



The
HOPE

*A 4-Week Bible
Study for Women*

By Amy Groeschel





Welcome to *The Hope* study! I am thrilled you are joining other sisters in Christ on this journey. *The Hope* is a four-week study including five daily lessons each week. You can complete the study individually, but it is most effective in the context of a small group. Each day, be sure to spend time studying, reading, and prayerfully completing the exercises in your guide.

My desire is that you will fully and clearly know the hope you can have in Christ. No doubt about it, there are a ton of despairing, hopeless people in this world. But it doesn't have to be this way. Through studying what you've been given as a child of God, I believe you will be strengthened with a more alive and active hope. By faith, I believe you will be equipped to share this good news with the hopeless.

Each daily lesson will cover these four important components:

1. **Seek God:** Begin your time in focused prayer.
2. **Obtain Truth:** Read, reflect, and learn from God's Word.
3. **Abide by the Spirit:** Personally apply what you have learned.
4. **Reach Out:** Share and live out the truth you are learning.

Before your first week, you'll want to watch the Sisters Event. You'll also want to start off each week by watching the weekly video teachings online. Find these videos and more at www.life.church/sisters.

We believe you will begin to **soar** as you discover the hope found in Christ. Our prayer is that you will be encouraged and leave this study filled with unwavering hope.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy".

The Hope Study

CONTENTS

Week One: Our Hope

- 7 You Have Hope
- 10 Knowing Your Hope
- 13 Hope Unlimited
- 16 Living with Hope
- 20 When Hope Seems Lost

Week Two: Expect to Be Enriched

- 27 Enriched in Everything
- 30 Enriched as a Child of God
- 32 Enriched with a New Citizenship
- 36 Enriched with Spiritual Blessings
- 39 Enriched Every Day

Week Three: Expect to Be Empowered

- 45 God's Great Power for You
- 49 Empowered by the Holy Spirit
- 52 Empowered Through Prayer
- 56 Empowered Through Faith
- 59 Empowered by the Word of God

Week Four: The Hope of a Bright Future

- 67 Longing for the Day
- 70 A Place Prepared for You
- 73 The Hope of Reward
- 77 The Hope of His Presence
- 80 The Hope of Newness

Notes



WEEK ONE

Our Hope



Day One || You Have Hope

"There's nothing more calming in difficult moments than knowing there's someone fighting with you." —Mother Teresa

SEEK GOD

Dear sister, I want to encourage you to begin each daily lesson by using the *Seek God* section as a prompt to spend some time in prayer. Every bit of truth you learn and are strengthened by in this study will be straight from the Holy Spirit, your Teacher. Open your heart to His lessons and invite Him to lead you.

OBTAIN TRUTH

Today is the beginning of our hope journey! I am thrilled you have this guide and have joined me. To start, we're going to figure out what hope truly is. No doubt, the concept of hope can sometimes be confusing. One reason is because there are two uses of the word "hope." There is a worldly hope we use in everyday life—where we hope we get the job or hope our loved ones travel home safely. With this type of hope, we are uncertain of the outcome and cross our fingers as we hope for the best.

This everyday, worldly hope is quite different than the biblical hope the Scriptures refer to. The hope we have in Christ is not a desire nor wishful thinking. The Bible's use of hope conveys an entirely different meaning. Biblical hope is "confident expectation."

Read Ephesians 1:16-19 again printed here for you. This will be the foundational Scripture for our study.

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ... Ephesians 1:16-19 ESV

Wow, what a power-packed prayer!

Although the Apostle Paul prayed this prayer for the Church in Ephesus, it is certainly a prayer that applies to all followers of Christ, both then and now.

I want us to zoom in on verse 18, *having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you.* What is Paul praying we gain enlightenment for? Let's zoom in a little more... *that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you.*

Having the blessings of God is wonderful, but not knowing what these blessings are or not living from these blessings is a tragedy. Let me explain it this way:

Have you ever discovered money in your jacket or pants pocket you forgot about? I love when this happens! It's like receiving an unexpected bonus. The funny part is I had the money the whole time but just forgot about it. It's like I temporarily robbed myself. Do you see how this can happen with our abundant riches in Christ?

Now read Ephesians 3:7-8 ESV, printed here for you, and notice what Paul has been commissioned to do.

Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ ... Ephesians 3:7-8 ESV

What was Paul given the grace and power of God to do?

.....
.....

What is the gospel, which means "good news," Paul was called to preach?

.....
.....

Are you grasping the beauty of the gospel? *The unsearchable riches of Christ!* This, sisters, is what Paul preached. And this glorious hope is a sure promise! We can confidently expect all that Christ lavishly gives. That's why I'm so passionate about this new study. Because such good news must continually be shared! Because we need to know the hope to which we were called; because we need to remember our hope. And because we need to be ready to share the hope our Lord offers anyone who accepts Him.

But, how can we know the hope of what we have in Christ if Paul describes it as "unsearchable"?

Some versions use the word "unfathomable," but the original Greek word is *anexichniastos*, which means "past finding out, unsearchable, not to be tracked out." The idea is that these blessings in Christ are too deep to be measured.

This information is breathtaking to me. I want to understand what we have in Christ fully and immediately. But even though we cannot yet fully unearth the depths of the wonderful riches we have been given, one day we will grasp it. Until then, we can gain more knowledge, wisdom, and insight from the Holy Spirit and God's Word, and hope will arise.



Day Two || *Knowing Your Hope*

"Most of us know about God, but that is quite different from knowing God."

—Billy Graham

SEEK GOD

Begin your study time with prayer. Focus your heart on knowing your Heavenly Father intimately. Seek to know Him as a friend and king. Tell Him your desire to know Him more.

OBTAIN TRUTH

There's one problem with hope. It doesn't come naturally. It's natural for us to cross our fingers and hope for the best. It's harder to expect confidently in God. But here's the deal: to have hope, we must know God. Why? Because God is our hope! So for us to live a life of hope, we must know the object of our hope.

It isn't enough to know about God. We must know Him and His Word *intimately*. Scripture shows us who God is and what He offers us. It reveals there is nothing that compares to Him. Jeremiah, the prophet, called God "The Hope of Israel." The Apostle Paul calls God "The God of Hope" and "Our Hope." Knowing our hope changes our lives. It changes our perspective, our desires, our focus, and who we listen to. It changes everything.

Today, we'll look at two situations that exhibit two contrasting depths of intimacy with God and see how this affects our hope.

The first is found in Matthew 8:23-27 NIV: *Then he [Jesus] got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"*

The disciples had a real problem. High waves were filling their boat with water and their hearts with fear. Their real problem had a real solution. Jesus was on the boat. But—what was Jesus doing?

How did the disciples respond? They freaked out. *Teacher, don't you care that we're going to drown?*

What was Jesus' response to their insulting question?

Jesus questioned His friends' lack of courage and faith, then calmed the storm. Let me just say that Jesus is so much nicer than I am! I would have said, "Hey people, what's your problem? Don't you get it? Don't you know me? Don't you trust me?"

Jesus' disciples—the ones who saw, first-hand, a continuous stream of awesome miracles—didn't get it. They only vaguely knew who they were with. "Who is this man?" they asked. "Even the wind and waves obey him!"

They put their hope in what they trusted, and they trusted what they knew.

These guys knew storms. They knew boats. And I bet they knew true stories about people dying in boats hit by big, scary storms. They trusted what they knew about the real world more than trusting the God who made it.

Can you relate to this at all? I sure can. Proverbs 3:5-6 instantly comes to my mind. *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.* Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV

Too often, I rely on my own understanding. I trust in what I think I know instead of seeking direction from the Holy Spirit.

The best way for us to overcome the temptation of self-trust is to know our wonderful God of Hope. Knowing God is trusting God—even when our storms are prolonged and even when our circumstances go from bad to worse.

Now, let's consider a close friend of God, Abraham, and see where he placed his hope.

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

Romans 4:18-21 NIV

Did Abraham have any logical reason to hope?

.....
.....

Did Abraham deny his reality?

.....
.....

What did Abraham do? Write this answer(s) down and let it encourage you.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....



ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

Have you been waiting for the chapter of personal pain to end for you or a loved one? Maybe these challenging days have turned into an ongoing struggle of weeks, months, or even years. I want to encourage you today. Though this battle seems to have no victory in sight, do not lose hope. Our God is forever faithful to us. You can expect, with all hope, His faithfulness with complete confidence. I know because I *know* my good Father.

Remember, knowing God is trusting God, so even when our circumstances seem hopeless, we need to hold onto our hope in God. Hebrews 6:15 NIV reminds us of Abraham's ongoing faith and hope in God: "And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised."

Abraham waited 25 years for the fulfillment of the promise. He was 75 when God promised him a son. What do you think Abraham knew about God that kept him holding on with great hope?

Circle all likely possibilities:

- God is trustworthy.
- God is able.
- God is God.
- God is faithful.
- God is all-powerful.
- God is a friend.
- God provides.

In what area of your life do you need to renew your hope in God's ability to work?

.....

.....

Our God is forever faithful. Keep asking and believing with patient expectation for God's good plans to unfold.

REACH OUT

Someone you care about needs to be encouraged. They need the hope that is only found through Christ. Would you reach out to them now?



Day Three || Hope Unlimited

"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God."

—Corrie ten Boom

SEEK GOD

Jesus, I sit here today asking you to quiet my life. May the everyday stuff not distract me as I focus on you. Fill my heart and mind with a confident and patient hope. You are the richness I seek. May I know you in a deeper way by the end of today! Amen.

OBTAIN TRUTH

Yesterday, we learned the first step in our hope journey is to know God intimately. Today, let's start unpacking how knowing Him intimately increases our hope and changes us from the inside out.

As you read the following Pauline prayer—these are prayers the Apostle Paul wrote—circle the words "love" and "power."

... And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:17-19 NIV

This prayer by the Apostle Paul to the church in Ephesus is crammed with descriptive expressions. It is as if Paul were searching for a vocabulary beyond his human ability to explain our great need and God's exceeding love.

What was Paul's basic prayer request?

Why did Paul want us to understand God's love?

You Have the Unlimited Love of God

God wants us filled to the fullest possible measure—with Him! With love!

So, let me ask you this: do you have or lack God's love?

If you have it—and yes, you do—can you comprehend its great volume?

Maybe my next question could test your understanding of God's love: are you ever fearful?

1 John 4:18 NIV says, *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*

God can help you wholly know His love. And when you know that you have all His love, you can truly grasp His grace, His forgiveness, His mercy, His friendship, His peace, His comfort, His holiness, His goodness, His provision, and His very presence—at work in you and all around you.

Understanding that God loves you completely and immensely fills you with unlimited love and unlimited hope.



You Have Unlimited Power from God

Paul concludes his prayer with a declaration of praise filled with hope. *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.* Ephesians 3:20-21 NIV

Read the verse one more time and circle the words "ask" and "imagine."

I love the Amplified version of the verse:

... far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams]— ... —Ephesians 3:20 AMPC

Understanding of God's unlimited love and power will grow as you walk with Jesus day by day and year by year. That's one reason to look forward to growing older!

You Have Unlimited Access to God

The following Scriptures show another unlimited benefit Christ Jesus has provided us:

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:16 NIV

For through him [Jesus] we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Ephesians 2:18 NIV

In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. Ephesians 3:12 NIV

Because of Jesus, you and I can freely and confidently approach God through the gift of prayer. We are encouraged to seek Him out for help, mercy, and, most wonderful of all, for relationship.

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

When you first enter into a relationship with Jesus, your knowledge of God and His promises is usually limited, but as you grow in your understanding of who God is and what He has provided you, your faith, hope, and love through the gift of prayer should flourish.

If God's love and ability are boundless and absolute, what should your prayers be like?

.....
.....



God is able! In fact, there isn't anything too difficult for God. Read Matthew 19:26 and Luke 1:37.

You may think you can handle things on your own, but it's actually God's ability that enables every capability you've been given!

Are your prayers in agreement with who your Father is?

Name something big you are specifically asking God to do.

.....
.....

Because you know God is able to do immeasurably more, what are you expecting or imagining you might see Him do? (Write out three ideas.)

.....
.....
.....

REACH OUT

Bless someone today by sharing what you're asking and believing God to do in your life.



Day Four || Living with Hope

"I don't think of all the misery, but of the beauty that still remains." —Anne Frank

SEEK GOD

Lord, I long to know You intimately. Take me on a journey that allows me to know You as a father, friend, and king. I need You! Reveal Yourself to me today. Amen!

Draw near to God in prayer with your heart filled with confident and patient hope. Enjoy the richness of His presence.

OBTAIN TRUTH

When I was about 9 years old, the kid neighbors down the street invited my brother, cousin, and me to their homemade carnival. Very cool idea, right? I was so excited and could hardly wait! They promised fun party games with prizes and sweet munchies, like cupcakes. My expectations were pretty high.

When carnival day arrived, I was the first on the scene. I didn't want to miss a thing! But disappointment slowly seeped into my heart. Things weren't as I had imagined. As the carnival proceeded from one boring game to another with lame prizes and food I was sure came from their trash bin, I held on to one last hope—the grand finale game. My brother and I were the only ones who stuck around to experience the finale.

"Follow us," they said.

We were taken down the dark and narrow steps of their cellar and told to wait for them because they had forgotten something. Lie. It was a set-up! They locked us in that pitch-black, musky, spider-infested dungeon for three years! Well, maybe 10 minutes, but as a kid, it felt like forever.

We screamed our little heads off. We were terrified. They thought it was all hilarious, but I've yet to laugh about it. We left devastated and disappointed. The truth is, we didn't really know these neighbor kids. And, to no surprise, we never trusted them again.

Life can be like that carnival. You start out hopeful, but after one disappointment after another, living with overwhelming situations, you end up being pulled down into dark pits of hopelessness.

We have an enemy, Satan, who convinces us to numb our ache and run after things that only make us temporarily happy. My goodness, how we get our hearts broken over trusting in things that don't deliver! The truth is, Jesus is our only hope. In 1 Timothy 6:17, Paul tells us "not to put hope in wealth, which is so uncertain" but to put "hope in God, who richly provides us with everything." We don't want to fall for the lies the enemy uses to try to destroy us. We want to live our lives based on who God is and what He has given us.

Only Jesus can completely satisfy us. He explains this to a Samaritan woman, "... Anyone who drinks this water will soon



ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

Maybe you're feeling down right now because you have a chronic illness or are living in survival mode with no light appearing at the end of your tunnel. Maybe you're experiencing financial or relational bankruptcy that keeps you up at night. Know this—your concerns matter to God. He is with you. Therefore, you can always have a real-time, living, and active hope.

In that dark cellar, I never even thought of God. No wonder I was void of any inner peace.

Precious sister, it's time to stop being emotionally tossed around by life's unknown circumstances and place all your hope in God. Allow the truth of who God is to change any fearful and anxious thinking.

Write down anything, no matter how big or small, that is disturbing your heart and mind right now.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Align any defeated attitudes with renewed, faith-filled hope by reviewing your "God is" list from today's **Obtain Truth** section.

I love this powerful truth: *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 NIV

This living hope we have was fully realized through Christ's resurrection! It is not empty speculation; it is a hope that is alive and active through the power of the Holy Spirit in us.



It's time to honestly consider the following questions:

- Is your hope fully in God alone?
- What or whom do you rely and depend on?

Circle all that apply:

my abilities money my job my experience doctors medicine/supplements
 experts my spouse food a diet a friend fitness a chemical substance
 my appearance a hobby other:

If you had to give everything you circled away, how would you feel?
 How would you cope?

Allow your answers to guide you to the real source of our hope.

Here's the reality to remember—you put your hope in what you trust in.

Lovely sister, would you spend a few minutes in prayer? Confess the areas where you've placed your hope in something or someone other than your amazing Father. Fully give Him your fears, disappointments, and problems. And with renewed hope, expect His faithfulness to provide.

REACH OUT

How was your heart stirred in today's lesson? Did God show you anything about yourself? Was there a Scripture you loved? Anytime you learn something new or that ministers to you, bless someone else and share it! Who needs to be encouraged by your faith journey, right now?



Day Five || When Hope Seems Lost

“Let God’s promises shine on your problems.” –Corrie ten Boom

SEEK GOD

I cry out to You, God! You are my hope. Thank You for being my all, my hope. I thank You that You are in control of my today and my tomorrows. You are good all the time, and all the time You are good. Amen!

Don’t miss out on spending even more time talking with God today.

OBTAIN TRUTH

Everyone you meet is carrying some sort of burden. Maybe it’s a lost love, a lost child, or a broken home. Big or small, we all face challenges as we go about our daily lives, and sometimes the pain is so deep we can hardly bear to stand up. Our stories may be different, but we all have one thing in common—when we cling to Christ, we have hope. We have hope that the pain will not remain and that God is working in all things for our good. When we cling to God, we can face all things and even give thanks in all things.

Today, we’re going to examine our hope during trials and suffering.

As you read through each portion of Scripture in James 1:2-4 and Romans 5:2-5, record a list completing the statement, “My struggles gain me...”

My Struggles Gain Me...

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-4 NIV

... And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. Romans 5:2-5 NIV

How does enduring suffering develop our character, and why does a stronger character produce hope?

1 Thessalonians 5:18 encourages us to give thanks in *all* circumstances. It's God's desire for us. *All* circumstances? This is mind-blowing. How can we actually do this? It may not be normal or natural to thank God in the middle of a mess, but one thing I know is God wouldn't ask us to do something that's wrong or impossible. This means that we can give thanks in every situation. We can, and we should.

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 NIV

Now, I wonder if any of you are thinking, "why is this God's will for us?" Hang with me as we consider some more counterintuitive statements:

"Rejoice in our sufferings" and "consider it pure joy" when we're in various trials? Does this sound a little crazy to you? Sometimes we misinterpret God, thinking He's asking us to have joy because of the pain. He never said that! It may seem unusual, but giving joyful thanks is one of God's prescribed ways to develop spiritual maturity in us. And, get this—rejoicing is only possible through our *hope* in Christ Jesus.

I wouldn't be as strong in my faith today if it weren't for my painful trials. Every battle with my sin, fear, sickness, rejection, loss, or any other daily problem allows me to become more like Christ Jesus. He's not going to allow a single cry for help to be in vain.

Does this mean we should go around laughing and dancing while in a crisis? No way. But in the unseen place of the soul, we can have a deep comfort, peace, and yes—even joy. All this happens through hoping in God.

In the middle of a fiery or even minor trial, remember to give God continual thanks. Hardships can actually cause our hope to soar because we see the truth of His faithfulness at work in and around us as we live out what Romans 12:12 NIV teaches: "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

Are you facing problems with joyful hope, patience, and diligent prayer? Or, are you having a hard time remaining hopeful in Christ?

If you aren't walking in peace and joy, it's time to reset your thinking and kick unbelief in the tail! Whisper Jesus' name. Whisper it, yell it, proclaim it out loud, whatever you do, just hold onto Jesus. God doesn't need you to have a mountain of hope. He just needs a seed to grow it into something to sustain you in the good times and in the devastating times. I know your battle may seem to have no victory in sight, but all hope is not lost!

Allow me to share a personal example to explain what I mean.

A few years ago, I was terribly disappointed. No. I was fed-up. Done. I'd had enough of waiting. I had held on patiently, expecting God to answer my prayer to heal my recurring bladder inflammation. When I say waiting, I mean I had been waiting for the past 12 or so years. Well, one particular day, there was no "rejoicing in all circumstances" going on in my heart. I wanted an end to the problem right then!

I had done *everything* the Bible said to receive healing, as well as prayerfully gone to doctors, taken their meds, used heaps of natural remedies, and listened to and applied advice, seemingly all to no avail.

But as I paused in my pain, I chose to thank God for His generous patience and grace over my life. This simple and sincere choice boosted me over the moon with renewed hope!

Why? Did I receive my healing? Not yet, but maybe someday soon. I'm not sure about my tomorrows, but I know God will be with me in them. My healing may come. If so, praise God! If not, I truly expect all things are working out for my good and His glory. His grace has *always* been enough for me—and you, too—and that's a great reason to give thanks!

My joy left that day because I became impatient. Whatever your need is, I want to encourage you to continue to ask and wait in full expectation. God is everything you need. Wait patiently on Him. Choose to walk in His goodness and strength.

Your loving Father longs to reveal His faithfulness. I pray you will have eyes to see His goodness in your life.



Remember and write a little about how God has been with you in your past.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Now, write about who you know God is. This is why you can rely on who He is today!

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

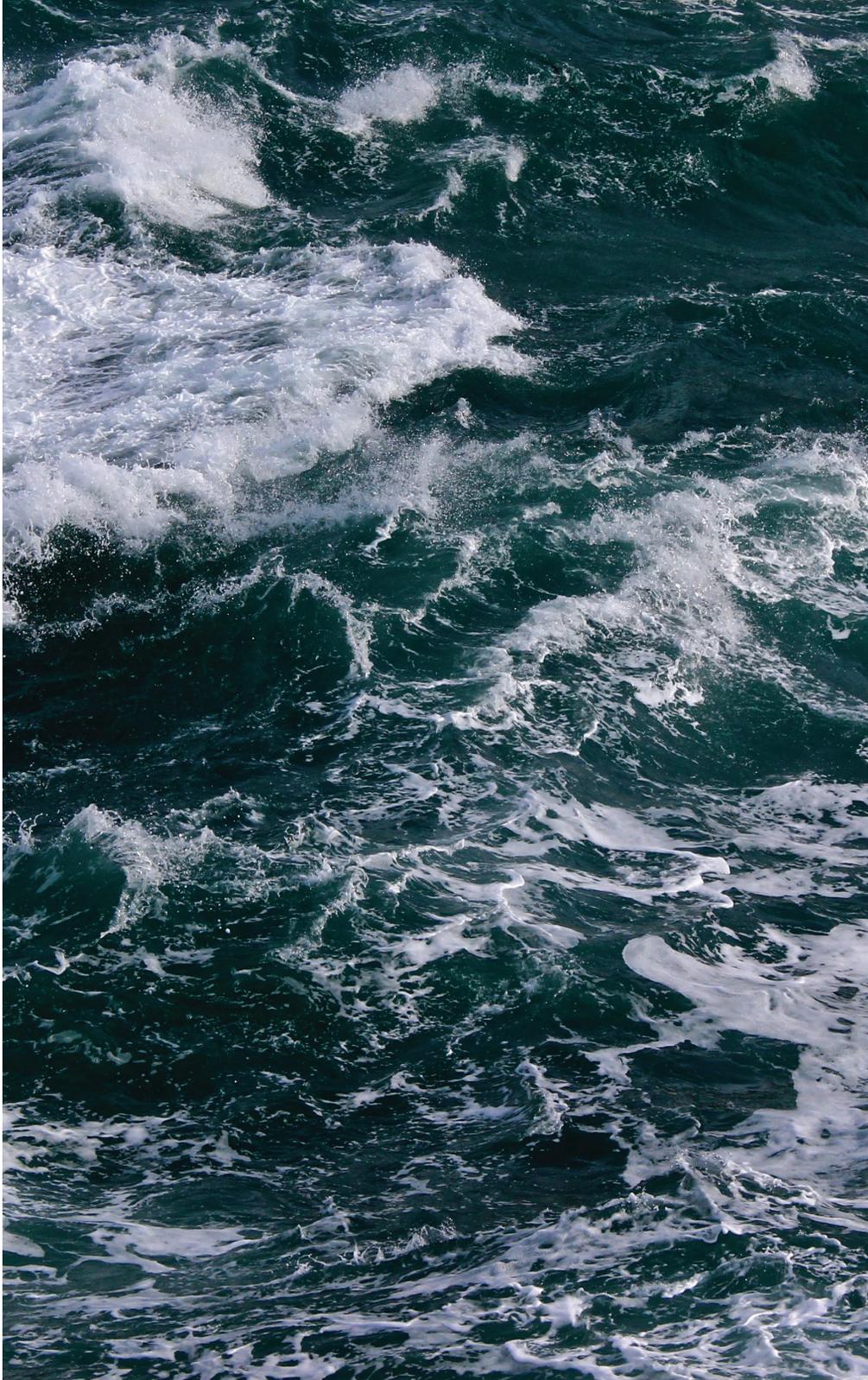
Expect Him to be your source for tomorrow. Write out a prayer of hope.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

You *can* give thanks in all circumstances! You can confidently expect God is working all things for your good as His beloved child. Read Romans 8:28.

REACH OUT

Everyone has bad days. Someone you know is likely going through a challenging season right now. Would you give them your time and encourage them today?



WEEK TWO

Expect to Be Enriched



Day One || Enriched in Everything

“Everything you need God already is.” —Priscilla Shirer

SEEK GOD

As you enter a time of prayer, remember to thank God for giving you His Spirit to teach you truth today.

These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

1 Corinthians 2:10-12 ESV

OBTAIN TRUTH

Hopefully, you are beginning to fall deeper in love with The Hope, our Savior and Lord, as you have discovered His promises and goodness! I am brimming with excitement for you to continue this Bible study journey with me. We will spend the remaining three weeks of this study exploring the wealth of our great hope in Christ. Are you ready to dig into the Word of God today and discover the great blessings you have as God’s child? Come on!

Go to 1 Corinthians 1, and as you read verses 3-9, write a list of what you have been given as a Christian.

I Have Been Given:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Now read 1 Corinthians 1:10-12.

What did Paul hear some believers arguing about?

.....
.....

What did this unloving debate have the potential to cause?

Paul continues to explain to the believers of Corinth that their arguing is worldly and foolish. He explains all the men they are biased toward are just instruments of God, doing their part, but God alone is the source of any true effectiveness (see 1 Corinthians 3:1-7).

And finally, at the end of 1 Corinthians chapter three, Paul concludes with a strong and profound statement: “So then, no more boasting about human leaders! All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, ...” (1 Corinthians 3:21-22 NIV)

Wait. What? All things are yours? All things are *mine*?

What does Paul say is ours? (Circle all that are accurate.)

- A. other believers
- B. the future
- C. the world
- D. life
- E. death
- F. today

What do you think Paul means by “all things are yours”?

Let’s consider the context of Paul’s letter a bit further to help us understand.

Paul explains we shouldn’t take pride in one man against another. *For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have begun to reign—and that without us! How I wish that you really had begun to reign so that we also might reign with you!* 1 Corinthians 4:7-8 NIV

So, when Paul writes, “all things are yours,” he’s asking the Corinthians to consider their foolish thinking. He’s asking them to realize God has abundantly blessed all of them for the mutual benefit of one another and His glory. If they could only understand the hope of what they have, they wouldn’t be fussing over worldly issues like “who’s the best?”

Now, I’ll explain the answers to the multiple choice questions from above.

- A. Other believers are yours: not only do we belong to the Lord but also we belong to one another to love and serve each other (1 Peter 4:10).
- B. The future is yours: our future is set and secure by the Holy Spirit’s seal upon us to live with God forever in eternal glory (2 Corinthians 1:22).

C. The world is yours: the blessings of God extend to all things in this world. *You made them [man] rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.* Psalm 8:6-8 NIV

D. Life is yours: every moment is a gift from God in which His power has provided you with everything you need (2 Peter 1:3).

E. Death is yours: Jesus has given us victory over our deaths! *Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep [perish], but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Corinthians 15:51-57 NIV

F. Today is yours: you have the resurrection life of Christ inside of you, so you can live each day as an overcomer. *Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.* 2 Corinthians 4:16 NIV

Never forget your incredible riches in Christ. All things are truly yours!



ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

Remember, "to hope" means to confidently expect. What do you already have in Christ but have forgotten about? You should live out of the abundance of all you've been given! What do you need to start having joyful and confident expectation about?

.....

.....

.....

.....

REACH OUT

Consider who you can encourage today with the truth you've received from today's study. You never know what impact sharing your wisdom will have on someone's life.



Day Two || *Enriched as a Child of God*

SEEK GOD

What you were you are no longer. In Christ, you have been made new. Spend some time being still before your Holy Father. Express your gratitude to Him for making you His child.

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ... John 1:12 NIV

OBTAIN TRUTH

We're going to explore some pretty fabulous truths about what we have as a child of God. To begin, I want to ask you to consider a very practical question.

What does a beloved child have as a family member? Go ahead and write as many possibilities (up to 10) you can think of in the space provided.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Your list may not look exactly like mine, but I bet they both show a child who has been enriched in many ways.

I have one more question for you about this well-off kid: Why was the child given those blessings?

Do you see where I'm going with this? You are God's precious child, and there is no better Father than Him! You did nothing to deserve His adoption, love, goodness, and mercy. You simply said yes to the most wonderful invitation there ever was and will be. You are a daughter of the Most High God, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords! And He invites you to His throne to hop into His lap where you can cry out, Abba-Daddy!

Look up and read through Ephesians 1:3-14. As you read, take notes of what you've been given as God's daughter in the space provided.

What My Father has Done for Me:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

A few standout verses in this passage to me were:

He [God] made known to us the mystery of His will. ... Ephesians 1:9 NIV

This refers to the salvation for everyone who believes in Christ Jesus, the revealed Messiah. Isn't it amazing that the most rewarding and wonderful mystery has now been revealed? Let's keep sharing this news with everyone we can!

Ephesians 1:3 tells us we've been enriched with every spiritual blessing in Christ! Wow. I want to know more about this! Don't you?

Now, let's read through Psalm 103:2-13, printed here for you. Give yourself time to reflect on the blessings you've received from God as His child.

*Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not **all his benefits**—who **forgives all your sins** and **heals all your diseases**, who **redeems** your life from the pit and crowns you with **love and compassion**, who **satisfies** your desires **with good things** so that your youth is **renewed** like the eagle's. The LORD **works righteousness and justice** for all the oppressed. He **made known his ways** to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: The LORD is **compassionate and gracious, slow to anger**, abounding in **love**. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he **does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities**. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; **as far as the east is from the west** so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the **LORD has compassion** on those who fear him; ... Psalm 103:2-13 NIV (emphasis added)*

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! ... 1 John 3:1 NIV

You are lavished with love! You have been chosen, redeemed, and forgiven!

Do these truths blow you away like they did when you first believed?

How long has it been since you have thought about the old, unchanged you?

Write out five to seven sins you've been forgiven of.

.....
.....
.....

What does forgiveness of your sins mean to you?

Read through the list you made in today's **Obtain Truth** for Ephesians 1:3-14.

Do you think you are living in the fullness of your abundant blessings as God's child? Why or why not?

REACH OUT

Families are special. It's easy to take our family members for granted. Who in your family can you spend some quality time with today? Is there something you can do to show a family member you love them that would make their day? Ask our Heavenly Father what He has in mind before you decide.



Day Three || *Enriched with a New Citizenship*

SEEK GOD

But now, this is what the LORD says—he who created you ... “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. Isaiah 43:1 NIV

Start today’s study by going to the throne of your Father with an expectant heart. Expect to be comforted, refreshed, and loved as you pour out your soul to Him.

OBTAIN TRUTH

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV

As Christians, you and I have been made *completely* new. We’ve been given a new family, a new identity, a new purpose, and a new citizenship (see Philippians 3:20). Although everything may appear the same on the outside, there is a new person on the inside. We have become an entirely different creation, and the Holy Spirit now lives within us.

Imagine for a moment that you’re an alien citizen from another planet. (Yes, this is quite a stretch, and no, I’m not a sci-fi junkie, but I’m just trying to make a point.) Now, imagine your parents take you to Earth for a first-ever vacation. When your spaceship arrives, you immediately go into culture shock. Everything is totally different from your home planet—the atmosphere, the vegetation, the life forms, colors, sounds, smells, and of course, the lifestyle. There seems to be little familiarity to your home. It’s a good thing your family is with you because earth makes you feel lost and homesick.

Just like this make-believe alien, you and I are strangers in this world. And, if you’re at all like me, you feel stranger the longer you live here. Our hearts, thoughts, and minds are transforming and longing for our true home.

The good news is our citizenship in Christ has given us a real-time hope. Although we aren’t home yet, we aren’t alone or without loving benefits from our Father.

Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is in your midst.” Luke 17:20-21 NIV

What does Luke 17 say about where God’s Kingdom is?

.....
.....

The phrase “in your midst” is the Greek word *entos* which means “within or inside.” So, when we follow Jesus, the Kingdom of God is inside each of us!

In the book of John, Christ Jesus, when answering Pontius Pilate’s questions, said, ... “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.” (John 18:36 ESV)

We may have to wait a while before entering our true and eternal home, but I want you to know and embrace what you have *now* as a member of the Kingdom of God.

Let’s dig into Romans 14:17 and see what treasures of truth we can find.

As you read it, create a brief list below of the revealed riches in Christ.

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, ...
Romans 14:17 NIV

Blessings of My True Citizenship:

.....
.....
.....

In Romans 14, Paul, its author, was instructing the Christians of Rome about the importance of doing everything in love. Paul told them to stop judging fellow believers whose faith was not as strong and to be sure they don’t force their life of freedom upon weaker brothers who may then stumble into sin. Go read it yourself for better understanding!

Now, it’s in this context that Paul’s zeal for what really matters spills out of him. Basically, he’s saying, “Guys, this world’s culture and our biases have little to do with God’s culture and Kingdom ways! God’s Kingdom is about a love that produces righteousness, peace, and joy!”

And don’t you know Paul could have listed an abundance of other virtues that come from God’s Kingdom, but I love that he chose these three: righteousness, peace, and joy!

Let’s examine some Scriptures containing these three virtues. Read them through the lens of our ability to experience the beauty and power of the Kingdom of God every day.

I Have Righteousness!

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV

... and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.
Philippians 3:9 NIV

You have received Christ’s righteousness in place of your filthy sinfulness; His righteousness is now your righteousness. Being a sinner saved by the amazing grace of God was only the beginning of your Kingdom story. The Holy Spirit took residency in your reborn spirit and began a work of transforming you into the image of Jesus. And you are promised that Christ, the Author of your faith, will finish what He started in your faith journey (see Philippians 1:6).



I Have Peace!

"I have told you these things [Jesus is referencing His coming death and resurrection], so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."
John 16:33 NIV

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14:27 NIV

Where does peace come from?

.....
.....

Did you notice peace is a gift? Peace is found in receiving and acknowledging the presence of God, the Prince of Peace, in your circumstances.

I have Joy!

In Philippians, Paul passionately instructs us, "Rejoice in the Lord always! I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4 NIV) These words, written from a first century Roman prison cell, hit straight into our baffled 21st century hearts. How could Paul have the capacity to rejoice under such horrible circumstances?

To answer this, I looked up the original Greek word for rejoice. It's *chairó*, which means to rejoice or be glad. But that's not all. The root word is *charis*, meaning grace. To "rejoice" is actually to delight in God's grace—literally, to experience God's grace or be glad for His grace. We can all certainly understand and do this!

Now, we will consider one more Scripture:

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 NIV

According to Roman 15:13, how does our joy and peace come from God?

.....
.....

And what overflows when we are filled with peace and joy?

.....

In God's Kingdom, we have righteousness, peace, and joy!

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

Our inner attitudes don't have to reflect our outward circumstances! We are children of the King and citizens of the unshakable Kingdom of God where hope, righteousness, peace, and joy abound.

Read and repeat—until it sinks in—the following statements aloud and with confidence:

I am a royal family citizen of the Kingdom of God. I have righteousness. I have peace. I have joy. Therefore, I have hope.

This is what you've been given through Christ!

Let's be real though. You may not be living according to God's righteousness, and you may not be feeling the peace or joy of the Father at all. If any of this is true, know this: God hasn't removed any of His goodness from you. It's time to pray, surrender control, and trust Him completely. It's time to rejoice as you remember and delight in God's grace for you.

REACH OUT

Though you have not seen him [Christ Jesus], you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ...
1 Peter 1:8 NIV

There are hopeless and lost people all around you who need to know about the righteousness, peace, and joy you've received through believing in Jesus. Who can you share your faith with?

Write down two of their names here:

1.
2.

Commit to pray for them every day.



Day Four || Enriched with Spiritual Blessings

SEEK GOD

For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. Psalm 62:5 ESV

Heavenly Father, I want to wait for You alone. Even if in silence, may I wait on You today. No one else can satisfy me. My hope is in You alone! Amen.

OBTAIN TRUTH

In day one of this week’s study, we looked at what Paul meant by teaching us that all things are ours. Today, I want us to continue exploring what is ours through Christ.

Please read 2 Corinthians 6:4-10 NIV.

What did Paul say? Fill in the blank for our emphasis: ... having and yet possessing

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Ephesians 1:3 NIV

God tremendously blessed you, cherished sister! In Christ, you don’t lack a single spiritual blessing. The original Greek word for “every” in this passage means “all” or “the whole.” The spiritual blessings of God are *all* yours.

The trouble is remembering they are yours and living in fullness of them.

I recently met with a dear friend whose husband committed adultery a few years ago. Devastating, right? She hung in there with him. They went to counseling, a marriage retreat, and she did all she could keep the marriage together. Sadly, it didn’t work out the way we all hoped and prayed it would.

My friend not only lost her marriage but also because she was a pastor’s wife, she lost her church home, her job, many friendships, and so much more. She told me she would never want her worst enemy to go through the pain she’d gone through. But as we sat together sipping our teas, I’ll never forget her smile and the sincerity of what she said to me next.

She said, “You know, Amy, I really haven’t lost anything [in Christ].”

Can we just pause and think about that?! Her words were stunningly true and so awe-inspiring to me and, I hope, to you as well.

Like my friend, your life may be full of loss and disappointments. But God wants you to know you haven’t lost anything in Him! He wants you to know, remember, and live from the spiritual blessings He’s given you in Christ!

After verse three, Paul, the author of Ephesians, went on to explain some of these spiritual blessings we’ve received:

- Adoption
- Righteousness
- Grace
- Forgiveness
- Fellowship with God and His people
- An inheritance
- The Holy Spirit

Did my friend lose any of these gifts when her world crumbled? No. Of course she didn't. And neither will we.

I have to share Matthew Henry's commentary on Ephesians 1:3 with you because it is good for the soul!

"Spiritual blessings are the best blessings with which God blesses us, and for which we are to bless Him. He blesses us by bestowing such things upon us as make us really blessed.

Those whom God blesses with *some*, He blesses with *all* spiritual blessings; to whom He gives Christ, He freely gives all these things. It is not so with temporal blessings; some are favored with health, and not with riches; some with riches, and not with health, etc. But, where God blesses with spiritual blessings, He blesses with all.

They are spiritual blessings in heavenly places; or it may be read, in heavenly things, such as come from heaven, and are designed to prepare men for it, and to secure their reception into it.

We should hence learn to mind spiritual and heavenly things as the principal things, spiritual and heavenly blessings as the best blessings, with which we cannot be miserable and without which we cannot but be so."

I'd like to try to paraphrase his last paragraph for a little more clarity:

Your spiritual blessings are the greatest, most important, and most beautiful things in this life, and true misery only comes from being void of these heavenly blessings.

Below are a few Scriptures that show some of the blessings we have in Christ. Use the margins to make a list of what each verse says we have in Christ.

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.
... Galatians 5:1 NIV

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Ephesians 2:13 NIV

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus ...
Romans 8:1 NIV

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:7 NIV

... neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:39 NIV

... and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. Colossians 2:10 NIV

So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. Romans 12:5 NIV

The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.
1 Timothy 1:14 NIV

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. ...
2 Corinthians 1:20 NIV

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19 NIV

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3:28 NIV

... "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5 NIV



ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

Do you believe these spiritual blessings are all completely yours? And that list is just a small sample! It doesn't matter if you've been a Christian for 80 years or only for a day, these truths are never to be taken for granted.

Oswald Chambers, in *My Utmost for His Highest*, asked a challenging question I believe we should apply: "Can I face things as they actually are in the light of the reality of Jesus Christ, or do things as they really are destroy my trust in Him and put me in a panic?" #wheretherubbermeetstheroad

I hope you know I'm not just stepping on your toes because this question is for me, too!

I'd like you to look over the list you compiled and choose **one** blessing in Christ you think you should meditate or focus on. You know the one. It's the one you often fail to remember or really understand. Pick that word or statement.

Write it down here:

Fix it in your mind and think about this great benefit. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you—to bring you more insight about how it should affect your life.

Christian sisters, we have a living hope that can never be taken away. The one who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing is surely worthy of our hope and trust.

REACH OUT

You and I both know we are blessed to be a blessing. What word of encouragement do you need to give to someone today? I believe they need to know or be reminded of what Jesus has done for them. Pray before you act or speak out. Like Jesus, be sure to be full of grace and truth. We should meet people where they are and show them the love of God by being the love of God.



Day Five || Enriched Every Day

"Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny."
—Christopher Markus

SEEK GOD

Acknowledge the presence of God with you in this moment. Lay all your worried and anxious thoughts down before Him, and realize who you have on your side.

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.
Isaiah 26:3 ESV

OBTAIN TRUTH

Read John 10:1-5 and 10:10-11 printed here for you. As you read Jesus' words, be ready to underline each reference of what the shepherd does, and circle the words that show us what the sheep do.

"Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."

John 10:1-5 NIV

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." John 10:10-11 NIV

What does the good shepherd, Jesus, do? Choose all that are true:

- A. calls you by name
- B. leads you
- C. goes before you
- D. engages in your life
- E. brings you life in abundance
- F. lays down His life for you

Now, write out the two things the sheep should do.

1.
2.

Pretty simple, right? But it's not always so easy to do.

John 10 has beautiful imagery. The Savior you and I love and serve is like a good shepherd caring for all your practical needs. In Christ, you are fully supplied! There isn't anything you need that your Heavenly Father doesn't already know about. He's concerned about your big needs and even the stuff you think is too petty for prayer. Our God is that good.

There have been countless times in my life when God has given me exactly what I needed—sometimes without me knowing I needed it yet—when I needed it. Sometimes it was a Scripture that opened my eyes and broke my stubborn pride to bring healing to a relationship. Other times, it was a calming call from my husband Craig right at my tipping point of becoming a crazy mom. It was also an answered prayer for my child when I began to think things were hopeless. Yes, Jesus Christ is a very good shepherd.

Name some specific needs your Shepherd has provided for you.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

And then there are other days when I am sure I lack something, only to discover the blessing of not getting what I thought was essential. Can anyone relate?

One example was when I had a strong desire to have some ministry encouragement from my friends. My new discipleship endeavor had become a battle of my insecure, rookie self versus my child-like, faith-filled, and obedient self. Like me, you may think the encouragement was something I'd require to keep on keeping on. My wise husband knew differently. After my rant about this seeming lack, Craig very gently suggested I consider that my loving Savior was giving me an opportunity to grow by withholding their support.

The Father knew I needed to learn to depend on Him and Him alone for approval. Now, I'm not saying God isn't for us being there for each other. Obviously, He is. But He also wants our hearts to wholly rely on Him whether life is going the way we want or whether our prayers go unanswered. A growing faith in God requires that we often lack the stuff keeping us from needing Him.

When were you blessed with the gift of *not* receiving what you thought you needed?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Let's read a passage you might have read many times before, Psalm 23. While you pore over the words, pay attention to the nearness the sheep—the psalmist David—and shepherd—God—must have for the sheep to be shepherded well.

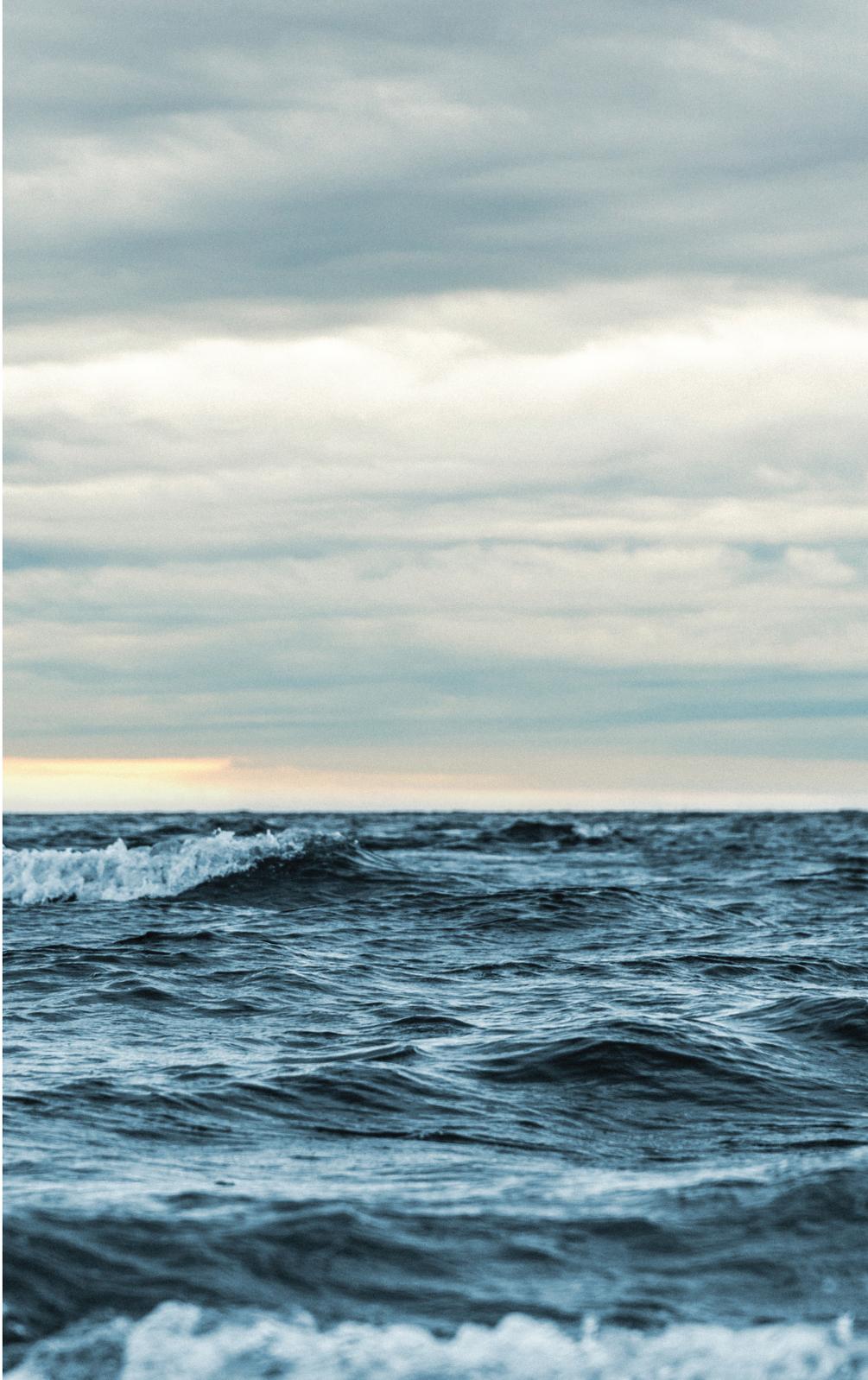
The first and last verses have always been my favorites. Write them in the space provided.

Verse 1:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Verse 6:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....



WEEK THREE

Expect to Be Empowered

VIDEO NOTES

Before beginning day one, remember to watch Amy's week three teaching video here: www.go2.lc/thehopewk3

Leaders, you can download this week's discussion guide by visiting www.go2.lc/thehope.

Key thought: The potential of your is determined by the strength of your

We tend to look at situations in life and determine how much power or ability we can give to it.

But what did David do?

1. He the situation.

"... Who is this uncircumcised Philistine [Goliath] that he should defy the armies of the living God?" 1 Samuel 17:26 NIV

David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." 1 Samuel 17:32 NIV

2. He had to fight against

Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth." 1 Samuel 17:33 NIV

3. He remembered God's

"Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." ... 1 Samuel 17:36-37 NIV

How do we plug into God's power? We choose to rely on God as our power source.

"... Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all."

1 Chronicles 29:11-12 NIV

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



Day One || God's Great Power for You

"Remember: even the smallest drop of God's strength is more than enough to cover our frailties, our shortcomings, and the places where we deem ourselves weak."

—Lysa TerKeurst

SEEK GOD

"No one who hurries into the presence of God is content to remain for long. Those who hurry in, hurry out." —Calvin Miller

I have learned so much about what I have in You, Father. I ask You to take me further into Your truth than You already have. Thank You for these precious moments of seeking You. Amen.

OBTAIN TRUTH

Let's look back at Ephesians 1:18-21 and remember what awesome hope the Apostle Paul prayed we would be able to understand.

*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may **know the hope** to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people [We will look at this in week four], **and his incomparably great power** for us who believe. ...*

Ephesians 1:18-19 NIV (emphasis added)

Okay. I want to stop here for emphasis.

This power is for whom?

.....

Just making sure you caught that. Let's go on to the next verse:

... That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. Ephesians 1:19-21 NIV

And how does Paul describe this power?

.....
.....
.....

Dunamis is the Greek word for power, and it basically means "power, might, or strength." Our modern dictionaries define power as "the ability to act or cause a reaction." Words we use for power could be: authority, ability, strength, might, force, or energy.

Let's consider what Paul declares to us in 1 Corinthians 4:20 NIV: *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.*

What power does the Kingdom of God possess?

How would you describe God's power?

What object could you use as a symbol of God's power?

It's pretty difficult, right?

The following Scriptures, with emphasis added, give us many examples of how God's kingdom power is manifested in our lives. I pray they'll encourage you.

I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. John 17:11 NIV

In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power. Acts 19:20 NIV

... God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. Acts 10:38 NIV

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. Romans 1:16 NIV

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. Romans 1:20 NIV

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 2 Peter 1:3 NIV

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. 2 Timothy 1:7 NLT

Whether this information is new to you or a reminder, what's important is that we learn to live from the reality of it! I suppose the question to be answered is, "How?" How do we live our day-to-day lives in this supernatural power? This is the focus for this week's study, and today we will consider the source of our power.

How do you live empowered by the Holy Spirit who lives in you?

The way is simple, but it's not always easy: **Admit your weakness while depending on His strength.** Recall what Jesus said to Paul:

... "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." ... 2 Corinthians 12:9 NIV

I love the way author Lee Strobel said, "We can't be filled with the power of God until we let go of the pretense that we can get by on our own."

Let's revisit Isaiah 40. Have you ever seen a journal, coffee mug, or framed print on the wall with a bald eagle and the well-known Isaiah 40:28-31 passage on it? You may even own one! This biblical text is famous for a reason. Favorite Scriptures are kind of like that. And there's truth to be examined or rediscovered in Isaiah 40 today. As you read, underline God's unique qualities and circle what it says God gives to us.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:28-31 ESV

How is our strength renewed?

.....
.....

In week one, I asked you what waiting on God might look like for you. Do you remember your answer? If so, write it out again.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Why do you think waiting on God brings us strength?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Now, let's consider this well-known verse:

"... Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts."
Zechariah 4:6 ESV

The Hebrew word for "power" in Isaiah's text means "ability." But the Hebrew word for "might" is *chayil*, meaning "strength, efficiency, wealth, or an army." I think *this* is the verse I should personally quote every day! My wealth of knowledge is limited, and my memory is forever forgetting to remind me of this fact. We all have pretty good ideas about how to muscle through a problem. We all tend to try to get by without seeking the Holy Spirit's direction or help. Could there be anything as dumb as that? I think not.

If you and I are going to live by God's power, we're going to have to rely on the Holy Spirit's ability to infuse our limited efforts with supernatural, powerful results. The Apostle Paul explains his life's mission this way in Colossians: "For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he so powerfully works within me." (Colossians 1:29 ESV)

Paul also wrote the great message in Philippians 4:13 NKJV: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

I want you to notice a few words in these texts. In the Colossians verse, *how* did Paul say he labored?

.....
.....

And what are the first three words Paul writes in the Philippians text?

.....

The Greek word for "struggling" is the word *agónizomai*, which means to contend for a prize, like in an athletic feat or warfare. This shows me two lessons about God's power in us: first, the empowering work of the Holy Spirit in Paul—and in us—involves us! We have actions to take. Secondly, we should give our best and trust God with the results.

The most obvious personal example I can give you right now is writing *The Hope* Bible study. I am absolutely honored to wrestle with what to include in each day's lessons. This study will not write itself. Someone has to do the work, but I am completely trusting that the Holy Spirit is guiding my thoughts and helping me know how to best lay out His truth and heart for you. It's quite daunting, but I can do all things *through Christ* who strengthens me. And, sweet sister, so can you.

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

You are empowered by the Holy Spirit! You are weak, but He is strong.

Where do you feel weak, incapable, alone, or defeated?

What are you saying, "I can't" about?

.....
.....

You may be weak, but the truth is, you are *not* powerless. Proclaim this truth aloud with confidence: "I have the strength of Christ." It's time to unplug from the limited socket-of-self and plug into the mighty power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you!

Are you living life plugged into God's strength? Check any of the areas that you tend to take on without waiting on God's help:

- Your marriage
- Your job
- Serving at church
- Your studies
- Your scheduling
- Your parenting
- Your responsibilities
- Other:

Don't let appearances fool you. You may have a ministry, job, or relationship that's outwardly impressive and even has some good results. But if it's become self-gratifying or self-willed instead God-glorifying and Spirit-led, what may have begun as a Spirit-empowered work desperately needs an overhaul of the heart.

If you checked one or more of those boxes, I encourage you to write out a short prayer statement of what changes you need to make here. Be clear and specific:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

REACH OUT

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 and strengthen you in every good deed and word. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 NIV

Take a deep breath now and allow the encouragement, hope, and strength of God's Spirit to overflow in you. Going through the motions of life with hurried busyness and unintentional reactions is *not* how Christ calls us to live. Now, as you set this study book down, I pray you will be carried along in His presence and that every word and action you take will come from the overflow of His life in you.



Day Two || Empowered by the Holy Spirit

SEEK GOD

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 2 Peter 1:3 NIV

Pursue God in prayer with your heart confident in the hope you have. Savor the wonder of His fellowship with you.

OBTAIN TRUTH

The Holy Trinity, which is Almighty God being three parts of one, has beautifully, powerfully, and lovingly made us in His image to intimately know and love Him. God, our Holy Father, is the great "I Am" who also became one of us—Immanuel, God with us—in human form as the Son of God. When the Son, Jesus, gloriously returned to the right hand of the throne of His Father, He provided us with the most profound treasure you and I have in Christ—the Holy Spirit. That's "God With Us" on a whole new level!

This amazing truth never gets old to me. How could it? The Holy Spirit is now involved in my daily, moment-by-moment experiences and is always helping me whether I realize it or not! God's life-giving presence and power lives in me and in you, sister in Christ. You may want to pause and dwell on this truth.

There's much to cover, so let's dive into the Scriptures and read the empowering qualities of the Holy Spirit we can rely on. Read 2 Corinthians 4:6-11, printed here for you.

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. 2 Corinthians 4:6-11 NIV

Who is the light shining in our hearts?

.....

What two ways is the "light" described?

.....

.....

What are the jars of clay?

.....

"Christ in us," as the Holy Spirit in our little, fragile, earth-soiled self is the most empowering and glorious treasure. Yes, we house the Holy One, the one and only Creator of all things. That, my friends, is the ultimate treasure!

In light of this reality, I want you to have a fresh view of what our Savior Jesus had to say about the Holy Spirit in John 14. As you read, underline the names Jesus calls the Holy Spirit.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. John 14:16-17 NIV

"All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ..." John 14:25-26 NIV

In John 14, Jesus also says the Holy Spirit will adopt us when He says: "I will not leave you as orphans." He also assures us the Spirit will bring us relational peace (see John 14 verses 18 and 27).

Keep underlining the names and functions Jesus gives us for the Holy Spirit as you read through John 16:7-15:

But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate [Counselor] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because

the prince of this world now stands condemned. I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you." John 16:7-15 NIV

"Counselor" in Greek is the word *parakletos*. It's a beautiful word that depicts the act of coming alongside someone. *Parakletos* can be translated into English as counselor, helper, advocate, intercessor, and comforter. Jesus also refers to the Holy Spirit as being like currents of living water.

"... Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." John 7:38 NIV

Write down a few words or thoughts that come to your mind about "rivers of living water."

.....
.....
.....
.....

My mind immediately fixated on the word "rivers." Water currents can be scary powerful. But moving water is not only a strong force but also a cleanser and a transporter. Abundant life is found in this flow of living water. This is the great and living hope we have—the Holy Spirit is always life-giving.

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

I don't know about you, but I constantly need help, comfort, counsel, and someone standing up for me. Rocky Balboa, the fictional boxer who was always striving for a champion's title, needed and had someone in his corner. Mickey, his coach, gave Rocky training in the gym and wise advice for his personal life. He was more than a great coach; he was a true friend. Imagine if Rocky never trusted and followed his coach's advice. He never would have become a champion fighter. It wouldn't matter how strong or how dedicated he was to his sport; his potential would have been severely limited.

You and I have a true and faithful friend, coach, and so much more in the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Are you following His training plan?

What are some ways you can see the Holy Spirit's power at work in your own life?

Circle any that apply and write out the circumstances:

Counselor:

Teacher:

Conviction of sin:

Helper:

Guidance:

Advocate:

What specific way do you need the Spirit's power to help you today?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Be sure to pray now and often regarding this need.

REACH OUT

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ... Ephesians 3:20 NIV

The Spirit of God is able to do more in and through us than we could ask or imagine. If you believe it, it's time to expect it and live boldly. Who do you know who needs a little or a lot of loving today?

Take a step of faith and go the extra mile for them. Do something beyond your norm of a generous, thoughtful, supportive, and loving act. Remember, God's ability to do immeasurably more will be working through you!



Day Three || Empowered Through Prayer

"We are fearful. God's presence gives courage. We are alienated. His love draws us near. We are doubtful. His promises give us hope." —Paul David Tripp

SEEK GOD

Wait quietly before the Father in prayer today. Wait in hope. Expect His help, protection, and love. May your heart rejoice because you can trust in who He is. Don't rush. Take as much time as you need. After all, what's a Bible study for if not to grow closer to the Author?

We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put our hope in you. Psalms 33:20-22 NIV

OBTAIN TRUTH

We have been encouraged through the truth that God did not leave us helpless but gave us the empowering support of the Holy Spirit. Now, we will examine the awesome and powerful privilege we've been given through prayer.

We're going to broadly cruise through a lot of subject matter today. My prayer is that you will be strengthened and encouraged by the following Scriptures and that your prayers will be filled with greater hope, faith, and passion.

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. Mark 11:24 NIV

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 1 John 5:14 NIV

What are the qualifications for our prayers to be answered according to these verses?

.....
.....

Answered prayers are absolutely the best, right?! Yet, we've probably all experienced times when we've seemed to pray with all the faith in the world, but God didn't answer in the way we asked Him to.

What are we missing? Well, perhaps our faith was actually lacking, but more than likely, it had more to do with the ultimate purposes of God. God explains it this way in Isaiah: *"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."* Isaiah 55:9 NIV

Ephesians 1:11 beautifully comforts us with the promise that our God works out everything to conform with the purpose of his will. And Romans 8:28 tells us that, as believers, God is working all things for our good.

So, what does this show us about prayer? We should pray! Jesus gave us some amazing promises.

According to the promises we read, circle each true statement:

- A.** We should pray in faith.
- B.** The name of Jesus has power.
- C.** Answered prayers glorify God.
- D.** God wants us to pray.
- E.** God's path looks much different than ours.
- F.** God is able to turn ashes to something good and desirable.

Let's turn to the book of James and see what he can teach us about prayer. Grab your pen and underline each statement about prayer.

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit. James 5:13-18 ESV

According to James 5, what all are we instructed to do in prayer?

.....

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. Romans 8:26-27 NIV

According to Romans 8:26-27, what does the Holy Spirit do for us when we don't know what to pray?

.....

I love the word intercede. It's so practical and rooted in helpfulness. To intercede is to make a plea on behalf of another; it's to step in as an advocate. The Holy Spirit is our great advocate!

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. 1 John 5:14-15 NIV

I encourage you to read biographies of great Christian men and women of faith. Learning from their faithful lives and commitment to prayer will inspire you always to go to God in prayer about every situation. Here's just one of many examples I could share with you:

After World War II and during the height of the Cold War, Communist countries were keeping tight control on their borders and were opposed to the spread of Christianity.

But God had called Brother Andrew, founder of Open Doors International, the world's largest outreach organization for persecuted Christians in high-risk places, to help strengthen Christians behind what was known as the "Iron Curtain." Here's a small glimpse of his story:

"When I pulled up to the checkpoint on the other side of the Danube, I said to myself, 'Well, I'm in luck. Only half a dozen cars. This Romanian border crossing should go swiftly.'

But when it took forty minutes to inspect the first car, I began to worry. ... Literally everything that family was carrying had to be taken out and spread on the ground.

Every car in line was put through the same routine. The fourth inspection lasted well over an hour. The guards took the driver inside and kept him there while they removed hubcaps, took his engine apart, and removed seats.

'Dear Lord,' I said, as at last there was just one car ahead of me, 'what am I going to do? Any serious inspection will show these Romanian Bibles right away.'

'Lord,' I went on, 'I know that no amount of cleverness on my part can get me through this border search. Dare I ask for a miracle? Let me take some of the Bibles out and leave them in the open where they will be seen. Then, Lord, I cannot possibly be depending on my own strategies, can I? I will be depending utterly upon You.'

While the last car was going through its chilling inspection, I managed to take several Bibles from their hiding places and pile them on the seat beside me.

It was my turn. I put the little VW in low gear, inched up to the officer standing at the left side of the road, handed him my papers, and started to get out. But his knee was against the door, holding it closed. He looked at my photograph in the passport, scribbled something down, shoved the papers back under my nose, and abruptly waved me on.

Surely thirty seconds had not passed. I started the engine and inched forward. Was I supposed to pull over, out of the way where the car could be taken apart? I coasted forward, my foot poised above the brake. Nothing happened. I looked out the rear mirror. The guard was waving the next car to a stop, indicating to the driver that he had to get out. I drove a few more yards. The guard was having the driver behind me open the hood of his car. And then I was too far away to doubt that indeed I had made it through that incredible checkpoint in the space of thirty seconds.

My heart was racing. Not with the excitement of the crossing, but with the excitement of having caught such a spectacular glimpse of God at work!"

Taken from *Brother Andrew's Story* at www.opendoorsusa.org and in his inspiring book, *God's Smuggler*.

As seen in Brother Andrew's example, power-filled prayers are given with childlike, relational, faith-in-action dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the kind of praying I desire to live out!

Let's look at the hope we have through prayer when we are covered—completely saturated, body, soul, and spirit—in the Holy Spirit.

As you read the following passage of Scripture, underline the instructions.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Ephesians 6:10-18 NIV

You and I have a powerful advantage over the scheming, evil forces in this sin-fallen world! Through Christ, we have unlimited access to the Lord's mighty power.

Your prayers are the catalyst to living a faith-filled life. Metaphorically called the Armor of God, this is how to protect ourselves and our souls. And I believe it's this protection that enables us to pray with precision, persistence, passion, and power.

Where are you weak and vulnerable in your armor?

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

What a hope we have through prayer! We are not left powerless. Our God personally hears our every 911 and SOS call. I hope you already know and experience prayer as your mighty resource and privilege.

But the vital question before you is this: are you praying knowing that your prayers are truly heard and will make a profound difference in you and in the world?

Examine your prayers. Do you pray daily? Are they faith-filled or empty? Do they come from a heart of passion and sincerity? Do you persist in your requests for years at a time?

It's time to take the gift of prayer more seriously and understand its power. Our failure to pray should be our great concern. It's not that our every prayer of faith will instantly—or even eventually—be answered. Not at all. Our prayers aren't supernatural formulas that result in an on-demand answer.

I'm reading a book right now called *When God Doesn't Answer Your Prayer* by Jerry Sittser that I highly recommend on this subject. I'm learning that receiving what we desperately want or need isn't the chief goal of our prayers. Prayer is not about getting our desired results; it's about going on a trust journey with our good and sovereign Father. Sittser said it this way, "We will begin to see God as worthy of our greatest love and affection, as if a *relationship* with God were the goal of our prayers and not merely the acquisition of things we want from God." Lovely sister in Christ, isn't this the greatest reason to pray more? To know Him is eternal life (see John 17:3)!

Here's a little assignment for fun: based on what you understand about prayer from our study of Scripture today, I'd like you to write your own personalized prayer quote(s). You may want to reference a Bible verse that supports your quote. Below are some of my favorite quotes for your encouragement and inspiration:

"Don't pray when you feel like it. Have an appointment with the Lord and keep it. A man is powerful on his knees." —Corrie ten Boom

"Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still." —E.M Bounds

"If you want that splendid power in prayer, you must remain in loving, living, lasting, conscious, practical, abiding union with the Lord Jesus Christ." —C. H. Spurgeon

"Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work." —Oswald Chambers

My Prayer Quote(s):

.....
.....
.....

Based on all you've learned, complete the following statement.

I have hope through prayer because:

.....
.....
.....

REACH OUT

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Romans 12:11-12 NIV

What are you asking God to do for your neighbors, family members, enemies, co-workers, and friends? Do you have a prayer list? If so, does it need to be updated? And are you praying regularly for those people?

I'm thinking right now would be a great time to call boldly on Him who sits on Heaven's throne. It may seem awkward at first, but you can expect the Holy Spirit to support you—even when you don't know what to pray. (See Romans 8:26-27).



Day Four || Empowered Through Faith

SEEK GOD

What does your heart look like? Is it peaceful and calm, anxious and unsettled, or agitated and hurting? Whatever the state of your heart, you can draw near to the Savior of your soul. Focus all your attention on Him while you write out seven things you're thankful for.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

OBTAIN TRUTH

We've been given the gift of faith (see Ephesians 2:8). This is great news because faith and hope go hand in hand. In fact, they are so closely connected that we often get them confused.

If you recall, hope is having a *confident expectation* for something good in the future. Faith is a *confident belief* that compels a hope-filled action. Faith is living out of a certainty that what you're expecting in hope will one day be realized. So basically, your hope springs out of your active faith. I believe (faith), therefore I expect (hope). I expect because I believe. Even simpler: Faith is filled with hope! My prayer for today's study is simple. I pray God's Word will give you a strong faith that continually grows.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
Galatians 2:20 ESV

"It is no longer I who live, but Christ ..."
What powerful words written by the Apostle Paul! Fill in the missing words of his next statement: The life I now live in the flesh I live in the Son of God.

Scripture clearly shows us many ways our faith empowers us. As you read through just a few passages (printed here for you), underline each benefit that comes through faith. Then, write them out in the margins.

By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

Acts 3:16 NIV

[Jesus giving Paul his assignment:] *"... I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified [purified] by faith in me. ..."*

Acts 26:17-18 NIV

It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.

Romans 4:13 NIV

... it is by faith you stand firm.

2 Corinthians 1:24 NIV

... for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

1 John 5:4 NIV

Hebrews 11:1 NIV defines what faith is: "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Today, we're going to look at some men who exemplified great faith. Their faith empowered them with an impenetrable protection and an unflinching hope.

Using the title, "Abraham, Man of Faith," create a list of every faith-filled action Abraham carried out as you read Genesis 22:1-14.

Abraham, Man of Faith

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Now, turn to Daniel chapter three and read the account of three brave men of faith.

I love the boldness of these men! Just imagine speaking to the most powerful dictator of your time and saying, "Nebuchadnezzar, we don't need to defend ourselves before you about this." That is seriously courageous faith! Did they have a death wish? Did they know they would be rescued?

What do you think fueled their resolve not to bow down?

Living by faith is when we go from reading and studying the Word, listening to podcasts, sermons, and faith-based songs, to actively getting into the game of obedience and trust. And an active faith is an empowered faith.

Just read Hebrews 11, known as "The Hall of Faith," if you want to know what empowered faith really looks like.

I've copied the conclusion of Hebrews 11:32-38. Pay attention to what these people *did* through faith (I underlined what they did and endured for emphasis).

*And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who **through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.***

Hebrews 11:32-38 NIV (emphasis added)

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

I want to have the kind of faith and hope Abraham and the three Hebrew men had, don't you? They lived by faith, not by the sight of their circumstances. The truth is we can, too. Just like these men, we can trust God and have strong and resolute faith no matter what situation we face.

God longs for you to believe Him with total trust and patience. He wants you to live each day with hope, knowing He will empower each step you take in faith.

What kind of faith does nothing, risks nothing, but instead plays it safe?

Think about it this way: when you're not moving, you grow weaker. Sideline faith, or inactive faith, is an ineffective faith. Don't allow your faith to wither!

What have you clearly done by faith lately? Suppose someone were to write a "by faith" statement about you. What would it say?

By faith, (put in your name here)(write what you are doing here)

.....
.....
.....

I sincerely hope you identified far too much faith-filled living than this page had space for. I believe the stories of our "By Faith" should fill volumes of books as we seek to glorify Him in all we do, and I believe the list of empowered "By Faith" heroes will continue until the day our Lord Jesus returns.

REACH OUT

If anyone speaks, they should do it as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. ... 1 Peter 4:11 NIV

You are *empowered* by your faith! Take a step of faith and actively engage in someone's life with the intention to love and serve him or her. Do you know exactly who this person is? Maybe you're unsure. That's okay. Simply ask God what your expression should be.



Day Five || Empowered by the Word of God

"A lie believed as truth will often affect you as if it were true." —Craig Groeschel

SEEK GOD

In a moment of stillness and quiet, turn your whole being to the one who fills and satisfies your thirsty soul. Ask the Father to guide you with truth and keep you from all deception.

OBTAIN TRUTH

Today's quote from Pastor Craig is such a profound statement because we often live life based on lies. The way we view ourselves is often a lie. The way we think of others is often a lie.

Here's the truth. You have a real enemy, the devil. He doesn't want you to know truth. He is the Father of Lies. The Deceiver. In fact, he would rather you not even believe in his existence. Referring to the deceiver, Jesus had this to say to some Pharisees: "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." (John 8:44 NIV)

Without the empowering truth of God's Word, you are subject to the enemy's STDs. I don't mean sexually transmitted diseases. The STDs I'm talking about are much more serious because they attack your freedom in Christ.

(S) Suppressed truth: Sinfulness and the pull of our ungodly culture can destroy the truth we've been given if we don't hold onto God's Word.

(T) Twisted truth: When the truth is not sharp and fresh within us, we are vulnerable to believe in twisted truth, which is not truth at all. Twisted truths often sound right and may even make us feel good, but they're dangerous.

(D) Doubted truth: Doubting God's truth makes us ineffective and weak vessels. Remember, doubt comes straight from hell's lies.

I bet you didn't think you'd be reading about STDs in a Bible study, but these spiritual diseases are just as serious for your soul.

This is why being a student of God's Word is imperative.

Lies put you in bondage, but the Truth sets you free.

Lies mislead you, but the Truth guides you to abundant life.

Lies pollute you, but the Truth purifies all who believe.

Lies blind you, but the Truth gives understanding.

Lies make you weak, but the Truth makes you strong.

Lies bring confusion, but the Truth gives peace and hope.

Here is some truth: God is love. And as amazing as it is that we serve a loving God, He is more than that. Our secular culture refuses to know God as a holy God and a righteous judge. The truth is our sin destroys us, but God loved us to the extent that He sent Jesus to take the great and final punishment for sin. When we choose to believe this and follow God, we are also choosing to leave our sin nature and have freedom in Christ. Jesus came with grace and truth. And many people know about grace but willingly forget about truth. The enemy is stealing the truth about God from many hearts today and leaving only a small portion of truth. This twisted truth leads to a self-serving gospel that smells sweet when applied but quickly turns toxic.

To put it plain and simply: *Partial truth without the whole truth is a distorted truth.*

When one of my kids hit puberty, the first change I noticed was their B.O.! Every time I got a whiff of their strong body odor, I would remind them to apply deodorant. After several similar, unpleasant encounters, I discovered they didn't realize one swift swipe of deodorant wasn't enough—they needed much more. This complete information solved the problem. Hooray!

Similarly, as Christians, our thinking—and consequently, our behavior—will be off, even foul, and our lives can become completely misaligned when we only know and apply some of God's Word.

To say I'm passionate about this subject would be a gross understatement. But instead of me telling you why I feel this way, I'll let the Bible speak for itself. As you read these Scriptures, consider how important knowing God's Word is.

... while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:13-17 NIV

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:12-13 ESV

The Word of God is alive and active! The Greek word for active is the word *energes*. You may notice this word looks similar to our word "energy." *Energes* is defined as being actively at work or effectively productive. And verse 13 reveals that the Word exposes us for who we really are—our thoughts and intentions are uncovered.

You Can Fight Your Battles with Truth

I am beyond thrilled our good Father hasn't left us to ourselves. Along with the Holy Spirit, He gave His Word to empower us to live as He lived.

In Luke chapter four, I want you to see how Jesus overcame the devil's lies and temptations. Underline every temptation the devil dished out and circle each reply Jesus gave.

Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days, He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.

And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."

But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'"

Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."

And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

Then he brought Him to Jerusalem and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you,' and 'In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

*And Jesus answered and said to him, "It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'" Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.
Luke 4:1-13 NKJV*

What gave Jesus the strength to make the right choices?

.....
.....

What was always Jesus' weapon of choice?

.....
.....

Why do you think Jesus didn't just run off and hide while praying to God the Father to make the devil go away?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Did you notice the devil knows the Scriptures, too? What could that mean when applied to your life?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Romans 1:25 NIV explains how unbelievers fell into the enemy's trap: "They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen."

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

The Word of God is your mightiest spiritual weapon and source of truth; therefore, your situation is never hopeless.

Jesus experienced physical weakness just like us. He was tempted just like us. But God's Word fueled Him. In the wilderness, He lived on truth.

What needs or temptations are you facing?

Apply God's truth to them! What Scriptures come to mind that you should hold onto? Write them down where you can review them and be strengthened by them.

Search the Bible and become a faithful student of it. Learn to use it against your spiritual enemies as the weapon it is. Learn it so that you know truth from lies. Learn it to encourage and be encouraged. Learn it to remember who you are, what you've been given, and what you are called to.

The truth is, you will face the temptation to doubt God's truth, the temptation to twist it to justify your sinful cravings, and the temptation not to remain in it.

The Bible is your empowering weapon! Are you equipped to wield it?

Write down the lies that currently deceive you.

.....
.....
.....
.....

Now, write down the truth.

.....
.....
.....
.....

REACH OUT

Jesus is the truth, and all He did was fueled by truth. Prayerfully apply a way you can live out this truth in Scripture today: *Share with Lord's people who are in need. ...*

Romans 12:13 NIV



WEEK FOUR

The Hope of a Bright Future



Day One || Longing for the Day

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world." —C. S. Lewis

SEEK GOD

Dear sister, you and I were made for the glory of Heaven and to experience the loving presence of our Savior. That's why you can confidently say: *For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.* Psalm 62:5 ESV

Take a few moments to express your gratitude to your Father, the God of Hope. Ask Him to give you His eternal perspective and understanding.

OBTAIN TRUTH

As we enter the last week of *The Hope* study, I want you to know how thankful I am that you have come on the journey with me. And I encourage you to finish strong! I pray you'll be rejuvenated by our eternal hope, strengthened in your faith, and filled with more love for our soon-coming King.

Let's look back one more time to Ephesians 1:18-19 NIV (emphasis added). Paul prayed, ... *that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.* ...

How guaranteed is this eternal inheritance?

Take a look for yourself:

... *When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.* Ephesians 1:13-14 NIV

Faith in Christ Jesus marked you with a seal of ownership. The Holy Spirit's indwelling presence is your guarantee of a glorious eternal future!

Some have defined hope as an expectation of coming good. I like this definition. Salvation through Christ grants us an unimaginable and glorious future!

I've always loved telling my children about their eternal future. I want them to understand this world isn't their home. I want them to know that one day—asleep or awake, living or dead—an angelic trumpet will sound for all the earth to hear. And their Savior Christ Jesus will appear in the clouds above, and they will fly up to meet Him. I want them to remain expectant and ready. In fact, we all need to keep an eternal anticipation of this soon-approaching day.

Another event children are often filled with hope and excitement about is the Christmas season. Not only is school out but also the season is delightful. Twinkling lights, holiday parties, feel-good movies,

yummy, homemade goodies, and brightly wrapped gifts of all shapes and sizes await them. What if we had the same delighted anticipation for the return of our Savior? Jack MacArthur wrote about a Christian man, H.S. Laird, who lay dying while his son sat beside his bed. The boy asked his father, "Dad, how do you feel?" The father replied, "Son, I feel like a little boy on Christmas Eve."

How are we to wait? We wait eagerly!

Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.
Romans 8:23 NIV

For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope.
Galatians 5:5 NIV

For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.
Philippians 3:18-21 NIV

We should be waiting for Jesus like an overdue pregnant woman longs to give birth, like a kid who sits on the edge of his seat before the school bell rings, or like a friend who could burst having to hold in a great secret surprise!

Let's get in God's Word to see what we can expect when our Savior returns. As you read, underline the word "trumpet" and circle what happens to God's children.

And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. Matthew 24:31 NIV

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the

dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 NIV

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 NIV

Beginning in Revelation chapter eight, we read there will be six angels who signal the unleashing of various plagues upon the earth. God's judgment and wrath is coming for those who stand against Him, but then, there will come the seventh trumpet blast when our Savior is declared King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever." And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small ..." Revelation 11:15-18 NIV

To conclude our time in Scripture, please read 2 Peter 3:3-15. What are God's intentions, man's doubts, and the Christian's role in this passage?

God's intentions:

.....

Man's doubts:

.....

My role:

.....

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

Look over what you circled about what awaits God’s children and think about your sure hope. This will soon be our reality, dear sisters! This world will pass away but God will make all things new. And it will begin with the sudden blast of an angelic trumpet. Are you ready? Are you expectant? Ask God to fill you with these truths.

The Apostle Peter gave us a great challenge: “Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?” And then Peter answered the question for us, “You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.” (2 Peter 3:11-12 NIV)

Write out a prayer in response to what God is revealing to your heart.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

REACH OUT

I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective and powerful because of your accurate knowledge of every good thing which is ours in Christ. Philemon 1:6 AMP

When we understand what the end of this world will be like, we won’t be able to hold back sharing the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. My prayer is that you’ll be active in sharing your faith—the reason for your great hope.



Day Two || A Place Prepared for You

"When you live in the light of eternity, your values change." —Rick Warren

SEEK GOD

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 NIV

Good Father, lead me into Your truth and allow me to hear the Holy Spirit clearly. Amen!

OBTAIN TRUTH

I don't know about you, but it is overwhelmingly humbling to think the Lord of all creation, who gives humanity His good earth to enjoy and govern, gave His life so that we would receive His amazing salvation. Then, He adopted us into His glorious family. If that were not incredible and breathtaking enough, consider this:

In John 14, Jesus comforted his disciples—and us—by reminding them of their forever future. Jesus exhorts, *"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am coming to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. John 14:1-3 NLT"*

What? Jesus leaves earth and continues to lovingly serve us by preparing a place for us to live *with* Him? What in the world has Jesus prepared for us? Can you even imagine? I can't. But that's part of the glorious mystery and wonder that awaits us.

Scripture plainly tell us, ... *"What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived"—the things God has prepared for those who love him ... 1 Corinthians 2:9 NIV*

The book of Revelation gives us many descriptions of our eternal home, but the most interesting to me is in Revelation 21:2 NIV: *"I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband." A city prepared like a lovely bride? Isn't that fascinating to think about?*

Now, I know some of you nature lovers must feel a little underwhelmed by the idea of a celestial, urban metropolis. You'd be more inspired by the thought of mountain peaks and vast valleys filled with otherworldly vegetation and creatures. But regardless of our own preferences, urban or country, we must remember every created thing you hold dear in this world has been fashioned by the God of Heaven. Just trust Jesus. Heaven will not disappoint or bore you!

According to the following verse, when did these kingdom preparations begin?

... 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.' Matthew 25:34 NIV

.....
.....

The creation of our world was a six-day event. But Jesus has been planning the wonders of the new kingdom and new earth for thousands of years now! Granted, a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day to our Father, but the possibilities thrill me to no end.

Just for fun, let's try to imagine the rooms and the holy city our Savior is preparing for us. I know we'll fail miserably at picturing what we'll one day behold, but if Jesus wanted us to know about His preparations for us, I think He'd expect our hearts to dwell on the possibilities of our future home. Don't you?

Imagine with me...

What might the raw materials of the Father's house be made of?

What types of rooms could be in our Father's house?

What do you think the scents and sounds will be like?

What unexpected things might we see and experience?

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

Even though we are waiting to realize the glory of our eternal home, we can make ourselves ready for our arrival there. How are you preparing for everlasting life?

I think the best way to understand this question is to think about how you might prepare for a special vacation. Let's imagine you planned a much-anticipated journey to an exotic place you've never been to before, and you've spent time researching the area attractions, the expected climate for that season, the best accommodations for your budget, and the transportation methods. You have possibly planned a trip itinerary, and of course, because of your great excitement, you began packing earlier than necessary. You counted down the days and thought about this vacation every day. You couldn't help yourself.

Jesus tells us multiple times and in multiple ways to keep a watchful stance for His return. I believe this implies our need to stay spiritually awakened (see Revelation 3:2-3). I believe we should stay awakened to the need to passionately share the gospel, awakened to the hope of our future, awakened to love others more boldly for Jesus, and awakened to the world's imitations and the enemy's lies.

Time will soon enter eternity. It's time to wake up. ... *The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.* Romans 13:11 NIV

And give careful thought to this: Heaven and Hell are real destinations.

We know this in our heads, but I believe our hearts are often dulled to these realities. It would serve us well to understand as fully as possible the only two locations that await all of humanity.

- How well do you know what the Bible teaches us about the Kingdom of Heaven and the New Earth?
- Can you somewhat explain what the last days of this world will be like?
- How well do you understand the place of torment known as Hell?

This isn't an imaginary game or some short vacation stop. We're talking about well-prepared, forever residencies!

These are some important ways to prepare us for our eternal future:

- Invite as many people to come with you as you can! Love them with God's grace and truth! Invite them to church. Host them for lunch. Share your faith story as often as you can and be ready to hear their stories, too.
- Study. There are many more Scriptures and resources about eternity. I recommend reading the wonderfully researched book, *Heaven*, by Randy Alcorn.
- Pray. Prayer keeps you alert and aligns your heart to the Father.

Our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus, wants us to live every day remembering and preparing for the day when our new destination will be assigned.

"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'" Mark 13:32-37 NIV

REACH OUT

I want to take every opportunity to share the good news and hope of Christ with someone else! Don't you? Will you prepare yourself for action? Do you need to study or freshen up on some topics in God's Word? I sincerely urge you to take intentional time to share with others about the hope you have through Christ.



Day Three || The Hope of Reward

SEEK GOD

Seek to grasp the goodness of God at a greater depth as you wait patiently in hope for what you do not yet have. You may be surprised to find that when you pursue God, the things you hoped for have changed because of a new perspective.

The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him ...
Lamentations 3:25 NIV

OBTAIN TRUTH

I have a hunch you may be like me. Maybe you still haven't genuinely grasped what you've been given and what awaits you as God's beloved child. Hopefully, I'm wrong, and I'm the only one late to the party. It's just that the idea of not only being graciously rescued, forgiven, and brought into God's family but also knowing Christ will give us additional, eternal rewards is mind-boggling, to say the least. We don't deserve any of this!

All the same, it seems many people feel entitled to the so-called good life. You see this when people use the phrase, "You deserve it!" to encourage you to purchase something for yourself. This tactic never works well for me. I already know I don't deserve anything—except punishment and death—and it's only through Jesus that I live with the richest blessings of the soul today.

Some even assume Heaven is a default destination for most people—excluding the really bad guys, of course. But none of this thinking aligns with Scripture. We should study Scripture to know what God says about true salvation and what's in store for those who stick with Jesus to the end.

Based on the following passage in 1 Peter, create a list of what Christians have been given in the space provided.

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, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1:3-5 NIV

What I've Been Given:

.....
.....
.....
.....

How does Peter describe your inheritance?

.....
.....
.....
.....

As the passage continues, Peter shifts to offering an explanation and encouragement for us as we endure this fallen world.

In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 1 Peter 1:6-7 NIV

Notice his words “greatly rejoice.” Honestly, I’m not sure I give regular time to delight in my future inheritance. My mind is too engrossed in the daily grind of today. How about you?

According to this text in 1 Peter, what role do your trials have?

.....
.....

Your daily life has a huge impact on your life to come! Read on and see how.

Underline all you are to do. Circle what will result.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism. Colossians 3:23-25 NIV

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. James 1:12 NIV

And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. 1 John 2:28 NIV

Please look up and read Matthew 25:14-30. (Bookmark this spot, too!)

Compare the three servants. Which one do you think you are most like?

.....

Although we receive Christ’s salvation by grace through faith, why is the fruit of faithfulness and good works an expected outcome?

.....
.....
.....

Think about it this way. How could God’s holy people, who are indwelt by His Holy Spirit, *not* be expected to display the character of God through their actions? It would be ironic, at best, to assume anything less! A fruitless Christian? This would be a contradiction to the very doctrine we say we believe.

What did the master call the servant who hid his talent? (Circle each correct answer.)

- A. Faithful
- B. Wicked
- C. Lazy
- D. Good

What do you think is the main point of Jesus’ parable? (Check verses 14 and 21.)

.....
.....
.....

Now, open back up to Matthew 25 and read verses 31-46.

What’s the main point of this parable? (Check verses 40 and 45.)

.....
.....
.....
.....

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

I believe Jesus taught these parables to show us we have a job to do while we remain on this earth. As we wait on Heaven, we are to be Heaven-minded and to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Are you living for the hope of tomorrow's everlasting crowns or today's temporary tiaras? Really think about this. What evidence proves your answer?

.....

.....

We need Paul's attitude in Philippians 1:21 NIV, ... *to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

I love these thoughts from Alexander MacLaren's Bible commentary regarding a Christian's shortsightedness. He shares:

"Surely God did not endue us with the power of hoping that we might fling it all away on trivial, transient things. We are all far too short-sighted; our fault is not that we do not hope, but that we hope for such near things, for such small things, like the old mariners who had no compass nor sextant, and were obliged to creep timidly along the coasts, and steer from headland to headland. But we ought to launch boldly out into mid-ocean, knowing that we have before us that star that cannot guide us amiss. Do not set your hopes on the things that perish, for if you do, hopes fulfilled and hopes disappointed will be equally bitter in your mouths."

It can be difficult to fix your mind on the eternal when the temporary is so real and present. My days are filled with many attention-grabbing moments. Some are wonderful and some are monotonous, dutiful, and burden-ridden ones. Where's the time to think eternally?

Keeping your eyes on the unseen is a matter of the heart. When your passion for God is thriving, you'll overflow with eternal thoughts and kingdom living. You won't be able to hold back! The trouble is our circumstances can distract us from our First Love. Don't allow it!

How can you shift your heart to seek God's Kingdom and righteousness first?

- Identify and deal with the roadblocks that stand in the way of keeping God first in your life.
- Faithfully use what God entrusts you with for His glory.
- Love and serve people in the name of Jesus.

The main purpose for today's lesson is this: Unimaginable rewards await each of us who patiently and faithfully continue to follow our Savior's leadership.

We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. Hebrews 6:11-12 NIV
Read all of Hebrews chapter six to gain the best insight.

Oh, dear sister, grab hold of this great hope God has promised you! He has chosen you and has provided an unshakable Kingdom where His glory and fullness dwell, where there are eternal rewards, and by far the greatest reward being the glorious union with your Holy Father, The Great I Am. Always live from this hope!

... because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. Therefore 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. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:14-18 NIV (emphasis added)

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 NIV

REACH OUT

How about getting out of your comfort zone and into the beautiful action of loving someone in need? Take a moment and ask the Father to show you the “who” and “what” you can do.



Day Four || *The Hope of His Presence*

SEEK GOD

"Knowing we will be with Christ forever far outweighs our burdens today! Keep your eyes on eternity!" —Billy Graham

Take a moment and rejoice that you'll be with your Father in glory soon.

OBTAIN TRUTH

It just doesn't get better than this. Have you ever spoken these words? Maybe it was just after taking a bite of a warm, chocolate chip cookie or watching a loved one sleeping peacefully after a full day. Maybe it was when you quietly watched a stunning sunset sitting next to a person you love, or a time with family or friends when you laughed until you cried. In these precious moments, we truly feel that nothing could outdo this earthly pleasure, but it's simply not true. It will get better than this—unimaginably and gloriously better.

If you're completely honest, you may have had thoughts about Heaven that made you feel a little nervous about being able to enjoy it more than the delights in this life. I've felt that way at times. I wonder if I'll get bored or miss something from this temporary life. But nothing could be further from the truth! Let's deal directly with this misconception by examining two realities of Heaven:

1. Complete joy will take the place of sorrow and pain.
2. The Great I Am, God Almighty, will be present among us.

This wonderful news comes straight from Revelation 21. Read it here for yourself: *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."* He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" ... Revelation 21:3-5 NIV

And in Revelation 22:3-4 NIV, *No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.*

I realize it's nearly impossible for us to imagine a world without brokenness where we'll live in eternal bliss. A broken world is all we've ever known. Emptiness haunts those without Christ, while deep longing remains for the Christian awaiting complete adoption (see Romans 8:23). True joy seems to be reserved for Christmas songs, holiday decor, and those rare moments of deep, belly, roll on the floor laughter. Right? But being in the presence of the Lord? Now that is overwhelming and beyond compare! We struggle to relate to these enormous soon-to-be-realities, just like Paul. He wrote: *For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.* 1 Corinthians 13:12 NIV

As you read through the following Bible verses, circle the word "joy" and underline each mention of our God.

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Psalm 16:11 ESV

"His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'" Matthew 25:23 ESV

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Isaiah 35:10 ESV

Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his place. 1 Chronicles 16:27 ESV

Let the trees of the forest sing, let them sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. 1 Chronicles 16:33 NIV

Surely you have granted him [King David] unending blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence. Psalm 21:6 NIV

How would you summarize all those verses you just read?

.....

The Apostle John gives us a glimpse of our future hope in 1 John 3:2 NIV "But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

Try to imagine standing before God for the first time.

- What do you feel?
- What do you think?
- What do you do?

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

How does knowing about the hope of fullness with God in eternity apply to your life on earth? I believe this hope is a guide for your heart. It provides an eternal perspective that takes your attention away from the trivial and temporary. Possessing this hope allows you to persevere through life's challenges because you know better days are coming.

When a problem arises, I have learned to ask the following questions:

- Will this matter in 100 years?
- What's the eternal significance of this?
- Father, what do you want to teach me through this?
- Father, what do you want me to do?

Too often, we're looking for heaven on earth instead of seeking our eternal home. These kinds of questions put everything in perspective, and eternal wisdom begins to take precedence. The Apostle Paul shares this same view in Romans:

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. Romans 8:18 NIV

Based on this outlook, complete the following statement.

"I can have hope today because..."

.....
.....
.....

Remember the presence of God is living in you and can continually fill you with joy in this life, too. In God's presence, there is fullness of joy!

Take a moment to acknowledge the Holy Spirit's presence with you right now. His joy is always available to you. Choose to live from His life, and you will experience a little Heaven on earth each day.

REACH OUT

"God does not choose people because of their ability, but because of their availability." — Brother Andrew

Here's a question to ponder: do you think people can sense the Holy Spirit at work in and through you? Why or why not?



Day Five || The Hope of Newness

"The person who knows that his destiny is glorious and certain will be free to live the most radical life of love and sacrifice here on earth." —John Piper

SEEK GOD

When you look to your Heavenly Father and begin to know Him intimately, your heart swells with peace and hope. Give Him your full attention as you begin this day's lesson. Allow the Father to quiet your soul. Open your heart to all He wants to teach you.

OBTAIN TRUTH

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." ...
Revelation 21:5 ESV

I like new things—well, good, new things: newborn babies, new haircuts, new clothes, new friends, and new adventures! Yes, please! But all things becoming new—this blows my mind.

You and I both know I couldn't possibly cover much of the "all" in this small lesson. We already know that "new" will be beyond incredible because we'll experience the fullness of joy from living in the presence of the Lord. But for our last day of this study, my heart's desire is to give you a little more insight from God's Word that should keep your heart ready for your heavenly home.

Today, we'll narrow the "all" down to four new realities all Christians will experience.

1. A New Moral Perfection

The Apostle Paul was pretty excited about our future hope of perfection. He wrote: *For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! ...* Romans 7:22-25 NIV Paul knew Jesus was and would always be the answer for our full deliverance from sin.

Yes, thanks be to God! When we are reunited with Christ, we will no longer struggle with our sin nature. Your battle to think, say, and do good and lovely instead of bad and ugly will vanish. You won't hurt yourself or others with your harsh words

or actions anymore. You won't gossip, lie, or become jealous. Think about this a minute—love will be perfected in you. You will always be kind, patient, pure, wise, faithful, and selfless. Rudeness, pride, and irritability will be gone from your heart. This will be true freedom!

Ephesians chapter five gives us insight about this truth within the context of marital advice, which is beautiful, really, because Christ is our Husband. It says, *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.* Ephesians 5:25-27 NIV

How are you—the Church—described as you stand before Christ?

.....
.....

2. A New Bodily Form

Being wholly free from sin in the new Kingdom of Righteousness is beyond spectacular. But wait—there's more! Paul explains in Philippians 3:21 that Christ "will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body." How amazing will this be! Where do I begin? You've got your list of desires, and I've got mine. No more feeling like we're too short, too long, too dark or too light, too curly, too thick, too thin, or too wrinkly. Far more meaningful and glorious than mere vanities will be healed eyes, restored minds, straightened backs, ears that hear, legs that walk, arms that move, and all disease, deformities, and pain gone! And all the people said, "Praise the Lord!"

Read through 1 Corinthians 15:40-55, printed below, for Paul's further explanation. As you do, underline each description of these bodily changes.

There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man is of heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

1 Corinthians 15:40-55 NIV

Last night, I wept bittersweet tears as I stood at the bedside of a dying sister in

Christ. Glynis has battled a rare brain cancer for the past two years and is now home with her family under hospice care. She couldn't speak but nodded her head with a smile when I told her I hated this situation, but I loved her and would see her on the "other side." With great emotion, I told her I was writing the last of this study about our future hope. She and her family know her future hope is dawning soon. Her body will lie in a grave while her soul will meet her Savior. And when the trumpet sounds, her weakened, frail body will rise first—from perishable to imperishable, dishonor to glory, weakness to power, and natural to spiritual.

3. A New Glorious Dwelling

Isaiah prophesied God's eternal intentions with the stunning words: "See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more." Isaiah 65:17-19 NIV

We touched on this subject earlier this week, and honestly, the breadth of content to cover such a topic can fill volumes of books. I'm not even going to go there. Like I recommended earlier, check out or buy Randy Alcorn's book, *Heaven*.

The main point of "a new earth" I'd like to express to your heart is this: this world, your life, and all that you strive for to find

meaning outside of loving people and God is passing away. It's temporary. It's here today and gone tomorrow. But don't be sad about this. A new beginning on a perfected earth—not Heaven with clouds to jump on with cupids playing harps—awaits you. Tell as many lost people in this world to join you in following Jesus. He is the way, the truth and the life!

(See John 14:6.)

4. A New Intimacy with God

John had a vision about our future in Heaven, which he wrote about in Revelation. *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."* Revelation 21:3 NIV

Read that verse again and underline when it says "with them."

To be with God, in His presence, just think of it! Oh, how I long to see Him, to meet Him face to face, to begin to know Him for all He is, and to worship at His feet! I yearn to hear His mighty voice and feel His gentle touch. Deep down, don't all Christ-followers feel this longing above all else? Don't you want to fully know and be with the Lord God—the God who is Love, the God who is Grace, the God who gave His all for you? This is the glory, wonder, and hope of all of Heaven—the presence of God and the relationship we'll have with Him!

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

Home is where your heart is (see Matthew 6:21).

Even though we won't be perfect in our righteous living until we reach Heaven, we are told to be holy, which means set apart, in this life (see 1 Peter 1:15). What are some reasons this is important?

.....
.....
.....

How does knowing you'll have a new body change the way you view yourself or your situation?

.....
.....
.....

How could living for eternity change how you live today?

.....
.....
.....

What can you do to stay mindful that this world is temporary?

.....
.....
.....

What about living forever with God excites your imagination?

.....
.....
.....

REACH OUT

Precious sister, this concludes our study together and your last "Reach Out" challenge. I pray you're inspired to bring as many people with you to Heaven as you can. All you need to do is share the good news of what Jesus Christ has done for you and what He longs to do for them. Salvation is a freely-given treasure to all who place their trust in Jesus, the Savior and the Hope of the world.

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.
Hebrews 10:23 NIV

For more content to help strengthen your relationship with God, check out last year's study, *The Pursuit*. My prayer is that both these studies would give you a greater perspective about who God is, how you can connect with Him, and the hope found through Him. You can also continue your hope journey by completing *The Hope Bible Plan* on the YouVersion Bible App.