



Losing Hope?

4 QUESTIONS WORTH ASKING

Northwest Bible Church

If you find yourself in possession of this PDF, you're likely searching for answers.

First, it's important to know that you're not alone in feeling hopeless, and that yes, in fact, there is a way to regain hope.

Our prayer for you is that through this content you'll find answers, including some practical ways to cope with feelings of hopelessness, and a source of hope that doesn't fade.

No matter what kind of anxiety or despair you're facing, you'll likely agree that our world in general is broken. All it takes is listening to five minutes of the news to become discouraged by our imperfect world full of painful suffering.

Add to that our own unmet expectations and broken dreams, and it's no surprise that feelings of hopelessness affect us in big and small ways.

We all need an interjection of hope. Our natural inclination is to put our hope in things we feel we can control, or at least hope we can.

Things like careers, education, social connections and status, health, finances, and relationships with significant others or our kids. Even dreams to leave a lasting legacy or make an impact - all good things!

At our church, we call these "little h hopes" - things that can let us down or dissolve due to circumstances beyond our control. And when they do, it's incredibly painful.

If you keep reading, we'd like to show you how trusting in Jesus provides a "big H Hope" - one that can be a true anchor for your soul that will never fade away. And that kind of hope can make an active difference in your real life today. Even in the midst of pain.

But first, let's address some questions you might be asking as you feel yourself losing hope.

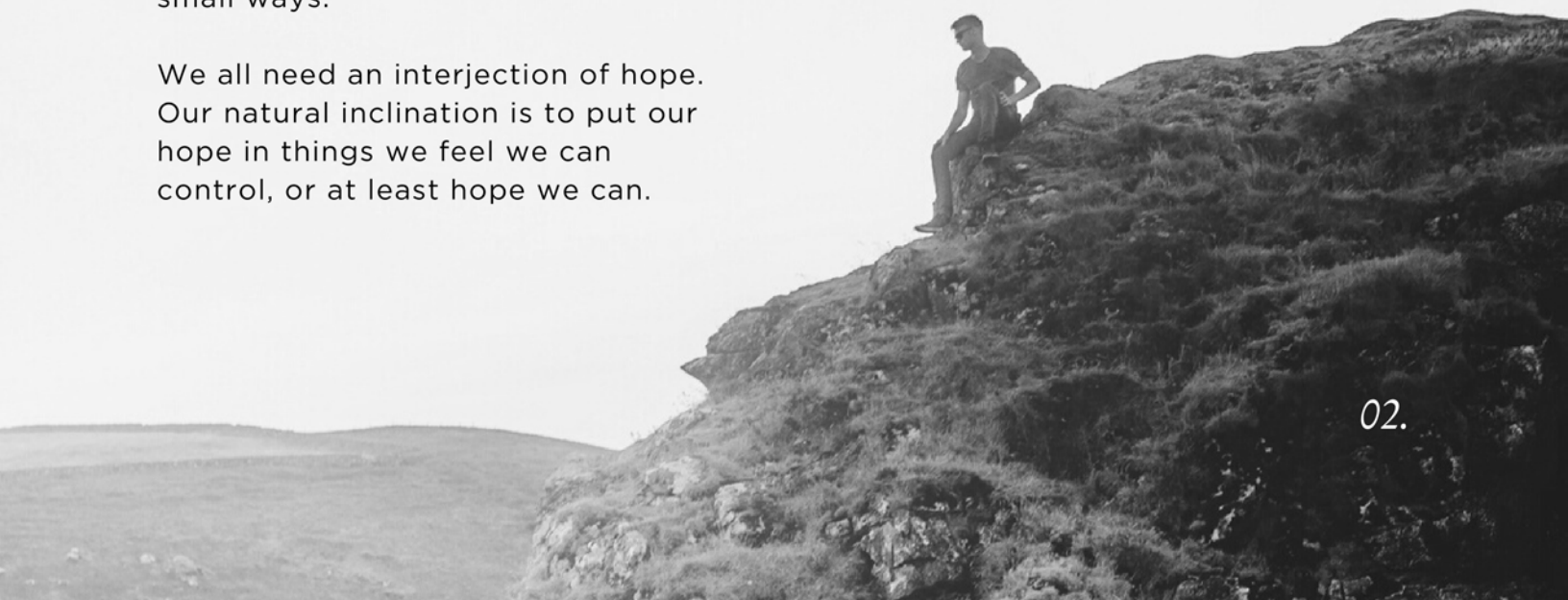




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IS "KEEPING HOPE ALIVE" EVEN WORTH IT?

04.

"It's not worth it" is a common reaction when we feel like we've done all we can to hold onto hope in a certain thing, person, or outcome. We may even start to wonder whether hope in general is worth it.

Depending on how much pain you've encountered and how many people have let you down, it's understandable to question hope as a concept. Hope in what? Hope in who? At times, giving up just feels easier and less confusing.

It's easy to look at those who have hope - especially people of faith - and shrug it off as "escapism." Basically, a denial of reality.



"Hope is one of the theological virtues. Faith, hope, and love. This means that a continual looking forward to the eternal world is not, as some modern people think, a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do."

"It doesn't mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history you will find that the Christians who do the most for the present world were just those who thought the most of the next."

- C.S. Lewis

However, hope is an essential human need. Psychologists have discovered the strong positive impact of hope on our ability to cope with hard circumstances in life.

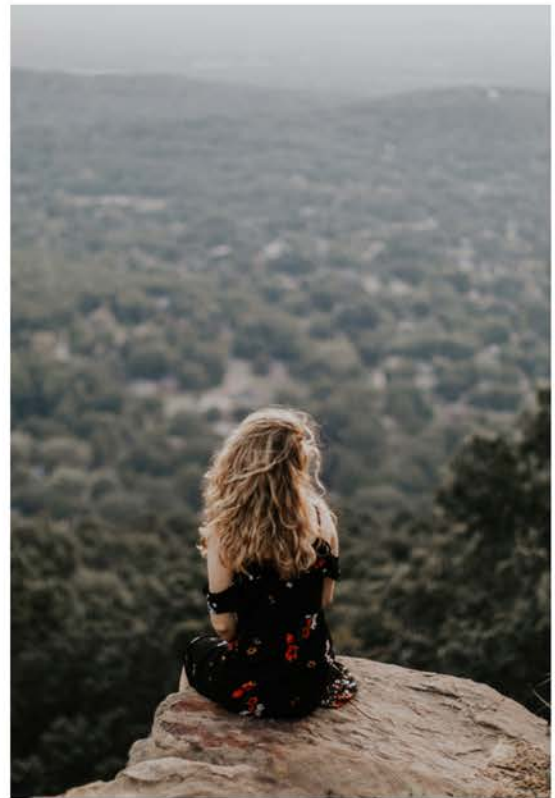
Our picture of tomorrow shapes our life today. If hope is truly this important, we can say positively that it is worth it to keep hoping. The questions then become more about how to keep hoping when life keeps throwing pain at us.



The question of “how” is a very practical one, just like it’s easy enough to know WHY maintaining a healthy weight is worth working towards, but knowing HOW to do it can feel elusive.

First, the big problem with hope is that logic and experience have shown us that putting our hope in these “little h hopes” lets us down - even the best and most worthy of them.

But there is a hope that never fades and provides context for everything else in life. A true anchor for our soul that allows us to enjoy the good parts of life - all the “little h hopes” worth having - without being tangled up in whether or not they eventually fail us.



"We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

- Hebrews 6:19-20

There’s a lot of theological and historical context in the verse above, but don’t miss this main point: people are longing for an anchor for their soul.

Jesus is our “big H Hope” - our living hope. The steadfast anchor of our souls.

CAN I GET OFF THE ROLLERCOASTER OF HOPE AND DESPAIR?

If you've ever gotten your hopes up over something - a relationship, a job you applied for, a medical procedure, the search for the perfect home or school for your kids - you understand the rollercoaster of hope and despair.

One little comment, email subject line, piece of mail, or test result can send you soaring or crashing. And it comes and goes until that thing is resolved.

In these circumstances, it truly does feel like hope has turned into something that tyrannizes your soul. Does it have to be this way? Can we get off this rollercoaster of hope and despair?

We've established that hope is necessary. But as mentioned, all these "little h hopes" we just referenced above (no matter

how good and worthy) will let us down. We need a Hope that doesn't tyrannize. We need Jesus - the anchor for our souls.

How do we access this Hope? First, we must recognize that we have a part to play in where we place our hope. We can make an active decision to place our hope in Jesus instead of the things of this world. Again, the question then becomes "how?" What does it look like, practically, to put your hope in Jesus and access this anchor for your soul? How can you essentially "revolt" from the tyranny of "little h hopes?"

On page 8, we'll give some practical steps for those of you who have already trusted in Jesus for salvation. If you haven't yet, we encourage you to start there! See the next page for what this means.



Trusting in Jesus for salvation

If you've never put your trust in Jesus before, we want to help you with that. It's as simple as embracing a few simple truths and praying a simple prayer, but the results are eternal.

Recognize that God created you for the purpose of enjoying an eternal relationship with Him full of joy and love, free of death and brokenness. But based on their decision to trust in themselves instead of God by eating an apple from the only forbidden tree, Adam and Eve brought sin and brokenness into the world, leading to ultimate death.

We are all born into the effects of that sin, separating us from a holy God. But God, out of his immense love for us and desire to restore our relationship with Him, sent Jesus in the form of a human to live a life in perfect obedience to God and die a sacrificial death on the cross to pay our sin debt, ultimately breaking the power of death from sin.

Because Jesus took our place in death, when we trust in His work on the cross, His perfect



righteousness covers us and presents us as blameless to God. And we know this is true because of Jesus' resurrection. The resurrection is the guarantee that hope is alive.

When we accept this free gift of salvation and trust in Jesus alone to restore relationship with God, He promises eternal life, an eventual restoration of all things, and a very real and present Hope for our lives here and now. Talk to God in prayer and tell Him you believe these truths and that you trust in Jesus for the salvation of your soul. When you do this, you will be saved from the power of sin and death, accessing the power to overcome the tyranny of "little h hopes."

If you've prayed this for the first time, God and all of heaven are rejoicing in your newly-restored relationship with your Creator! We would love to guide you in your new relationship with God. Reach out to speak with someone today. Find contact info on the last page of this PDF.



HERE ARE 4 PRACTICAL YET POWERFUL STEPS TO “REVOLT” FROM THE TYRANNY OF “LITTLE H HOPES:”

1. *Obsess over God’s story.*
2. *Challenge your rules
(about how life should work
in a broken world).*

Read your Bible to remind yourself that you’re not crazy. Keep reminding yourself that Jesus’ power over death and brokenness is real and that He died so that your suffering can be redeemed. If you’re not sure where to start, begin in the Gospels and find a good daily reading plan. Ask God to guide you and show you His truth.

“For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”

– Matthew 7:8

Life doesn’t always turn out the way we think it should, even when we trust in Jesus. That’s because we still live in a temporarily broken world full of the effects of sin. But God redeems all things for the good of those who trust in Him, and this Hope can bring us peace that doesn’t make sense to others. We can trust God because He is good.

“The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him.”

– Nahum 1:7

3. *Get help from others.*

We all need more help than we think we do. God created humans for relationships and community; we weren't meant to do life alone.

Don't let pride cause you to suffer in silence without asking for help from others who can encourage you and remind you of God's truth. God wants to bring healing, but you must decide to be vulnerable, stop hiding, and reach out for help.

If you need help in hard circumstances, we would love to be that encouragement and support for you. Find resources at the end of this PDF.

"And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

— *Ecclesiastes 4:12*



4. *Hang on to God.*

God's timing is not our own, because He sees things we do not and has purposes that are hard for our human hearts and minds to grasp.

But he sees us and He sees our suffering. We can trust Him because He is good, and when things are hard, that truth keeps us holding on to God.

"The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."

— *Lamentations 3:25–26*





The process of revolting from our little h hopes is hard and continual. Until Jesus returns to set all things right once and for all, our broken world will continue to try and break us, and our sinful hearts will continue to try and lead us astray.

The good news is, God provided the Holy Spirit who promises to help us keep our eyes on Jesus, our living Hope.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

– John 14:26

Here’s a practice for how to hang on to God. You can do this any time you need a hope reset.

- 1 Make a list of all your “little h hopes” – all the good things in your life right now that are working just fine, or those things that you’re feeling anxiety about. Job, car, family, kids, health – anything important to you in some way.
- 2 Thank God for the good things on this list.
- 3 Recognize that they all have the potential to let you down. Acknowledge to God, “None of these can be a true anchor for my soul.”
- 4 Pray that God would give you supernatural help. That He would do something for you that you can’t do for yourself.


May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

– Romans 15:13



WHAT CAN I DO IF MY HOPE HAS DIED?

11.



We talked about how it feels to be on the rollercoaster of hope and despair, and how to get off that crazy ride. But what if you feel like all hope has been lost in that situation, person, or thing? What can you do if you're in the darkest place where it feels like a death has occurred, and you can't see a way forward? Broken dreams, unmet expectations, painful suffering... these are not small things. Some may result from failure of "little h hopes" - but the impact they have on us can be huge.

When your hope dies, there is no more rollercoaster. Instead, the coaster has crashed. Depending on what that thing is for you, you may feel humbled, devastated, embarrassed, confused, or regretful.

Maybe you had a dream for a successful marriage that ended in divorce, a dream for a baby that ended in miscarriage, a dream for a career that was shattered, or a dream for a healthy child that ended in disability or chronic disease. Reality doesn't match the dream you had. How do you respond?

First, it's important to remember that people survive from devastating losses of hope. If you're in that dark place of despair, know that you're not alone. The Scripture says the whole earth actually groans under the weight of this sinful, broken world, just like a woman in labor waiting for the hope of her child to be born.

"For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."

- Romans 8:22-25



The truth is that after the pain of “little h hopes” dying, there is the resurrection of a big H Hope. But sometimes this requires waiting. Psalm 62:1 says, “For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.”

Waiting acknowledges the death of “small h hopes” and imagines a living big H Hope to come. Waiting also positions us closer to God. Psalm 34:18 says, “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” God wants to comfort us in our waiting and in our suffering.



With the mindset of waiting and knowing God wants to draw near in suffering, try this practice:

- Turn off your cell phone notifications
- Set a timer for 7 minutes
- Find a comfortable spot
- Read Psalm 62:1 and Psalm 34:18 from above
- Reflect = “I’m still breathing. I’m alive. I’m not alone.”
- Recognize = “I’m not holding up my own life; Jesus is.” Imagine Jesus is holding your hand
- Recite = “My soul waits in silence for God only. My hope is in Him. He is my rock and my salvation. I will not be shaken from the anchor of my soul.”

The whole of the Christian life is recognizing that God is doing things for us that we can’t do for ourselves. He is willing and able, He loves us because He is good, and we can trust Him.

HOW DO I RECONCILE HOPE WITH REALITY?

When you decided to download this PDF, you had something in mind. Something in your life made you feel like you were losing hope. And in that place, you had hope that something in this content would maybe turn that around for you. Essentially, you had at least a tiny bit of hope left.

Our prayer for you is that something you've discovered here has helped you believe that it is possible to hope again.

Our prayer is that you're starting to believe that you need a big H hope that can't let you down, and that Jesus can be your source of Hope when all else fails. We all need a big H Hope because our picture of tomorrow shapes our life today. If we believe there's something better, our view of today will be more hopeful.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

- 1 Peter 1:3-5

And there is a living Hope that can't be taken away - an eternal inheritance that is imperishable and will not fade or erode. It is guaranteed to us when we place our faith in Jesus, whose death and resurrection secured it for us.



But how do you reconcile hope with the realities of a broken world?

One way this living Hope shapes your life today is that it allows you to have joy in the middle of hard circumstances and in the middle of grieving. When you trust in the living Hope of Jesus, you get to have joy that doesn't deny the sadness and sadness that doesn't overwhelm the joy. You're able to live in reality - hope without "escapism."

A beautiful example of this is found in the Bible in John 11 where Jesus is told that his friend Lazarus has died. We know the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead.

As the omniscient Son of God, Jesus knew he was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, but before that, Jesus visits Lazarus' family in their grief. He has encounters with multiple family members who are devastated by the loss of their loved one, and when he visits with them and then visits the tomb, he cries. John 11:35 says, "Jesus wept."

Those around him remarked at how much he appeared to love Lazarus. This shows Jesus being fully present - embracing reality even while knowing He is about to change the circumstances and bring hope through resurrecting Lazarus and restoring him to his family. Our Living Hope can say, "Everything will be OK" while embracing the emotion of our current suffering.

15.

*So as we close, let's recap how you can embrace
Jesus as your Living Hope!*

Look up to Jesus. Start reading the stories about Jesus in the Bible and look at what He can do for you. Find some friends who can hold the emotional weight of loss and disappointment with you and reach out to a professional if you need help. Jesus is a rock that doesn't move - an eternal anchor for your soul. He cares more about you than even you do, because He created you, and He wants to care for you.

It is our prayer that you would know the love of Jesus, who wants to be your Living Hope.

*May the God of hope fill you with
all joy and peace in believing, so
that by the power of the Holy
Spirit you may abound in hope.*

- Romans 15:13



RESOURCES FOR HELP & HOPE

*Find more information about each of these resources at
northwestbible.org/care*

Celebrate Recovery

Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered, 12 Step recovery program for anyone struggling with hurt, hangups, pain or addiction of any kind. It's a safe place to share and receive care, support, & encouragement.

GriefShare

GriefShare is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences. This is a free, open group program that you can join at any time. You don't have to go through the grieving process alone.

re|engage

re|engage is a marriage-enrichment program, not only for couples whose marriages need to be reignited and restored, but also for those who are looking for intentional investment.

Talk to someone about trusting in Jesus:

Did you pray to place your trust in Jesus? We would love to help guide you in your new relationship with God! Reach out to us at 469.453.7777 and ask to speak with a minister.

Questions about Jesus? We would love to talk with you.



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