have let me down in my life, which makes it difficult to hope. How can I have hope in my life?"

**Answer:** Unquestionably, people fail us. We are all broken, imperfect, sinful people so we are bound to fail each other from time to time—both in big ways and in small ways. Thus, our ultimate hope and trust must not be in people but in God. The Bible says, "*It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in people*" (Psalm 118:8 NLT).

God alone is perfect and completely faithful, so He will never fail you. In fact, God Himself promises, "*I will never fail you. I will never abandon you*" (Hebrews 13:5 NLT). When your source of hope is in Him, you have an unshakable rock and refuge that remains secure through every storm of life.

*"Yes, my soul, find rest in God;  
my hope comes from him.  
<sup>6</sup> Truly he is my rock and my salvation;  
he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.  
<sup>7</sup> My salvation and my honor depend on God;  
he is my mighty rock, my refuge."  
(PSALM 62:5–7)*

## What Are Outer Evidences of Hopelessness?

Have you ever felt that your life was shipwrecked? Being anchorless in a storm can cause a ship to capsize or crash onto the rocks. Likewise, being anchorless in life can cause you to careen into ruin. If you are living your life without the Lord as your hope and security, you can find yourself shipwrecked—feeling disconnected, displaced, and distraught. The Bible says . . .

*“Cling to your faith in Christ,  
and keep your conscience clear.  
For some people have deliberately  
violated their consciences; as a result,  
their faith has been shipwrecked.”*  
(1 TIMOTHY 1:19 NLT)

### Do you look . . .

- **Drained?** ..... Drowning with exhaustion
- **Debilitated?** ..... Depleted of energy and strength
- **Disinterested?** ..... Drifting on a sea of apathy
- **Defeated?** ..... Deadlocked from moving forward
- **Disgusted?** ..... Down on life and pessimistic about living
- **Disconnected?** ..... Disengaged from people and purpose
- **Despondent?** ..... Deteriorating and emotionally withdrawn
- **Displaced?** ..... Desolate and lonely with no place to go
- **Demoralized?** ..... Disheartened, without confidence or hope
- **Distraught?** ..... Deeply agitated and filled with doubt

*“If I say, ‘I will forget my complaint,  
I will change my expression, and smile,’  
I still dread all my sufferings.”*  
(JOB 9:27–28)

## Moving Forward with Hope

**Question:** “I see no future for my life. How can I go on?”

**Answer:** Although you may not see a future right now, the Lord assures you of a hope-filled future. The Bible says, “*There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off*” (Proverbs 23:18). You are not alone, and you are not without hope.

You may be in the midst of a storm right now, but God still has a purpose for you. Read His Word, pray, and talk with other wise believers to help you discover God’s plan and purpose for your life. The Bible says, “*I cry out to God Most High, to God who will fulfill his purpose for me*” (Psalm 57:2 NLT). As you seek His plans for you and move forward with hope, remember that God cares for you and carries you along even when you can’t see what’s ahead.

*“I will be your God throughout your lifetime—  
until your hair is white with age.  
I made you, and I will care for you.  
I will carry you along and save you.”*  
(ISAIAH 46:4 NLT)

## What Is the Downward Spiral of Despair?

Does your life seem to be spiraling downward? If you are caught in a life-threatening storm, you may feel a foreboding sense of doom—a frightening sense of despair.

If you’ve ever felt hopeless, it’s as though you’re like a leaf caught in a whirlpool—spinning and spiraling downward, sucked inside the dark center. Those caught in this ominous vortex can feel like the psalmist . . .

*“Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck.*

*<sup>2</sup> I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold.*

*I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me.*

*<sup>3</sup> I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched.*

*My eyes fail, looking for my God. . . .*

*<sup>14</sup> Rescue me from the mire, do not let me sink.”*

(PSALM 69:1–3, 14)

**Do you have . . .**<sup>18</sup>

- **Disappointment?** ...Disillusionment from unfulfilled expectations
- **Doubt?** ..... Distrust in yourself to do what is right
- **Denial?** .....Direct refusal to accept or believe something
- **Discouragement?** ..... Dejection with no courage to risk again
- **Disillusionment?** .....Disenchanted by life’s broken promises
- **Depression?** ..... Despondency and a heavy heart
- **Disdain?** .....Disgust over too many wrong choices
- **Disunity?** ..... Division and confusion within or with others
- **Disharmony?** .....Discord and disagreements with others
- **Despair?** .....Devastation and a sense of helplessness

*“Relieve the troubles of my heart  
and free me from my anguish.”*

(PSALM 25:17)

### **Jonah: A Man Drowning in Despair**

Jonah was a man called by God to deliver a life-changing message of hope to an enemy nation. Instead Jonah refused, rebelled, and ran to board a ship headed in the opposite direction. But because of his disobedience, the judgment of God fell upon the ship. Soon his shipmates threw him overboard. Jonah described this life-threatening situation and God’s lifesaving intervention. . . .

*“You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. . . . <sup>5</sup> the engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. <sup>6</sup> To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, LORD my God, brought my life up from the pit”* (Jonah 2:3, 5–6).

Although Jonah temporarily obeys, his heart is yet filled with disdain for his enemies—even though the entire city repents. Later, overtaken with self-pity, he declares, *“I’m so angry I wish I were dead”* (Jonah 4:9).

Jonah’s story reveals a few things about despair . . . and hope. When Jonah ran away from God’s call on his life, he ended up quite literally drowning in despair. Yet there was still hope for him. Jonah called out to God, and the Lord was gracious to save Him.

However, even when Jonah *did* obey the Lord, his motives were impure. You see, Jonah wanted Nineveh to receive God’s judgment, not His mercy. He did not want Nineveh to experience the same hope and saving grace he had just experienced! Jonah’s despair over Nineveh is thus a reflection of his heart before God.

There may be many uncontrollable situations in life that lead us to despair. When we feel this way, the story of Jonah leads us to ask: “Are we looking to God to give us hope when we’re drowning in despair? Are we sharing His hope with others? Or, like Jonah, are we secretly hoping for something that may not be in line with God’s character and His purposes?”

*“I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God,  
slow to anger and abounding in love,  
a God who relents from sending calamity.”*

(JONAH 4:2)

## What Is the Upward Spiral of Hope?

Imagine experiencing these two emotional extremes within minutes of each other: First you plunge headlong into the depths of despair, then you soar upwards on the wings of hope. Now imagine what Jesus' disciples felt flailing about in their fishing boat in the midst of a storm, fearing for their very lives . . . while Jesus is sound asleep on a cushion in the stern. *How can He possibly sleep?* they wonder. Frantic, they call out to Jesus, “*Don't you care if we drown?*” (Mark 4:38).

Then the Bible says . . .

*“[Jesus] got up, rebuked the wind and said  
to the waves, ‘Quiet! Be still!’  
Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.  
<sup>40</sup> He said to his disciples, ‘Why are you so afraid?  
Do you still have no faith?’  
<sup>41</sup> They were terrified and asked each other,  
‘Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!’”*  
(MARK 4:39–41)

### Are You Anchored in Hope?

Jesus' disciples experienced their Savior as their secure anchor. As long as they relied on Him, they had hope.

**When you have Christ, you have . . .**

**Contentment:** Being patient because of what you hope for

*“If we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently”* (ROMANS 8:25).

**Courage:** Being bold because of God's hope within you

*“Since we have such a hope, we are very bold”* (2 CORINTHIANS 3:12).

**Confidence:** Being assured because God is your hope

*“You have been my hope, Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth”*  
(PSALM 71:5).

**Cheerfulness:** Being joyful because your hope is in God

*“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer”* (ROMANS 12:12).

**Comfort:** Being encouraged because of God’s unfailing love for you

*“May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put our hope in you”*  
(PSALM 33:22).

**Conviction:** Being anchored in hope because of God’s Word within you

*“May those who fear you rejoice when they see me, for I have put my hope in your word”* (PSALM 119:74).

**Christlikeness:** Being conformed to the character of Christ because of God’s hope for you

*“I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death”* (PHILIPPIANS 1:20).

Unlike the anchorless person, if you have an anchored life, you will never drown in despair. When you have Christ as your anchor, you are held secure with His hope. A life anchored in Christ is not at the mercy of chance or circumstance. Swirling currents and pounding waves offer no cause for alarm when you abide in the One who is master over both the storms and the seas.

*“Who is like you, LORD God Almighty?  
You, LORD, are mighty,  
and your faithfulness surrounds you.  
You rule over the surging sea;  
when its waves mount up, you still them.”*  
(PSALM 89:8–9)



## **Anchoring Your Hope Finding Hidden Treasure<sup>19</sup>**

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An article from the *Billings Gazette* reported that an extraordinary treasure had been discovered on the beaches of Florida. Joel Ruth came across 180 near-mint-condition silver coins. These Spanish coins were from a Spanish fleet of about a dozen ships that were destroyed by a hurricane in 1715.<sup>20</sup>

Then 289 years later, another hurricane uncovered a portion of this treasure that had washed ashore. It took Hurricane Jeanne, a devastating tropical storm responsible for some of the worst destruction in Florida's history, to bring that slice of shoreline back to where it had been years before. The storm exposed an impressive treasure to the one who went looking for it.

From a spiritual standpoint, look at what the Lord so often does: He'll allow a storm in your life to expose some hidden treasure. Are you willing to look for it? Imagine this: In the midst of a painful storm He might prepare you for a personal ministry of mercy that you will later discover. After a costly crisis He could be uncovering coins of compassion for you to pick up and ultimately share with others. Through a severe, scary tsunami you may experience the grace of God like never before, which you can then give to others.

What personal hurricane have you experienced? What did you learn from it? As a result, what treasure do you have that you would otherwise not have?

The apostle Paul wrote, “We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us” (2 Corinthians 4:7). The “jars of clay” refer to what people see when they look at us—our weak mortal bodies. “This treasure” is the light of Christ inside us shining through our cracks. The light of Christ shines the love of Christ and also shines His light rays of empathy, grace, compassion, and mercy.

And what happens when we possess this surpassing power? “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed” (2 Corinthians 4:8–9 ESV).

You are promised the *gift* of grace. This means at times you will be pressured by people, but will not be *depressed*. You will be at wit’s end but not at hope’s end. You will be persecuted by people but not persecuted by God. You will be knocked down in life but not knocked out.

Now read this slowly: “It is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God” (2 Corinthians 4:15 ESV).

What is the reason for your hope? God’s gift of grace. He forgives you for all of your failures, sustains you through all of your storms, and reveals treasures after your trials.

## What Are Different Types of Anchors?

Ships at sea cannot survive the most severe storms without the use of anchors. And if you are anchorless on the “sea of life,” neither will you survive. However, as long as you have an anchored life, though battered and bruised, you will still be held secure. As long as you have an anchored life, you will weather the storms of life.

*“He is my loving God and my fortress,  
my stronghold and my deliverer,  
my shield, in whom I take refuge.”*

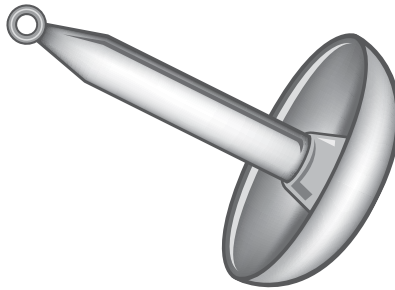
(PSALM 144:2)

## Five Anchors for any Condition

There are many types of anchors. Let’s look at the following five:

### 1. The Mushroom Anchor<sup>21</sup>

- Mostly used for smaller vessels such as rowboats and canoes
- Least efficient as an anchor because it has no arms



**Jesus is our anchor.** As the mushroom anchor is used for smaller watercraft, Jesus stabilizes us even as we move through the “smaller,” more minor problems of everyday living. He helps us stay steady with people who gossip and gripe, who lie and are lazy, who pout and are petty, who annoy and are nosy. Jesus anchors us when we have feelings of frustration, problems with people, worry at work . . . and the list goes on.

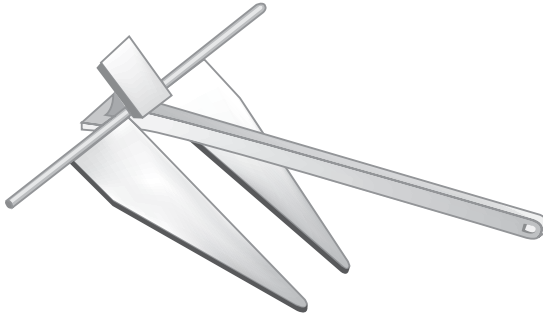
**Biblical example:** Some of Jesus’ disciples were fishermen by trade and experienced the frustration of working all night, only to end up empty-handed. Knowing this, Jesus tells them, *“Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.”* Simon answered, *‘Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets’* (Luke 5:4–5). Jesus then honors their obedience by filling their nets with more fish than their boat could possibly hold.

**Jesus proves Himself to be our personal anchor** for the everyday trials of life.

*“When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink” (LUKE 5:6–7).*

## 2. The Fluke Anchor<sup>22</sup>

- Lightweight, but with high holding power
- Buries into the water bottom; works best in sandy, muddy, or clay bottoms



**Jesus is our anchor.** Like the fluke anchor, Jesus stabilizes us with a powerful hold and a sense of peace. He is strong and steady, and yet His presence brings us peace—a “lightness” even in the heaviest of circumstances, such as the death of a loved one or a devastating diagnosis. When we are struggling with ourselves and questioning our decisions, when we have unforeseen challenges and changes, when we are doubting who we are and doubting who He is—Jesus anchors us with His power and peace.

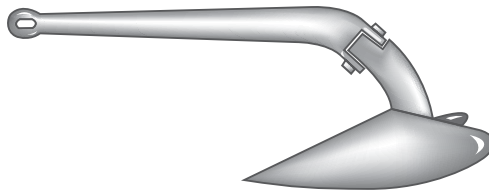
**Biblical example:** Jesus sends the disciples ahead of Him by boat to the other side of the lake so that He can take time to pray. In the middle of the night, Jesus walks toward the boat—on the water. Astonished, Peter instantly wants to join Jesus on the water. Jesus says, “Come”—and Peter does! He steps out and begins to walk. But then his faith in the known is weakened by his fear of the unknown. As he takes his eyes off Jesus, Peter is consumed with fear, starts to sink, and cries out for help. Then Jesus reaches out and rescues him.

**Jesus proves Himself to be our personal anchor.** When we look at life from our limited point of view or when doubt begins to dominate and faith begins to fail—Jesus proves to be faithful.

*“Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, ‘tell me to come to you on the water.’ ‘Come,’ he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. ‘You of little faith,’ he said, ‘why did you doubt?’ And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down” (MATTHEW 14:28–32).*

### 3. The Plow Anchor<sup>25</sup>

- Usually massive and heavy, often able to swivel
- Effective in rock, kelp, grass, weeds, sand, and mud (not in heavy grass)



**Jesus is our anchor.** Like the plow anchor, Jesus stabilizes us when all we can see around us are problems. With its swivel capabilities, comes an agility and adeptness to anchor us through a variety of difficult situations—job loss, broken relationships, money problems, prodigal loved ones, painful losses. When our problems are overwhelming and what we see saddens our soul, Jesus never fails to be our anchor.

**Biblical example:** Immediately after miraculously feeding 5,000 men (plus women and children), Jesus goes off alone to pray and sends His disciples by boat to Bethsaida. He knows they do not understand the meaning of the miracle He’s just performed. By evening the disciples reach the middle of the lake, struggling to paddle against the wind. Jesus watches them from the shore. Then in the late night hours, Jesus walks out on the lake. They become terrified, thinking they are seeing a ghost. Jesus quickly reassures them, climbs into the boat, and immediately the winds cease.

**Jesus proves Himself to be our personal anchor** when we don't know how to think or what to do.

*“Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, ‘Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.’ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened” (MARK 6:47–52).*

#### 4. The Claw Anchor<sup>24</sup>

- Originally designed for offshore gas and oil rigs
- Most effective on rocky, gravel, and coral bottoms



**Jesus is our anchor.** Like the claw anchor, Jesus stabilizes us when we are victimized—violence or abuse of any kind wounds the heart and body—leaving us emotionally and spiritually scarred. For the times when we feel powerless or preyed upon, Jesus is our powerful anchor who holds us strong and secure.

**Biblical example:** Jesus climbs into a boat with His disciples and tells them they will all go across to the other side of the lake. Once on the water, Jesus falls into a deep sleep and is not awakened by a storm that swamps the boat. The experienced crew believes they are sure to drown! In desperation they cry out to Jesus. With only a few words, He calms the storm, then questions their faith. After all, *hadn't He said* they were going across to the other side? *Didn't He imply* they would indeed make it to the other side?

**Jesus proves Himself to be our personal anchor** when the events of life are so perilous that the thought of death seems imminent and the memory of His promises seems to fade.

*“One day Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Let’s go over to the other side of the lake.’ So they got into a boat and set out. As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger. The disciples went and woke him, saying, ‘Master, Master, we’re going to drown!’ He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. ‘Where is your faith?’ he asked his disciples. In fear and amazement they asked one another, ‘Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him!’” (LUKE 8:22–25).*

### 5. The Sea Anchor

- Made of sturdy cloth like either a giant sail or a parachute
- Lowered into the water to create a drag and slow the vessel down, especially when water depth is too great for other anchors to grab hold of the bottom



**Jesus is our anchor.** Like the sea anchor, Jesus stabilizes us when we feel like a ship flailing in the water, tossed from side to side because of an unrelenting addiction or besetting sin. In the depth of our souls, He slows us down and helps us see how our wrong choices will damage our lives, our relationships, and our witness. Jesus anchors us when the powerful waves of personal disappointment leave us in despair. Even in the most turbulent times, like an unseen anchor, Jesus is there.

**Biblical example:** Facing possible death, the prisoner Paul is being transported by ship to Rome to stand trial. In the midst of hurricane-strength winds, the crew loses control of the ship. The tempestuous wind tosses the ship like a weightless cork toward the shore. In an attempt to diminish their speed, the sailors let down the sea anchor. This is their only hope of not crashing into sandbars at a speed that would cause certain death.

**Jesus proves Himself to be our personal anchor** when life hangs in the balance and all hope seems lost.

*“Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the Northeaster, swept down from the island. The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. . . . so the men hoisted it aboard. Then they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Because they were afraid they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. . . . When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved” (ACTS 27:14–15, 17, 20).*

But then . . .

*“Paul stood up before them and said: ‘. . . I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost. . . . keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God’” (ACTS 27:21–22, 25).*

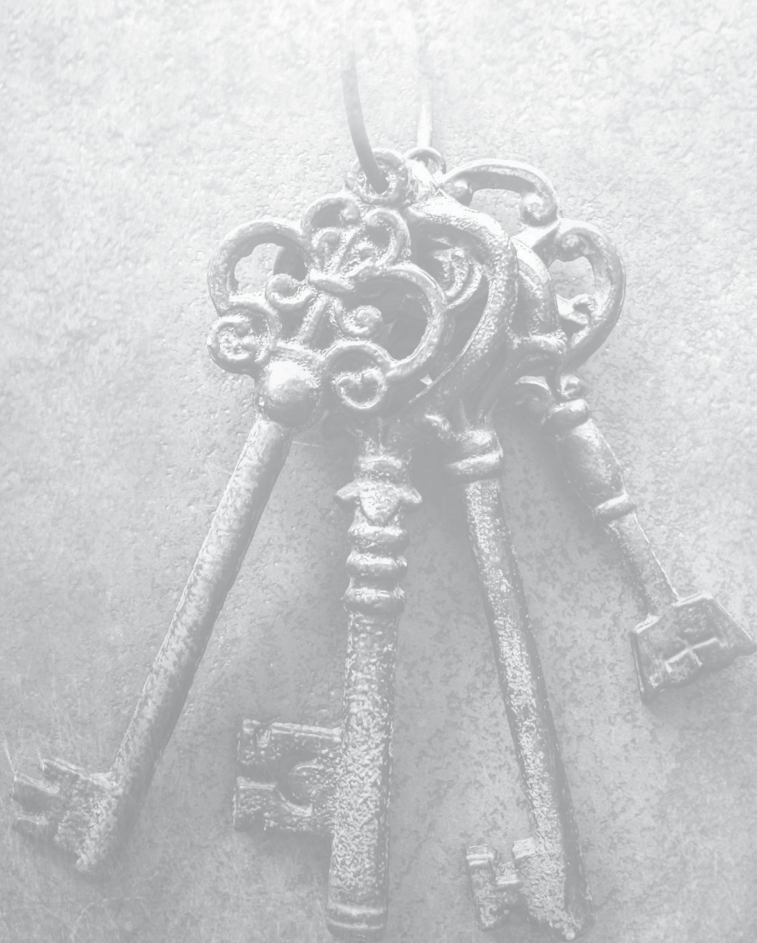
**When Jesus is your anchor,  
He can hold you secure in *any* storm  
because He holds the power over *every* storm.**







# CAUSES



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*“Only God  
can provide  
lasting hope  
and joy.”*



Has hope ever failed you? You don't understand why and try to figure it out. In fact, you thought you had more than enough hope to navigate any adverse circumstance of life . . . plus a boat full of faith on top of it! The Bible says hope is an anchor for the soul, so what possibly could have happened to cause your anchor to fail?

Unfortunately, sometimes we rely on “anchors” other than the hope God gives and those anchors fail us. People fail us. Relationships sometimes don't work out. Jobs aren't as good as we thought they'd be. Finances can disappear . . . overnight. Our personal dreams and plans can change in a moment. Who of us hasn't placed our confidence in someone or something that didn't hold or that broke under pressure? Our hope was never meant to be in ourselves, in others, or in any human endeavor—our hope is meant to be in the Lord.

*“It is better to take refuge in the LORD  
than to trust in humans.”*

(PSALM 118:8)

## What Are Unreliable Anchors?

Oh, the pain of placing all of our hope in a person, or in a position, or in (fill in the blank) only to discover that we have been terribly deceived. And what makes the deception worse is that it's often self-deception. Typically someone warns us—yet we fail to pay attention.

Temporal “anchors” like possessions, popularity, power, or position were never intended to be our anchors for life. We are told, “*We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal*” (2 Corinthians 4:18). What is temporary does not last. Jesus points out that misplaced hope fails because it is anchored in shifting sand:

*“Everyone who hears these words of mine  
and does not put them into practice is like  
a foolish man who built his house on sand.  
The rain came down, the streams rose,  
and the winds blew and beat against that house,  
and it fell with a great crash.”*  
(MATTHEW 7:26–27)

## Unreliable Anchors

Unreliable anchors cause devastating loss when they fail, and they inevitably do. Here are a few of the unreliable anchors we often stake our hope in that simply don't hold:

### Anchoring our hope in **politics**

- Results in loss of hope when the political system crumbles or when politicians fail us

*“The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug; their feet are caught in the net they have hidden”* (PSALM 9:15).

### Anchoring our hope in **economics**

- Results in loss of hope when resources are scarce or the economy weakens

*“When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider this: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, no one can discover anything about their future”* (ECCLESIASTES 7:14).

### Anchoring our hope in **society**

- Results in loss of hope when society rejects God's moral standards

*“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit”* (JUDGES 17:6).

### Anchoring our hope in **law**

- Results in loss of hope when the legal system fails

*“Justice—do you rulers know the meaning of the word? Do you judge the people fairly? No! You plot injustice in your hearts. You spread violence throughout the land”* (PSALM 58:1–2 NLT).

### Anchoring our hope in **vocation**

- Results in loss of hope when a job is lost or when work is not meaningful

*“There was a man all alone; he had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth. ‘For whom am I toiling,’ he asked, ‘and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?’ This too is meaningless—a miserable business!” (ECCLESIASTES 4:8).*

### Anchoring our hope in **health**

- Results in loss of hope when the body deteriorates

*“My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body” (PSALM 38:7).*

### Anchoring our hope in **money**

- Results in loss of hope when circumstances cause a financial loss

*“Riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations” (PROVERBS 27:24).*

### Anchoring our hope in **marriage**

- Results in loss of hope when a spouse is unfaithful, dies, or fails us

*“The LORD is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant” (MALACHI 2:14).*

### Anchoring our hope in **friendship**

- Results in loss of hope when a friend betrays a confidence

*“Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me” (PSALM 41:9).*

### Anchoring our hope in **children**

- Results in loss of hope when children bring great pain upon their parents

*“A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the mother who bore him” (PROVERBS 17:25).*

### Anchoring our hope in **longevity**

- Results in loss of hope when a loved one dies

*“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die” (ECCLESIASTES 3:1–2).*

### Anchoring our hope in **religion**

- Results in loss of hope when religious leaders fail us or when we rely on our “good works” instead of God’s grace.

*“[God] saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace” (2 TIMOTHY 1:9 ESV).*

### Anchoring our hope in **possessions**

- Results in loss of hope when the possessions we value deteriorate or are lost

*“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (LUKE 12:32–34).*

## Where Is Hope When “It” Doesn’t Happen?

In 1912, the most magnificent ship ever built set sail on its maiden voyage. Heralded to the world as “unsinkable,” how then did the Titanic end up on the bottom of an ocean floor? Tragically, over 1,500 trusting souls needlessly died because the owner of the shipping line failed to provide enough lifeboats, and wanted to set a trans-Atlantic record for speed.<sup>25</sup>

The typical question people ask is, “Why would God allow such a catastrophe?” And typically, God gets the blame—even though the ship received warning after warning about icebergs.

Where is hope when God allows bad things to happen? Can you have absolute hope that “God’s will” is going to prevail? What happens to your hope when “it” (what you are hoping for) doesn’t happen? Some people get angry at God, others get angry with their church or with other people, and still others get angry with life when their expectations are not fulfilled . . . when “it” doesn’t happen. It’s during times like these you need to know about the will of God and the plans He has for you.

*“The plans of the LORD stand firm forever,  
the purposes of his heart through all generations.”*

(PSALM 33:11)

## The Will of God

We question: *How could it possibly have been God’s will for so many people to die when the Titanic sank?* Consider three words that can be used to describe the will of God—**perfect**, **permissive**, and **prevailing**.

### God’s perfect will

- God has an ideal plan.
- God’s plan is pleasing and good.

*“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will”* (ROMANS 12:2).

- **Example:** God’s perfect will is that everyone repent of sin and that no one perishes.

*“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance”* (2 PETER 3:9).

### God’s permissive will

- God permits each person to exercise free will—even when it opposes His perfect will.
- God created people not as robots with no ability to choose, but as humans with the ability to choose independently of God.



*“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, . . . But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD” (JOSHUA 24:15).*

- **Example:** God’s permissive will is that everyone have the option of choosing right or wrong, spiritual life or spiritual death, blessing or cursing.

*“This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live” (DEUTERONOMY 30:19).*

### **God’s prevailing will**

- God’s plans cannot be thwarted.
- God’s ultimate purposes are achieved because He is sovereign.

*“Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the LORD’s purpose that prevails” (PROVERBS 19:21).*

- **Example:** God’s prevailing will is to grant full forgiveness and a home in heaven to all who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

*“I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted” (JOB 42:2).*

### **The Problem: Painful Circumstances**

- “Since God ordains marriage and hates divorce, He must restore my marriage. He has to answer my prayers to save my family.”
- “I am certain that God will change my rebellious son because that is His will.”
- “I am confident that (“it”—you fill in the blank) will happen because that is what the Bible says should happen.”

God indeed has His perfect will. He wants marriages restored, wayward children to change their ways, and all people to come to saving faith in Christ. However, God also gives people free will. He gives us the freedom to make our own choices, even if it goes against His perfect will.

When “it” doesn’t happen, hope remains. The hope you have in Christ is not dependent on people or circumstances. Regardless of the

choices other people make and regardless of the severity of the storms in your life, God’s plan for you—His will—hasn’t changed.

Our circumstances do not change the fact that Jesus died and rose again for our salvation. They don’t change the reality that God can use the storms in life to make us more like Christ. Our pain and trials do not alter the truth that God has secured an eternal home in heaven for those who believe in Christ. The unshakable, rock-solid truth and hope we have is that whenever “it” doesn’t happen . . . God is still with us.

God’s will . . . will prevail. He will still work out His purposes for us. He will continue to be faithful to us each day. And that is why we can always have hope.

*“The thought of my suffering . . . is bitter beyond words.*

<sup>20</sup> *I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss.*

<sup>21</sup> *Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this:*

<sup>22</sup> *The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease.*

<sup>23</sup> *Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.*

<sup>24</sup> *I say to myself, ‘The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!’”*

(LAMENTATIONS 3:19–24 NLT)

## Hard to Hope

**Question:** “Why is it so hard to have hope?”

**Answer:** Part of the reason is because we can’t see it. In fact, the Bible says, “*Hope that is seen is no hope at all*” (Romans 8:24). Many people live by the saying, “Seeing is believing.” Pragmatism says, “I want to see it, touch it, hold it.” This mindset is anything but new. After the crucifixion, the apostle Thomas (later referred to as “Doubting Thomas”) refuses to hope that Jesus is alive. He declares to the other disciples, “*Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe*” (John 20:25).

A week later the resurrected Jesus stuns Thomas by showing him the holes in His hands and the scar in His side. From this moment on, Thomas doubts no more. The skeptic becomes a believer, saying to Jesus, “*My Lord and my God!*” Jesus responds, “*Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*” (John 20:28–29).

We may not be able to “see” our hope, but we can trust the Lord and wait patiently for Him to fulfill His promises. The Bible says . . .

*“But if we hope for what we do not see,  
we wait for it with patience.”*

(ROMANS 8:25 ESV)

## Why Do People Drift without Direction?

Have you ever found yourself drifting through life? You know your life lacks direction, but you don’t know what to do. Consider the “why.” An unanchored ship in the midst of a storm drifts wherever the winds and waves carry it. Even in fair weather, a ship will drift aimlessly unless it has a captain to give it direction.

Just as a ship needs an anchor to keep from drifting into other ships, we need an anchor to protect us from drifting into destructive habits and relationships. Since many people are not only anchorless but also directionless in life, they need a *captain* to provide direction and an *anchor* to provide security. Christians have both an anchor and a captain in Christ. The Bible says . . .

*“We must pay the most careful attention, therefore,  
to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.”*

(HEBREWS 2:1)

## Reasons People Drift Off Course

### 1. The winds of fear

**Our human viewpoint:** “I know God can do anything; however, I’m really terrified that if I lose my job or my health, there won’t be anyone to take care of me.”

**Our Captain’s viewpoint:** *“The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged”* (Deuteronomy 31:8).

### 2. The waves of isolation

**Our human viewpoint:** “I feel so lonely and isolated. I feel cut off from everyone—even from God.”

**Our Captain’s viewpoint:** *“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand”* (Isaiah 41:10).

### 3. The winds of disbelief

**Our human viewpoint:** “How can I believe in Christ when I don’t see Him doing anything in my life?”

**Our Captain’s viewpoint:** *“The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it”* (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

### 4. The waves of persecution

**Our human viewpoint:** “So many Christians are persecuted in the world. I don’t understand why God allows Christians to be killed.”

**Our Captain’s viewpoint:** *“If the world hates you, remember that it hated me [Jesus] first. <sup>19</sup>The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you. . . . <sup>20</sup>Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. . . . <sup>21</sup>They will do all this to you because of me, for they have rejected the one who sent me”* (John 15:18–21 NLT).

### 5. The winds of disillusionment

**Our human viewpoint:** “I sincerely believed that God was going to

grant physical healing—but He didn't. Now I feel God lied to me.”

**Our Captain's viewpoint:** *“My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,’ says the LORD. ‘And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts”* (Isaiah 55:8–9 NLT).

## 6. The waves of temptation

**Our human viewpoint:** “No matter how hard I try, I am not able to achieve victory over this temptation. I don't understand why God won't help me.”

**Our Captain's viewpoint:** *“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it”* (1 CORINTHIANS 10:13).

When we find ourselves drifting off course, away from the Lord and His plans for us, we need to come back to Him and anchor ourselves in the truth of His Word. As we pursue Christ and seek to build others up, the Bible says we will be kept from drifting away:

*“Then we will no longer be immature like children.  
We won't be tossed and blown about  
by every wind of new teaching.  
We will not be influenced when people try to trick us  
with lies so clever they sound like the truth.”*  
(EPHESIANS 4:14 NLT)

**Anchoring Your Hope  
A Boat Without a Rudder/  
A Ship Without a Sail<sup>26</sup>**

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It was a warm California day in June 2002. Richard Van Pham launched his twenty-six-foot sailboat to travel from Long Beach harbor to Catalina Island.

As evening approached, a storm whipped around him. The winds were so treacherous, they broke the mast and rudder of his boat. To his dismay, when Van Pham attempted to call for help, his radio wouldn't work and his motor wouldn't start. Unable to control his boat, he was helplessly carried away by the wind and the waves.

At age sixty-two, this Vietnamese immigrant had no idea that his three-hour sail was about to become a three-month saga that could only be described as terrifying. His intended twenty-five mile voyage turned into a 2,500 mile journey of isolation and desperation. Because Van Pham had no other family members, no one initiated a search or filed a missing persons report.

Each day he drifted at sea. Each day he looked for land but instead saw only boundless blue water. He survived by drinking rainwater and eating sea turtles, fish, and seagulls.

Then on September 17, hoped-for rescue became reality. A Navy P-3 patrol plane on an anti-drug interdiction mission spotted the broken-down boat almost three-hundred miles off the coast of Costa Rica. A nearby ship, the USS *McClusky*, plucked Van Pham from his crippled craft and took him to Guatemala. Back on solid ground, the sailor-turned-survivor finally flew back home.<sup>27</sup>

Memories loomed large for Van Pham when he revisited his lost-at-sea voyage. “I didn’t know where I was or where to go. For months I saw nothing . . . only water, sky, and seagulls.”

Like this rescued man, many of us encounter unexpected crises in our lives. Storms whip around us, and we are blown off course. Suddenly we’re fighting for our lives, struggling to stay afloat. Can we have real hope of survival? Where can we find hope? Where can we turn for help?

The psalmist tells us, “They cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. <sup>29</sup>He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. <sup>30</sup>They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven. <sup>31</sup>Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love” (Psalm 107:28–31).

Whatever storm you are experiencing, allow Christ to be your Anchor. He will keep you from hopelessly drifting. He will hold you both safe and secure.

## **What Is the Root Cause of Hopelessness?**

Where we place our hope often reveals where we look for love, significance, and security.<sup>28</sup> For example, maybe you’ve put your hope in a romantic relationship because that is a source of love for you. Or perhaps you’ve put your hope in a certain job because it will provide you with a sense of meaning and significance. Or maybe you’ve put your hope in a savings account or a stock market portfolio believing it will provide you with a sense of security for the future.

But then what happens if the relationship doesn't work out, or if you don't get the job (or you get fired), or if the stock market plummets? Your hopes are dashed. Hopelessness settles in because of a wrong belief—that people and things can give us hope and provide us with love, significance, and security. The things of this world ultimately can't do that. Only God can provide lasting hope and joy as well as the love, significance, and security we all long to have.

*“You are the hope of everyone on earth,  
even those who sail on distant seas. . . .  
From where the sun rises to where it sets,  
you inspire shouts of joy.”*  
(PSALM 65:5, 8 NLT)

### 3 Inner Needs

We all have three inner needs: the needs for love, significance, and security.<sup>29</sup>

**Love**—to know that someone is unconditionally committed to our best interest

*“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you”* (JOHN 15:12).

**Significance**—to know that our lives have meaning and purpose

*“I cry out to God Most High, to God, who fulfills his purpose for me”*  
(PSALM 57:2 ESV).

**Security**—to feel accepted and a sense of belonging

*“Whoever fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for their children it will be a refuge”* (PROVERBS 14:26).



## The Ultimate Need-Meeter

### What do our inner needs reveal about us and our relationship with God?

God did not create any person or position or any amount of power or possessions to meet our deepest needs. People fail us and self-effort also fails to meet our deepest needs. If a person or thing could meet all our needs, we wouldn't need God! Our inner needs draw us into a deeper dependence on Christ and remind us that only God can satisfy the longings of our hearts. The Lord brings people and circumstances into our lives as an extension of His care, but ultimately only He can satisfy all the needs of our hearts. The Bible says . . .

*“The LORD will guide you always;  
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land  
and will strengthen your frame.  
You will be like a well-watered garden,  
like a spring whose waters never fail.”*  
(ISAIAH 58:11)

All along, the Lord planned to meet our deepest needs for . . .

**Love**—*“I [the Lord] have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness”* (JEREMIAH 31:3).

**Significance**—*“‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’”* (JEREMIAH 29:11).

**Security**—*“The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged”* (DEUTERONOMY 31:8).

Our needs for love, significance, and security can be legitimately met in Christ Jesus! Philippians 4:19 makes it plain, *“My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”*

**Wrong Belief:** “I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul.”<sup>30</sup> I can take charge of my life and make it what I want it to be. My future is in my hands. I can look to myself, to others, and to other things to give me hope. I don’t need God to give me purpose, meaning, or hope—or to help me weather the storms of life.”

**Right Belief:** “I refuse to base my hope on anything that can be taken away from me, including my own abilities and resources. My hope is in everything God promises in His Word and in Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. He alone provides everything I need for my present, my future, and for eternity—and He can help me weather any storm in life.”

*“Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,  
whose hope is in the LORD their God.”*

(PSALM 146:5)

## How Can You Have Hope That Lasts Forever?

*“The hope of eternal life.”*

In all of his letters, the apostle Paul used this phrase two times. He explains that God promises *“the hope of eternal life”* (Titus 1:2). Even more, he says that God promised the hope of eternal life *“before the beginning of time”* (Titus 1:2). Think about that. Before you were even born—before time even began—God promised you hope . . . the hope of eternal life.

Is there any greater hope you could possibly have? The world can’t offer this kind of hope. People can’t either. Only God can promise the hope of eternal life.

The other time Paul uses this phrase is in the context of discussing the saving work of Christ. He explains that everything Jesus did for us—for you—leads to the assurance of the hope of eternal life.

*“But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared,  
5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done,  
but because of his mercy. He saved us through  
the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,  
6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,  
7 so that, having been justified by his grace,  
we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”*  
(TITUS 3:4–7)

### **4 Points of God’s Plan**

Whether you’re trying to make sense of your past, trying to overcome something in the present, or trying to make changes for a better future, the Lord cares about you. He loves you. No matter what challenges you or your loved ones are facing, no matter the pain or difficult feelings you may be experiencing, no matter what you’ve done or what’s been done to you, there is hope. And that hope is found in Jesus Christ.

God has a plan for your life, and it begins with a personal relationship with Jesus. The most important decision you can ever make is whether you will receive His invitation. If you have never made that decision, these four simple truths can help you start your journey together with Him.

*“‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD,  
‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future.’”*  
(JEREMIAH 29:11)

### 1. God's Purpose for You: *Salvation*

- What was God's motivation in sending Jesus Christ to earth? To express His love for you by saving you! The Bible says, "*God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him*" (JOHN 3:16–17).
- What was Jesus' purpose in coming to earth? To forgive your sins, to empower you to have victory over sin, and to enable you to live a fulfilled life! Jesus said, "*I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full*" (JOHN 10:10).

### 2. The Problem: *Sin*

- What exactly is sin? Sin is living independently of God's standard—knowing what is wrong and doing it anyway—also knowing what is right and choosing not to do it. The apostle Paul said, "*I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway*" (ROMANS 7:18–19 NLT).
- What is the major consequence of sin? Spiritual death, eternal separation from God. The Bible says, "*Your iniquities [sins] have separated you from your God*" (ISAIAH 59:2). Scripture also says, "*The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (ROMANS 6:23).

### 3. God's Provision for You: *The Savior*

- Can anything remove the penalty for sin? Yes! Jesus died on the cross to personally pay the penalty for your sins. The Bible says, "*God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us*" (ROMANS 5:8).
- What is the solution to being separated from God? Belief in (entrusting your life to) Jesus Christ as the only way to God the Father. Jesus said, "*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*" (JOHN 14:6). The Bible says, "*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved*" (ACTS 16:31).

#### 4. Your Part: Surrender

- Give Christ control of your life, entrusting yourself to Him. Jesus said, *“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?”* (MATTHEW 16:24–26).
- Place your faith in (rely on) Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and reject your “good works” as a means of earning God’s approval. The Bible says, *“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast”* (EPHESIANS 2:8–9).

Has there been a time in your life when you know you’ve humbled your heart and received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior—giving Him control of your life? You can tell God that you want to surrender your life to Christ in a simple, heartfelt prayer like this:

“God, I want a real relationship with you.  
I admit that many times I’ve chosen to go my own way  
instead of your way.  
Please forgive me for my sins.  
Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross  
to pay the penalty for my sins.  
Come into my life to be my Lord and my Savior.  
Change me from the inside out and make me the person  
you created me to be.  
In your holy name I pray. Amen.”

### **What Can You Now Expect?**

When you surrender your life to Christ, you receive the Holy Spirit who empowers you to live a life pleasing to God. The Bible says, *“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life . . .”* (2 Peter 1:3). Jesus assures those who believe with these words:

*“Truly I tell you, whoever hears my word  
and believes him who sent me  
has eternal life and will not be judged  
but has crossed over from death to life.”*  
(JOHN 5:24)

**Life with Christ is endless hope.  
Without Him, it’s a hopeless end.**

## Anchoring Your Hope A Star to Steer By<sup>31</sup>

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On land, giving directions is not really difficult. It is a matter of splitting the journey up—no matter how long—into smaller segments. The trick is to move from landmark to landmark, eventually arriving at your destination. *Head away from town, passing by that abandoned blue hotel. At the first stop sign, turn right, then go about a mile until you see the red hay barn. Turn right again on the dirt road, and that will take you straight to the Hamburger Hut by the lake!*

But how would you give directions if there were no landmarks to signal the need to turn one way or another? Or for that matter, what if there were no roads? What if the landscape itself never looked any different . . . except for the time of day or the weather?

Now imagine being one of the earliest sailors with precisely this dilemma. How could you navigate across vast expanses of ocean with no visible landmarks? The slightest error in judgment could mean arriving hundreds of miles from your intended destination. And one single storm could cause your expedition to be hopelessly lost.

Your problem is solved, however, because astronomers have discovered you no longer need to look at the horizon for help—instead, look up . . . at the sky. *Celestial navigation* makes use of the sun, moon, planets, or one of fifty-seven navigational stars whose positions and movements are easy to calculate and pinpoint throughout the year. Despite how it appears to the untrained observer, all celestial bodies in the sky move in precise, exact, predictable ways.

Using a device called a sextant, you (and other ancient mariners) can measure the angle between a star in the sky and the horizon. By using this information, you can identify your ship's exact position on the globe! The whole process was made possible by the absolute, unchanging reliability of the stars and planets.

Today that function is performed by GPS (Global Positioning System) satellites that triangulate a ship's location from space by the touch of a button. (Triangulation is a measurement technique that uses a network of triangles to divide the earth's surface in order to locate one specific position on the earth.)

Yet for all of this impressive technological precision, such machines cannot compete with the stars for unerring infallibility and dependability. Satellites are vulnerable to all sorts of disruptions—from catastrophic collisions with space debris to hardware malfunctions and software glitches. As is so often the case in our technological world, expediency and convenience have replaced consistency.

Too frequently we experience unexpected glitches in our personal lives as well. To navigate the sometimes difficult waters of everyday life, you can make the mistake of “looking at the horizon” as far as your eyes can see—and yet still get off course. Beware of placing all your hope in human solutions that inevitably fail or fall short.

Anything made by human beings can eventually wear out, run down, or fall apart. But God always has been and always will be unchangeable, unalterable, and unshakable. The Bible says He is “the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

The first and foremost person to look to for guidance is Jesus Himself. By following His example, we will become increasingly wise and discerning. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12 ESV).



Consider this course of action: Since the Bible calls Jesus “the bright morning star,” (Revelation 22:16 ESV) look even higher than the celestial bodies and put you hope in the Supreme Star, who promises to guide you and direct you. He will never fail to show you the way home.



# STEPS TO SOLUTION



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*“True hope comes from  
knowing Jesus Christ,  
resting in Him  
and His plan  
for both my todays  
and my tomorrows.”*



In ancient times, ships would have a “forerunner” (Greek: *prodromos*—“who went before us”) known as the “anchorarius.” This forerunner was in charge of the ship’s main anchor. With a group of sailors, he would take the anchor by means of a smaller boat into a safe harbor and set it there.

Although the ship remained outside the harbor, it was anchored within the harbor and held secure against wind and waves that would otherwise carry the ship out to sea or dash it against rocks along the shoreline.

The “forerunner” was the one chosen to arrive at a designated location ahead of the others in the group—for three specific purposes:

- To give notice of their approach
- To take possession in their name
- To prepare for their arrival<sup>32</sup>

As our forerunner, Christ is our steadfast hope—anchoring us within the safe harbor of heaven (“*the inner sanctuary behind the curtain*”). He secures us on earth and assures us of our eventual safe arrival in heaven.

*“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.  
It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain,  
where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf.”*

(HEBREWS 6:19–20)

## Key Verse to Memorize

When stormy feelings of hopelessness drop anchor in your life, it is possible to regain a hopeful outlook. But to do that requires a shift in focus. The challenge comes in focusing not on “the storm” but on the hope God has for you in the storm. Because of God’s faithfulness, hope anchored in His character will hold. That is when meditating on God’s unfailing promises found in His unchanging Word will supply you with all the stability and hope you need.

*“I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD,  
‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future.’”*

(JEREMIAH 29:11)

## Key Passage to Read

The deepest failures in your life cannot thwart God’s faithfulness to you. Do you know the genuine goodness of God in your life—His immense mercy, His constant compassion, His everlasting love? Do you know how to experience the kind of hope that will anchor you through any storm?

### Staying Anchored in the Midst of a Storm Lamentations 3:19–25

**Assess** the situation accurately. ....vv. 19–20

*“I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.”*

**Align** your thinking with what gives you hope. ....v. 21

*“Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:”*

**Acquire** understanding of what provides hope in difficult situations. .... vv. 22

*“Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.”*

**Acknowledge** God’s faithfulness to you on a daily basis. .... v. 23

*“They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”*

**Allow** the Lord to totally fulfill your life. .... v. 24

*“I say to myself, ‘The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.’”*

**Abide** in God’s goodness and gain hope for your heart. .... v. 25  
*“The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him.”*

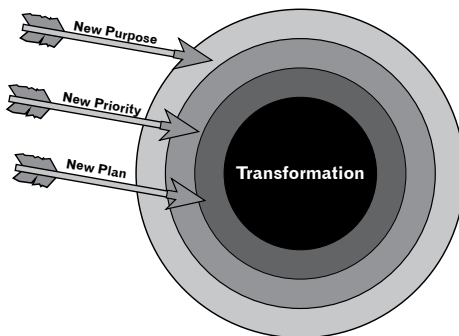
## How to Have a Transformed Life

It’s been said, “Man can live about forty days without food, about three days without water, about eight minutes without air . . . but only for one second without hope.”<sup>33</sup>

Because of Christ, we can live each day, each moment with hope. The hope we have in Christ not only changes our eternity but changes our lives *now*. It transforms us from the inside out and helps us move forward even in the darkest of circumstances. It gives us a new perspective on our trials, a source of joy and peace apart from circumstances, and strengthens us when we are weak and weary.

*“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.”*  
 (ISAIAH 40:31)

### Reaching the Target: Transformation!



**THE FREEDOM FORMULA**  
 A New Purpose  
 + A New Priority  
 + A New Plan  
 —————  
 A Transformed Life

### Target #1—A New Purpose

**God's purpose for me** is to be conformed to the character of Christ.

*"Those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (ROMANS 8:29).*

— "I'll do whatever it takes to be conformed to the character of Christ."

### Target #2—A New Priority

**God's priority for me** is to change my thinking.

*"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (ROMANS 12:2).*

— "I'll do whatever it takes to line up my thinking with God's thinking."

### Target #3—A New Plan

**God's plan for me** is to rely on Christ's strength, not my strength, to be all He created me to be.

*"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (PHILIPPIANS 4:13 NKJV).*

— "I'll do whatever it takes to fulfill His plan in His strength."

### My Personalized Plan

True hope comes from knowing Jesus Christ, resting in Him and His plan for both my todays and my tomorrows. Therefore, when unexpected sorrows and hardships come, I will remember God's promises to me found in the Bible.

*"I am counting on the LORD;  
yes, I am counting on him.  
I have put my hope in his word."  
(PSALM 130:5 NLT)*

As I focus on renewing my mind with God's Word and deepening my hope in Christ, **I will . . .**

**Remember** that true hope is anchored in God.

- I will remember that true hope is found in God, who doesn't change—not in people, who do change.
- I will remember that true hope is found in God's unchanging Word, not in shifting circumstances or cultural opinions.
- I will remember that true hope is found in God's Son, who loves me and secured my eternity through His death and resurrection.

*"And so, Lord, where do I put my hope? My only hope is in you" (PSALM 39:7 NLT).*

**Recognize** that when I feel hopeless, God calls me to trust Him.

- I will accept that in this broken world, I will inevitably face painful circumstances.
- I will accept that even believers can experience sorrow, loneliness, depression, and periods of desperation.
- I will accept that in dark times, God is with me and He desires to give me His love and hope.

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (ROMANS 15:13).*

**Realize** that there is always hope and God will help me overcome the obstacles in my life.

- I will trust that God is always with me, guarding and guiding me, fulfilling His purposes for me.
- I will trust that God is in control of the circumstances of my life, and I can learn and grow during both good and bad circumstances.
- I will trust that God can use me to be an encouragement to others who are facing their own obstacles.

*"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; . . . The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever" (PSALM 138:7–8 ESV).*



**Rely** on the Lord and others for support and help when I feel hopeless.

- I will remember that I don't have to suffer alone or in silence, and I will acknowledge my need for help.
- I will seek the support of a counselor, friend, or pastor when I feel unable to handle my situation or emotions.
- I will seek God in prayer, trusting Him to give me victory and use my trials for my good and His glory.

*"Where there is no guidance the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory"* (PROVERBS 11:14 NASB).

**Recount** my blessings, thanking God for them.

- I will thank God for all the good things in my life—for family and friends, work and play, clothes and food, rest and inspiration.
- I will do at least one thing a day that brings me joy and focuses my attention on Jesus.
- I will remember all the things God has brought me through in the past and trust Him for my future.

*"Put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption"* (PSALM 130:7).

**Reach out** to others and share the hope of Christ.

- I will pray for those in my life who do not know the Lord—that God will save them.
- I will look for opportunities to share the hope of Christ with the lost.
- I will encourage others who are suffering or facing a trial with God's truth.

*"Encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing"* (1 THESSALONIANS 5:11).

## Anchoring Your Hope

### Taking a Different Tack<sup>34</sup>

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In this age of abundant energy, it's hard to believe our ancestors once explored and colonized every corner of the world using nothing but *the power of the wind*. With timber masts and canvas sails, they ventured across vast oceans, defying storms and reefs in the harshest climates. As long as a steady wind blew, there was no point on the compass where they couldn't go.

Well, almost. There is one direction the best sailing ship can never ever go. From the beginning, every sailor at sea learns this simple fact: *You cannot sail straight into the wind!*

To understand why, think about a flag flying on a windy day. If you hold a flag straight into the wind, it flaps and flutters as the wind blows by, but it cannot catch any of the wind like sails do on a sailboat. However, to get the wind to work for you, tightly hold the cloth steady in the wind *at an angle*.

Sailors have a unique vocabulary to describe the relative positions of a boat to the wind (called "points of sail"):

***In irons:*** A sailboat facing directly into the wind might as well be locked in irons . . . because it isn't going anywhere. The sails will only flap in the wind.

***Close-hauled:*** A craft is close-hauled if the sails are trimmed tightly and moving as near upwind as possible without landing in irons. If the helmsman steers too close into the wind and the sails start "luffing," the boat is said to be pinching.

***Close reach:*** Sometimes called fetching, a vessel in close reach means the sails are anywhere between close-hauled and at an angle of 45 degrees.

**Beam reach:** This point of sail is when the mainsheet is placed at a 45-degree angle and the boat is moving at right angles to the wind.

**Broad reach:** A sailboat is in broad reach when the wind blows from behind at various angles, but not directly behind.

**Running:** Boats are running when sails are angled at 90 degrees to catch wind blowing directly from the stern, from the rear. While you may think this point of sail is the fastest way to travel (with the wind pushing you from behind), experienced sailors also know this point of sail is the most dangerous, often referring to it as the “don’t go zone.” Your running sailboat is less stable, harder to steer, and more susceptible to jibing or capsizing. (A sail that jibes shifts suddenly and dangerously from one side to the other.)

Here’s the point: Sailing is the art of getting somewhere on an *indirect* course. Each leg of the journey is called a tack, and an experienced sailor strings them together, tacking in a zigzag pattern that methodically moves the sailboat toward the desired destination. To an uninformed observer, a particular tack often looks like it is tracking too far to the right and then to the left. But that is all part of a systematic strategy to safely arrive at a desired destination, harnessing the power of the wind.

Putting your hope in the Lord during your journey through life requires that same kind of strategic patience. You must keep your eyes firmly on God, trusting Him no matter how often the course of your life changes. Remember, your ultimate destination is accomplishing the purpose for which you were created.

When your hope is in the Lord's plan and purpose for your life, letting Him determine the exact direction—the angle of each tack—your journey will be absolutely secure. The Lord says in Jeremiah 29:11, “I know the plans I have for you . . . plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” And when you fulfill God's purpose for your life, you will arrive safely in the harbor . . . because He is at the helm.

## **Guilt . . . How to Plug the Holes in the Hull**

Are you unable to make headway in your life? No matter what you do, your effort to move forward is thwarted and you often feel pushed backward. Such is the struggle when sailing with guilt.

Imagine being in a small boat in the midst of a storm, but your guilt has gouged holes in the hull. You try to move forward toward safe harbor, but the strong winds hold you back and your vessel is on the verge of sinking. Again and again you bail out water, but you cannot bail fast enough. Finally, you tire out and give up. Feeling completely exhausted, you lose hope. You could endure the storm, but not in a boat with holes in the hull.

When you're unable to move forward because of the storm gales of guilt, you need to discern the truth about your guilt. Only the truth can plug the holes in the hull.

*“Teach me your way, O LORD,  
that I may walk in your truth.”*  
(PSALM 86:11 ESV)

## Discerning the Truth When Drowning in Guilt

**True Guilt** is the result of having committed wrong.

- True guilt is an emotional response as a result of any wrong attitude or action contrary to the will of God—and refers to the fact of being at fault.
- This “good guilt” is designed by God to bring a sense of remorse over your wrong choices and lead you to take personal responsibility for your part in the negative consequences that occur in your own life or in the lives of others.
- This “good guilt” over your past or present sins is natural because your life is to reflect God in all you do.
- This “good guilt” is actually designed by God to turn you around so you will be who He created you to be and do what He created you to do.
- True guilt leads to freedom, as it leads you to repent of sin and wrongdoing, turn to God, and receive His grace and forgiveness.

*“Whoever conceals their sins  
does not prosper,  
but the one who confesses  
and renounces them finds mercy.”*  
(PROVERBS 28:13)

**False guilt** is the feeling of unjustified self-condemnation.

- False guilt is an emotional response of (1) self-blame even though no wrong has been committed, or (2) self-blame that continues after confessing and repenting of a committed sin which is no longer a part of a person’s life.
- This “bad guilt” may be the result of other people putting a “guilt trip” on you. False guilt can also be based on self-condemning feelings that you have not lived up to your own expectations or to the expectations of someone else.

- This “bad guilt” can result in anger, fear, and shame as well as being overly self-judgmental, overly responsible, overly conscientious, or overly sensitive. It can be the impetus for extreme self-denial demonstrated by overly serving others (being a “people-pleaser”), low self-worth, and emotional blocks that produce negativity and hopelessness.
- False guilt is not resolved by confession because there is nothing to confess. Revelation 12:10 says that Satan is the “*accuser of our brothers and sisters.*” He loves to burden believers with false guilt and condemnation. Some of his favorite strategies are bringing up the past, reminding you of your failures, and making you feel unforgiven and unaccepted by God.
- False guilt is resolved by rejecting lies and believing truth.

*“You will know the truth,  
and the truth will set you free.”*

(JOHN 8:32)

**Discern the truth** about your guilt by honestly asking . . .

- “Is what I’m feeling true guilt or false guilt?”
- “Have I truly repented of my sin, yet am I still living with guilt?”
- “Why am I struggling with hopelessness?”
- “Are there any lies I’m believing or recurring negative thoughts I have that don’t line up with the truth of God’s Word?”
- “Am I in any way responsible for my lack of hope?”
- “In what way does my guilt make my feelings of hopelessness worse?”
- “If my guilt were removed, would I feel hopeless?”

*“If our hearts do not condemn us,  
we have confidence before God.”*

(1 JOHN 3:21)

**Once you discern the truth** about your guilt . . .

- Sincerely ask God to forgive you for any sin causing you to experience true guilt and to help you reject and release any false guilt you have.

- Place your hope in Jesus, choosing to believe in His personal acceptance of you and in His total forgiveness of your sins.
- Saturate your mind with passages from God’s Word about His love for you, such as Psalm 86:5; Jeremiah 31:3; John 3:16; Romans 8:38–39; Ephesians 3:16–19; and 1 John 3:1.
- Memorize Romans 8:1 and turn it into a prayer: “Thank you, Father, that you don’t condemn me and you don’t want me to condemn myself. Thank you for your forgiveness. Help me release any false guilt because I am accepted in Christ.”

*“There is now no condemnation  
for those who are in Christ Jesus.”*

(ROMANS 8:1)

Guilt can be a powerful emotion. It can impact how you view yourself, how you interact in your relationships, and how you relate to God. Whether you’re experiencing true guilt or false guilt, it can take time to untangle and overcome. In addition to believing the truth of God’s Word, talk with a wise friend, counselor, or pastor to help you gain victory over these feelings.

*“In an abundance of counselors there is victory.”*

(PROVERBS 11:14 NASB)

## **Grief . . . How to Stand against the Storms**

In the broken world in which we live, there is no shortage of reasons why we will experience grief. Losses devastate. Relationships end. Unexpected tragedies happen. Even positive changes like starting a new job, moving into a new home, or graduating from college can be met with grief because we experience loss when saying good-bye to someone or something that’s been part of our lives.

Whether the loss is significant or seemingly minor, it is normal to experience grief. And it's during times like these that we need hope to keep us anchored, give us perspective, and help us move forward. The good news is: When we grieve, God is near. He is with us in our pain—we don't grieve without purpose, without His presence, or without hope. When anchored in God's promises . . .

*“You will not grieve like people who have no hope.”*

(1 THESSALONIANS 4:13 NLT)

## **Weathering the Storm Gales of Grief**

If you are overwhelmed with grief, rest in these promises of God to help you stay anchored . . .

**God is with you** in your grief.

*“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand”* (ISAIAH 41:10).

**God understands** the grief you are experiencing.

*“He [Jesus] was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief”* (ISAIAH 53:3 NLT).

**God sees your grief** and cares about you.

*“I will be glad and rejoice in your unfailing love, for you have seen my troubles, and you care about the anguish of my soul”* (PSALM 31:7 NLT).

**God hears your cries** and listens to you in your pain.

*“The LORD has heard my weeping”* (PSALM 6:8).

**God wants you to reflect** on fond memories and allow yourself time to grieve.

*“There is a time for everything . . . a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance”* (ECCLESIASTES 3:1, 4).



**God wants you to process** your grief with Him.

*“Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge” (PSALM 62:8).*

**God does not want** you to grieve alone.

*“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help” (ECCLESIASTES 4:9–10 NLT).*

**God comforts you** in your grief and can use you to comfort others.

*“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God” (2 CORINTHIANS 1:3–4).*

**God wants you** to view your grief in light of eternity.

*“We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all” (2 CORINTHIANS 4:16–17).*

**God will one day wipe away your tears**—and there will be no more death or mourning or grief.

*“He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever” (REVELATION 21:4 NLT).*

In our grief, the Lord comforts us with the presence of His Spirit, with the promises of His Word, and with the encouragement of others. When you are anchored in Christ, you can experience comfort, hope, and even joy amidst your grief.

*“You have taken away  
my clothes of mourning  
and clothed me with joy.”  
(PSALM 30:11 NLT)*

## Bitterness . . . How to Bear Biting Winds

Bitterness can be like a winter storm blowing in from the north. At first the signs are subtle, but soon bitterness swirls into a blizzard of complaints, unforgiveness, depression, sustained grief, hopelessness, and rage against God.

Most people have great difficulty admitting they are bitter. They say words like “I’m not bitter—I just can’t forgive him!” or “I’m not angry—it’s just not fair.” Bitterness is buried anger that has become frozen in resentment. Like a chain that ties us to the past, we carry unresolved anger in our hearts wherever we go.

The solution to overcoming bitterness lies in letting God’s grace work in our hearts so that it has no place to grow.

*“See to it that no one falls  
short of the grace of God  
and that no bitter root grows up  
to cause trouble and defile many.”  
(HEBREWS 12:15)*

### Bearing the Biting Winds of Bitterness

If you are struggling with bitterness in your life . . .

**Take** personal responsibility for your attitude of bitterness. Know you are not a helpless victim of other people or circumstances. You can change. Bitterness is not just about what happened to you but about your *response* to what happened.

*“We are each responsible for our own conduct” (GALATIANS 6:5 NLT).*

**Confess** to God that you are harboring anger. Express your desire to overcome the bondage of bitterness.

*“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. . . . Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (PSALM 51:1, 10).*

**Search** your heart for events or people in the past who have led you to feel bitter. Then, in prayer, release your desire for revenge to God.

*“Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord” (ROMANS 12:19).*

**Believe** it is possible, with God’s help, to get rid of all of your bitterness and resentment. Understand that having a close personal relationship with Jesus can give you the love needed to let go of past pain and destructive emotions.

*“With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (MATTHEW 19:26).*

**Cultivate** a heart of forgiveness toward others by reflecting on God’s grace and forgiveness in your own life.

*“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (EPHESIANS 4:30–32).*

Bitterness, anger, and unforgiveness are destructive to your life and relationships. These emotions can even impact your relationship with God. He cares about your emotions and does not want you to spend your days filled with anger and bitterness. Rather, He wants your life to be filled with peace and gratitude.

*“Now is the time to get rid of anger, rage,  
malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. . . .  
let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts.  
For as members of one body you are called  
to live in peace. And always be thankful.”  
(COLOSSIANS 3:8, 15 NLT)*

## **Anchoring Your Hope Batten Down the Hatches<sup>35</sup>**

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On April 2, 2001, the worst accident in fifty years involving an American fishing boat took place on the Bering Sea. The *Arctic Rose*, a 92-foot commercial fishing trawler, went down in frigid waters 205 miles northwest of St. Paul Island. All fifteen crewmen aboard drowned. No radio call for help was sent.

The Coast Guard began an investigation that lasted nearly three years. Eventually the *Arctic Rose* was discovered 428 feet under the sea, but only one body, that of Captain David Rundall, was found.

Based on an underwater video of the wreck, the inquiry came to certain conclusions. Although the exact cause was not definitively determined, a possible reason for the disaster was discovered. The underwater cameras revealed that several of the ship's doors and hatches had been left open. Since not all the crew members were experienced seamen, more than likely they were not diligent in keeping the ship watertight.

Investigators found that leaving watertight doors open contributed to the sinking of the boat. Waves over twenty feet high struck the boat from the rear and side, sweeping through open doors and hatches. In less than three minutes the boat was flooded beyond recovery, and it sank within eight minutes.<sup>36</sup>

Not all open doors are positive opportunities. Some are doors to disaster. This is certainly true in our lives! One potentially dangerous door we leave open is bitterness. A refusal to shut the door to bitterness can lead to unforgiveness, grievous grudges, and ruined relationships.

Heed the wisdom of the writer of the book of Hebrews: “See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many” (12:15). A seemingly small action, like not shutting the door to grudges, can cause unforgiveness to flood every compartment of your heart and sink your significant relationships. Failing to close those doors can lead to disastrous consequences . . . it can be a matter of life and death.

The Bible leaves us with no other option. Colossians 3:13 says, “Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

Simply put, to keep from drowning, batten down the hatches to bitterness, resentment, and hatred. Shut the doors and keep them shut!

Then, finally, you will see for yourself that forgiveness will protect you from a watery grave and give you free sailing.

## **Negativity . . . How to Hold on to the Lifelines**

In a novel by Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe was shipwrecked on a desolate isle. He alone survived while everyone else on board drowned. Though separated from humanity, he did not starve. Though without clothes, in the hot climate he didn’t need them. Though he was on an island with no supplies, since his ship was wrecked near the shore, he could get all necessary items.

He concluded that no situation was so miserable that something good couldn’t come from it. No matter the “bad,” there was something for which he could be thankful.

When you find yourself shipwrecked in life, you have a choice about your attitude—and a choice as to what you will do. Choose to put your hope in the Lord and thank Him for how He will use your trials.

*“Give thanks in all circumstances;  
for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”*

(1 THESSALONIANS 5:18)

### Using God’s Word to Counter Negative Thoughts

When facing difficult circumstances and ongoing negative thoughts, counter those thoughts with the Word of God.

**If you say:** “I’ve lost all hope.”

**God says:** Hold on to my hope.

*“Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him” (PSALM 62:5).*

**If you say:** “It’s impossible.”

**God says:** All things are possible with me.

*“What is impossible with man is possible with God” (LUKE 18:27).*

**If you say:** “I cannot do it.”

**God says:** You can do all things through Christ.

*“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (PHILIPPIANS 4:13 NKJV).*

**If you say:** “I don’t have anyone to help me.”

**God says:** I am able to give you all that you need.

*“God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work” (2 CORINTHIANS 9:8).*

**If you say:** “Nothing good can come from this.”

**God says:** I can bring good out of this.

*“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (ROMANS 8:28).*

**If you say:** “I can’t meet my own needs.”

**God says:** I can meet all your needs.

*“My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus” (PHILIPPIANS 4:19).*

**If you say:** “I don’t know the way.”

**God says:** I’ll teach you my way.

*“He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way” (PSALM 25:9).*

The storms of life often push us to replay negative thoughts or to believe lies about ourselves, others, our situation, or about God. Besides the “self-talk” quotes listed above, there may be other negative thoughts you’ve had or lies you’ve been led to believe. Write them down and then look in God’s Word to discover a passage or a truth that can speak directly to that negative thought or lie.

God wants you to *“take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ”* (2 Corinthians 10:5). Over time, as you replace the lies and negative thoughts with God’s truth, you will be transformed by His Word.

*“Do not conform to the pattern of this world,  
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.  
Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—  
his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*  
(ROMANS 12:2)

## Drifting . . . How to Have an Anchored Life

While certain companies only build anchors, other companies only test anchors. Each new anchor is taken out on a ship, attached to a chain, and cast overboard. The casting is repeated in different depths of water and into different water bottoms containing different sediments.

Stress is put on the anchor to see if the metal or the shaft of the anchor will twist or break or if the flukes of the anchor will drag or slip. Each of the anchors is tested before it is sold in order to establish that it will hold secure.<sup>37</sup>

We have an anchor—Jesus—who, when tested, has never bent, broken, slid, or slipped. Therefore, when the stresses of life come your way, He will hold you firm and secure.

*“He lifted me out of the slimy pit,  
out of the mud and mire;  
he set my feet on a rock  
and gave me a firm place to stand.”*

(PSALM 40:2)

## Anchor

(an acrostic for the word ANCHOR)

**A—Accept** Christ as your only hope.

*“You are the hope of everyone on earth, even those who sail on distant seas” (PSALM 65:5 NLT).*

**N—Never** put your hope in what is seen, but hope in God and His promises.

*“In this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently” (ROMANS 8:24–25).*

**C—Claim** the plans and promises of God.

*“Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God’s promises to be fulfilled” (ROMANS 15:4 NLT).*

**H—Hope** in the redeeming power of God.

*“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” (PSALM 42:5).*



**O—Offer** genuine faith, hope, and love to other Christians.

*“We always pray for you, and we give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God’s people, which come from your confident hope of what God has reserved for you in heaven” (COLOSSIANS 1:3–5 NLT).*

**R—Reach** out to others so they might know the hope of His calling.

*“I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance. I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him” (EPHESIANS 1:18–19 NLT).*

## Ingratitude . . . How to Thank God for the Hope He Gives

If you have ever sailed on a ship, you’ve probably never stopped to appreciate and give thanks for the anchor. Most people are oblivious to this vital piece of equipment. Likewise, have you ever genuinely thanked God for giving you hope?

The Bible says to *“give thanks in all circumstances”* (1 Thessalonians 5:18). How can you do this? One way to thank God is to look at the descriptive words that come right before the word *hope* in Scripture. Certain adjectives in God’s Word shed light on the meaning of our hope in Christ. They make hope come alive! They will help you remain thankful and help you focus on the relevance of hope in your life—especially when you are in the midst of a storm and need reassurance that you have an anchor that holds. The Bible says . . .

*“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess,  
for he who promised is faithful.”*  
(HEBREWS 10:23)

## Thanking God for His Hope

Thanking the Lord for His different kinds of hope will not only please Him, but also bless you. Thank God for giving you . . .

**Living hope**—“Thank you, Jesus, for saving me from being spiritually dead in my sins and for making me spiritually alive.”

*“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 PETER 1:3).*

**Better hope**—“Thank you, Jesus, for rescuing me from a legalistic way of living—for setting me free!”

*“The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God” (HEBREWS 7:18–19).*

**One hope**—“Thank you, Jesus, for calling me into a relationship with you, for the unity I now have with all believers, and for the one hope we all share because of you.”

*“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called” (EPHESIANS 4:4).*

**Good hope**—“Thank you, Jesus, for your love and grace. Thank you for making it possible for me to have eternal encouragement because of all the good you are storing up for me in the future.”

*“May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts” (2 THESSALONIANS 2:16–17).*

**Future hope**—“Thank you, Jesus, that you have a future planned for me both here on earth and in heaven. And thank you that my future will not be cut short because it is dependent on you alone.”

*“There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off” (PROVERBS 23:18).*

**Blessed hope**—“Thank you, Jesus, for placing in my heart the exciting anticipation of seeing you face to face when you come again.”

*“We wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (TITUS 2:13).*

**Enduring hope**—“Thank you, Jesus, for giving me a hope that endures throughout my life—through every trial, every storm, every moment.”

*“As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 THESSALONIANS 1:3 NLT).*

## Despair . . . How to Help Those Who Feel Hopeless

When someone is drowning, they need a lifeline—a raft that will keep them afloat and help them get to safety on land or on a boat. People drowning in despair often struggle with suicidal thoughts. Their pain is relentless and they don’t see a way out.

In situations like this, you can become a lifeline to hope. God can use you to encourage those in despair, comfort the downcast, and give hope to the hopeless.

*“But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus.”*

(2 CORINTHIANS 7:6)

### Helping Those Who Feel Hopeless or Suicidal

**Know your limits.** Don’t think you can “do it all.” The Bible says, *“In an abundance of counselors there is safety”* (Proverbs 11:14 ESV). Build a support system of family, friends, church members, community support groups, suicide hotlines, as well as a pastor and/or counselor.

**Learn the warning signs.** Despairing people are often suicidal people. Therefore, learn the warning signs of suicide, which include: expressing a desire to die or kill themselves; talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live, being a burden to others, feeling trapped, being in pain; purchasing a weapon, increased use of drugs or alcohol; reckless or anxious behavior; changes in sleeping patterns; withdrawing from others; extreme mood swings.<sup>38</sup>

**Be present and available.** Call, visit, and check in on them regularly. Your presence and consistent encouragement can go a long way in showing them they are loved and valued.

**Listen with compassion.** Don't feel like you have to say something to "fix it." When Job's friends saw his suffering, the Bible says, "*Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. No one said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was too great for words*" (Job 2:13 NLT). Listen to their story without judgment. Acknowledge the reality of their deep pain and suffering and express concern and empathy when appropriate.

**Talk about suicide with the person.** Contrary to what some believe, talking about suicide does *not* plant the idea in someone's head. Talking actually provides an opportunity to explore the thoughts, feelings, and reactions of the suicidal person. Ask direct questions regarding the existence of a plan. Ask *how*, *when*, and *where* to gain valuable information that may help prevent a suicide attempt. Do not promise confidentiality if this is the case.

**Ask for a signed contract** that obligates the suicidal person to talk with you or with someone else before taking harmful action. For instance, you might ask: "Will you promise to first call me if you are considering harming/killing yourself?" Write the words out like a contract and then both of you sign and date it.

**Suggest activities** that engage them and could prove beneficial, including:

- Keeping a journal to record their thoughts and feelings throughout the day.
- Going out with friends and family, even if they have to push themselves to do so.

- Reading one Psalm every morning and one every night before going to sleep.
- Memorizing verses in Scripture that offer encouragement and hope such as Psalm 46:1; Psalm 145:8–9; Isaiah 41:10; Jeremiah 29:11; 1 John 3:1.

**Take care of yourself** physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It is easy to become over-stressed and overwhelmed when caring for someone who is deeply despairing or suicidal. Consequently, it is imperative that you ask others for help when you need it.

**Encourage them to pursue professional help** (i.e., medical treatment and professional counseling). Help them find a local counselor or clinic. Keep a list of all the numbers you will need to call in case of an emergency.

**Don't hesitate to call for help.** Call 911 immediately if there is a crisis or emergency. You can also call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline anytime at 988 or 1-800-799-4889 (Deaf + Hard of Hearing). Or visit [988lifeline.org](http://988lifeline.org) (live chat available) to seek help and information on suicide.

*“A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions.”*

(PROVERBS 27:12 NLT)

For a more comprehensive look at suicide prevention,  
consider purchasing

*Suicide Prevention: Hope When Life Seems Hopeless,*  
one of the topics in the *Keys for Living Library*.

Call 1-800-488-HOPE (4673) or  
visit [www.HopeForTheHeart.org](http://www.HopeForTheHeart.org).

## Uncertainty . . . How to Grab Hold of the Benefits of Hope

Why does the Lord ask you to put your hope in Him? It's not for His sake—it's for yours! Christ will keep you from being wrecked by the crushing events of life. You will be tossed about by the waves and battered by the winds, but your faith in Him can replace your fear. Although your anchor is unseen, you will feel its pull and know it is holding you. Remember: The stronger the storm, the stronger the pull. So no matter what storms you may encounter in life, if you're anchored in Christ, your anchor will hold.

Extraordinary benefits await those who hold on to His hope—benefits based on the promises of God—benefits both now and for the future. The next time you feel uncertain about life, when you feel like you're adrift on an uncharted course, the Lord wants you to look to Him as your anchor and to rely on His compass to chart your course.

Jesus supernaturally fed thousands of people, walked on water, healed the sick, calmed the storm, raised the dead and performed many other miracles. Therefore, is He not able to hold you secure and fulfill His every promise? Absolutely!

*“Jesus did many other things as well.  
If every one of them were written down,  
I suppose that even the whole  
world would not have room  
for the books that would be written.”*

(JOHN 21:25)

### The Benefits of God's Hope

Extraordinary benefits await those who hold on to God's hope—benefits based on the promises of God. The Bible says that **God's hope . . .**

**Provides** you joy in living

*“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer” (ROMANS 12:12).*

**Generates** faith and love in you

*“We have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God’s people—the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel” (COLOSSIANS 1:4–5).*

**Causes** you to live a pure life

*“All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure” (1 JOHN 3:3).*

**Inspires** you to persevere with endurance

*“We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 THESSALONIANS 1:3).*

**Lifts up** your downcast soul

*“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” (PSALM 43:5).*

**Causes** you to praise God

*“As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more” (PSALM 71:14).*

**Anchors** your soul

*“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure” (HEBREWS 6:19).*

**Generates** boldness in you

*“Since we have such a hope, we are very bold” (2 CORINTHIANS 3:12).*

**Develops** your patience

*“If we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently” (ROMANS 8:25).*

**Gives** you reason to rejoice

*“Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God” (ROMANS 5:2).*

**Establishes** your security and safety

*“You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety” (JOB 11:18).*

**Guarantees** your eternal life

*“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life” (TITUS 3:5–7).*

Whenever you feel uncertain about your future, about your circumstance, about what God is doing . . . revisit this list and grab hold of what God’s hope can do for you.

*“Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this:  
The faithful love of the LORD never ends!  
His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness;  
his mercies begin afresh each morning.”  
(LAMENTATIONS 3:21–23 NLT)*

### **Anchoring Your Hope When the Seas Will Cease<sup>39</sup>**

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One of the most common expressions associated with *hopelessness* is “Things will never change.”

When we look around our world today, we see a steady stream of hatred and violence manifested in a myriad of ways. It has been that way since the beginning of history. And now things seem to be going from bad to worse, and society seems destined for moral decay . . . forever.



*Nothing could be further from the truth.*

One of the most common expressions associated with *hopefulness* is “Change is a’comin’,” as President Dwight Eisenhower and others have said. And oh, is it ever.

The Bible presents this hope-filled promise: One day, all sin will cease, and that means *all sin*. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, and what are characterized as seven evils (death, mourning, weeping, pain, the curse, night, and the sea) will be gone. *The sea?* Yes, in the book of Revelation the apostle John specifically prophesies, “*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more*” (Revelation 21:1 ESV).

What could this possibly mean? For a literal interpretation, consider these two certainties about our future: We will no longer face the proverbial storms of life, nor will we be in the proverbial “sea of troubles.”<sup>40</sup>

While water covers the vast majority of the present earth’s surface, according to the Bible that will not be the case with the new earth. But why? Because the sea is often perceived as an opponent to humanity—turbulent, untamable, and terrifying when its great waves thunder and crash. If there is no more sea, there will be no more hurricanes and tidal waves, no more tropical storms and feared typhoons, no more cyclones and tsunamis, all of which have devoured and destroyed millions of lives.

Can you imagine how many lives have been lost at sea, how many drownings from disastrous shipwrecks? If someone sailing alone in the middle of the sea is deprived of help and hope, the untamed waters will swallow the sailor, leaving him to die in its murky depths.

But change is a'comin' . . . and that should give us all a renewed sense of hope. This kind of hope “does not disappoint us” (Romans 5:5 NKJV) because we will permanently be in God’s presence. Pain will cease forever, and peace will reign forever. And we will be at home in heaven . . . at home in our true home . . . for *eternity!*

*“He has made everything beautiful in its time.  
He has also set eternity in the human heart.”*

(ECCLESIASTES 3:11)

## Conclusion: Your Anchor Holds

Hundreds of classic hymns contain lines, verses, and choruses describing Jesus as our anchor, our hope, our stay. Such is the hymn “*The Solid Rock*.” Slowly read the lines and take to heart the truths that will indeed give hope to your heart.

### The Solid Rock

My hope is built on nothing less  
than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;

I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
but wholly lean on Jesus’ name.

When darkness veils His lovely face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace;

In every high and stormy gale  
my anchor holds within the veil.

His oath, His covenant, His blood,  
support me in the whelming flood;

When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my hope and stay.

#### Refrain:

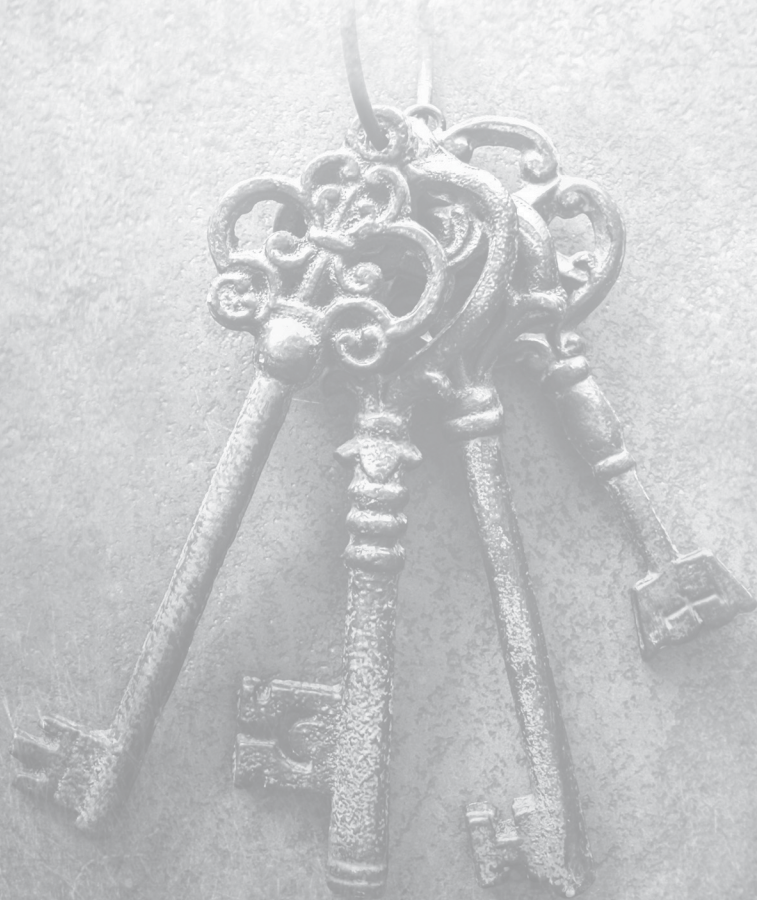
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.<sup>41</sup>

**In Christ we have an anchor securing us through our storms.  
His holding power is without question—  
He holds us secure in His arms.**

—JUNE HUNT



# SCRIPTURES TO MEMORIZE



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*“First seek the counsel  
of the LORD.”*

(1 KINGS 22:5)



God's Word offers the hope and promise of a changed life. The Lord will renew your mind—transforming the way you think, act, and live—as you saturate yourself in His Word. In the following questions, the bold-faced words serve as prompts to help you more easily memorize the verses related to this topic. May God's truth come alive to you, flourish in you, and flow through you.

Where does **my hope** come from?

*"Yes, my soul, find rest in God; **my hope comes from him.**"*

(PSALM 62:5)

Does **the Lord** have **plans** and **a future** for me even though the present seems so without **hope**?

*"For I know the **plans** I have for you,' declares **the Lord**, '**plans** to prosper you and not to harm you, **plans** to give you **hope** and **a future.**"*

(JEREMIAH 29:11)

When I'm suffering, **is there hope** for me and my **future**?

*"**There is** surely a **future hope** for you, and your hope will not be cut off."*

(PROVERBS 23:18)

Why do I still feel so **uncertain** when I have accumulated so much **wealth**?

*"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."*

(1 TIMOTHY 6:17)

What **hope** do I have to find **redemption** . . . to find **love**?

*“Put your **hope** in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing **love**  
and with him is full **redemption**.”*

(PSALM 130:7)

When my **soul** is **downcast** and **disturbed**,  
what can I do to regain **hope**?

*“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.”*

(PSALM 42:5)

What proof do I have that **Jesus Christ** can give me **hope**?

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

(1 PETER 1:3)

What is the only **hope** that is **firm and secure** and **anchors the soul**?

*“We have this **hope** as an **anchor for the soul, firm and secure**.  
It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain,  
where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf.”*

(HEBREWS 6:19–20)

Besides the Lord, is there any other **source of hope**?

*“You are my refuge and my shield;  
your word is my **source of hope**.”*

(PSALM 119:114 NLT)

What is the only lasting **hope of everyone on earth?**

*“O God our savior. You are the **hope of everyone on earth,**  
even those who sail on distant seas.”*

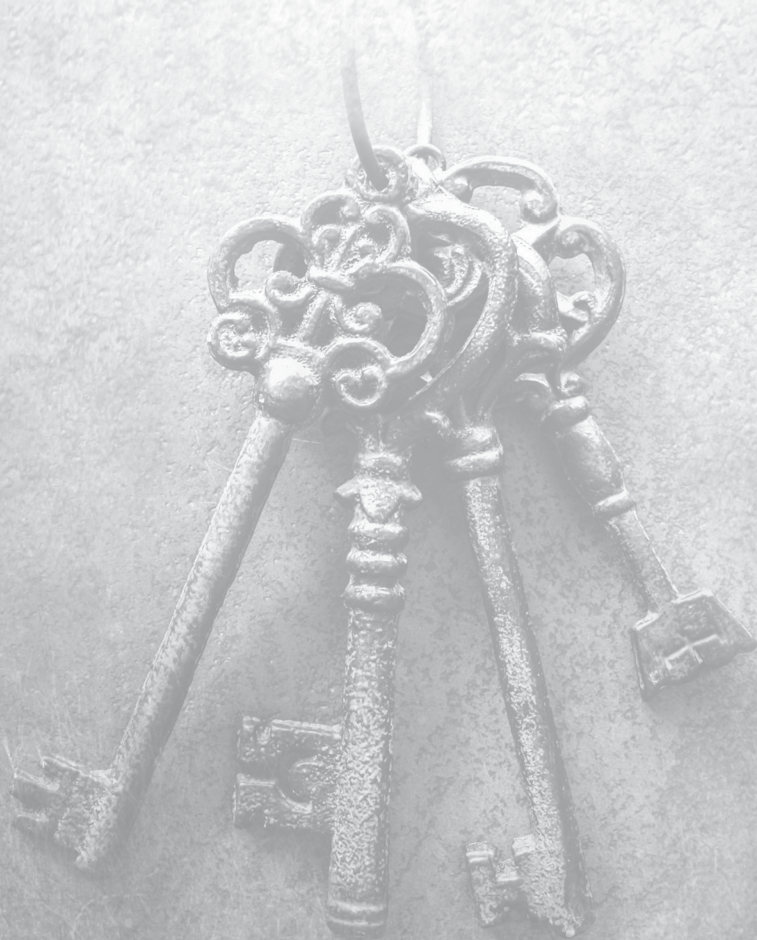
(PSALM 65:5 NLT)







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*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD,  
‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future.’”  
(Jeremiah 29:11)*

**June Hunt, M.A.**, is the Founder and Chief Servant Officer of Hope for the Heart, a worldwide counseling and caregiving ministry that offers biblical hope and practical help in more than 60 countries and 36 languages. The *Keys for Living Library* provides the foundation for the ministry's award-winning, live, call-in counseling radio program, *Hope in the Night*. Her passion to help others through biblical counsel is fueled by her joy in seeing a life changed through Christ. As an accomplished author, speaker, and musician, June provides God's truth for today's problems. See more at: [www.junehunt.org](http://www.junehunt.org)

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