

RESILIENT HOPE

100 Devotions for Building Endurance
in an Unpredictable World

CHRISTINE CAINE



Resilient Hope

© 2022 Caso Writing, LLC

Portions of this book are excerpted from the following: *Undaunted: Daring to Do What God Calls You to Do* (Zondervan), *Unexpected: Leave Fear Behind, Move Forward in Faith, Embrace the Adventure* (Zondervan), *How Did I Get Here: Finding Your Way Back to God When Everything Is Pulling You Away* (Thomas Nelson), and *20/20 Seen. Chosen. Sent.* (Lifeway).

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other—except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Published in Nashville, Tennessee, by Thomas Nelson. Thomas Nelson is a registered trademark of HarperCollins Christian Publishing, Inc.

Published in association with Yates & Yates, www.yates2.com.

Thomas Nelson titles may be purchased in bulk for educational, business, fundraising, or sales promotional use. For information, please email SpecialMarkets@ThomasNelson.com.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the Christian Standard Bible®. Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers, all rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked AMP are from the Amplified® Bible (AMP). Copyright © 2015 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. www.Lockman.org

Scripture quotations marked ESV are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®). Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com. The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.®

Scripture quotations marked NRSV are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Any Internet addresses, phone numbers, or company or product information printed in this book are offered as a resource and are not intended in any way to be or to imply an endorsement by Thomas Nelson, nor does Thomas Nelson vouch for the existence, content, or services of these sites, phone numbers, companies, or products beyond the life of this book.

ISBN 978-0-310-45760-2 (audiobook)

ISBN 978-0-310-45797-8 (eBook)

ISBN 978-0-310-45796-1 (HC)

Printed in China

22 23 24 25 26 GRI 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



*To my dear friend Dawn Jackson.
Your passion for hiking opened up a whole new world for me.*





CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	1
PART 1: FAITH, TRUST, AND STRENGTH	5
PART 2: HIS DEVOTION IS UNFAILING	57
PART 3: HOPE, THE ANCHOR OF OUR SOUL	109
PART 4: LOVE, HIS HEALING BALM	161
<i>Notes</i>	212
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	214
<i>About the Author</i>	216



INTRODUCTION

There are few sporting events that can bring me to my feet, move me to tears, and fill my heart with equal parts of joy and sorrow like the Olympics. Maybe it's because I'm Greek and I can't stop imagining carrying the torch someday, or maybe it's because secretly I want to be the one competing. Truth be told, it's probably both.

When I watch, I marvel at the strength of the competitors, at their determination. Even when I read about Olympic games gone by and famous athletes who beat the odds or made some amazing comeback to win a medal, I swell with pride.

One of my favorite Olympic stories involves a runner from Tanzania—John Stephen Akhwari—who competed in the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City. When he took part in the men's marathon, he started out as one of seventy-four participants set to run the 26.2-mile race. Together, the runners took off at 3:00 p.m., the hottest part of the day. A few hours later, everyone had either crossed the finish line or dropped out of the race. Everyone except John.

Early in the race, his calf muscle started cramping. Mexico City stands at an elevation of 7,350 feet. Tanzania stands at an elevation of 660 feet. John had not trained at altitude, and it affected his body. Almost to the halfway point, as he struggled to run with the cramping, there was some jockeying for position between runners. John was hit, and he fell hard onto the pavement, dislocating and wounding his knee and injuring his shoulder. After his wounds were bandaged on the sidelines, he stepped back into the race and kept running.

For almost an hour, John hobbled. And fell again. He got up and hobbled some more. At times he even dragged himself, only to rise up and stumble through. Officials begged him to stop. To drop out of the race. But he would not. When he finally shuffled into the stadium, most of the spectators had left. It had been almost a half hour since the last runner had crossed the finish line. But to the applause and cheers of the remaining fans, he limped over the finish line into the arms of medics.

When John was asked why he didn't drop out of the race, his answer said it all:

“My country did not send me to Mexico City to start the race; they sent me five thousand miles to finish the race.”²

Can you imagine? I tear up just thinking about it! John's story went down in Olympic history and was dubbed “The Greatest Last Place Finish Ever.” What a great description. I wonder—if he'd finished first and captured the gold medal, would he have ever realized what he was actually capable of doing? We'll never know, of course; but what has never left me about John's story is that in the face of such physical pain, such emotional pressure, such incredible adversity, something inside him kept him moving forward. Fueling his passion. Providing him strength against impossible odds. Helping him press on and push through when everything was working against him. Pushing him to finish the race he'd started. And while I have no way of knowing what all he drew on in those moments, I do recognize the strength he had.

From a spiritual standpoint, I want to be like John. Though I don't plan on running a marathon like he did, I am running a spiritual race here on earth. And as I run, I want to be full of vision, passion, determination, and courage.³ I want to fulfill all the plans and purposes God has for my life. I want to stay on mission until I cross the finish line. No matter what gets thrown my way, or what tries to hold me back, I want to be like the apostle Paul when, at the end of his life, he wrote to his protégé Timothy and said, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”⁴ In order to do that, no doubt, I'm going to need something greater than me. Something internal *and* eternal. Something I can get only from God. The writer of Hebrews had a name for this something. He called it *endurance*.

“You have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.”⁵

Endurance. It's what you and I both need to keep moving forward in this life. Against all odds. Against all opposition. Against all setbacks, disappointments,

and disillusionments. When nothing turns out like we expect. When, despite all the pain, we need to get back up and keep running our race. It's what we'll need to finish all that we start.

Endurance is formally defined as “the ability or strength to continue . . . despite fatigue, stress, or other adverse conditions.”⁶ It's the capacity to bear up under difficult circumstances. The power to withstand pain or hardships. It's a hopeful fortitude that perseveres to the end. In the original Greek language of the New Testament, it is *hupomone*, a compound word that translates “to remain under.”⁷ It is a quality built by remaining under pressure—something we naturally prefer to avoid.

I have spent a lifetime building endurance—mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically; and I have found they are all quite connected. When the global pandemic of 2020 began and quarantines went into effect, overnight, I was no longer able to travel and speak at live events, though I did record numerous messages for churches around the world. Because I was unexpectedly at home for months on end, my friend Dawn, who has walked, run, and hiked more trails than I ever will, invited me to start hiking the trails and mountains scattered throughout Southern California. *Why not?* I thought. *Since moving to the States, I've never had the time to explore the great outdoors. Now's my chance.* Little did I know how God was going to use such a decision.

Taking hold of Dawn's suggestion, I began prepping in every way I knew how. In every area I could, I began building stamina, strength, and courage to go a greater distance. To do what I had never done before. Deep inside, I knew that God wanted to increase my capacity, especially spiritually. As He'd used many other activities in my life, such as walking, running, weightlifting, and even boxing, this time He was going to use hiking. How, I had no idea, but I was up for it.

To be honest, as we ventured out on each of the hikes, weekend after weekend, I found myself thinking very little about God and spiritual principles. I was mostly trying to survive! Often we would trek for six to eight hours, climbing

in elevation by as much as 4,500 feet in the span of a few short hours. Once we reached a summit, we would have to begin the equally dangerous trek downhill, which requires just as much skill, steadiness, and endurance as the ascent.

In the days following a hike, as I would rest and recover and go for long walks along the beach, I would begin to see volumes of spiritual truth. And out of that truth came this devotional—inspiration to help you build the endurance you need to run your race, fulfill all the purposes and plans God has for you, and stay on mission—even in the face of adversity. Especially in the face of adversity.

Together, we'll explore the many ways we endure, what hinders us from enduring, and how to make lasting change in our lives so we can endure. In short, I'll share with you all I learned putting one foot in front of the other while walking, running, and climbing the great outdoors of Southern California and beyond.

Love you so much,

Christine Caine



PART 1

FAITH, TRUST, AND STRENGTH

When you go to the mountains, you see them and you admire them. In a sense, they give you a challenge, and you try to express that challenge by climbing them.

EDMUND HILLARY



1 MARVELOUS FAITH

When [Jesus] was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, “Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. . . . But say the word, and let my servant be healed. . . .”

When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, “I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.”

LUKE 7:6–9 ESV

When Jesus encountered this centurion, He marveled at his faith. “Marveled” in the Greek is *thaumazo*, and it means “to be astonished, to be amazed.” What on this earth could ever cause Jesus to be astonished or amazed? After all, He is the God of this universe. He existed always. He hung the stars and the moon. He’s literally seen it all and *knows everything*. But for some reason, He marveled at the faith of a man who believed his servant could be healed. “Not even in Israel have I found such faith,” Jesus said.

I want to have faith like the centurion—the kind that causes Jesus to marvel and say, “I haven’t seen this kind of faith.” I want to have such faith that I always believe God can do what He said He will do, no matter how impossible it may seem, naturally speaking. I want to have faith that there is no heart God cannot mend, no past He cannot redeem, no sickness He cannot heal, no relationship He cannot restore, no person

He cannot save, no sin He cannot forgive, no need He cannot meet, no prayer so big that He cannot answer it.

And yet to have that kind of faith is risky because it means trusting God and His Word. It means believing that God is good, that God does good, and that God is working all things together for my good, even when things don't look good. It means trusting that Jesus is who He says He is and that He will do what He said He would do, even when it takes much longer than I like or happens in a way I never imagined. It means pursuing Jesus when the world around me is constantly reminding me that my faith doesn't make sense. That it's foolish to believe in Jesus.

Trusting Jesus hasn't come easy for me. Still, I'm willing to risk it. What about you? Are you willing to risk believing more deeply than you ever have? No matter what hasn't gone according to plan in your life, the truth still stands: God created you on purpose for a purpose. He positioned you in time and gave you gifts and talents for the purpose of serving your generation. For having faith that endures despite setbacks and challenges. A faith that causes Him to marvel.



Heavenly Father, I commit this day to risk growing deeper in my faith than ever before. I want to fulfill all that You've called me to do, full of marvelous faith. In Jesus' name, amen.



2 ENDURING FAITH

We live by faith, not by sight.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:7 NIV

God has called us to live by faith and not by sight, though I feel sure we'd both agree there are times when that is easier said than done. There will always be situations we can't explain, when we will have to trust God with all our hearts and resist the temptation to exhaust ourselves trying to understand what we cannot. Tossing and turning in our sleep, ruminating on conversations and events and all the things we think we could have done differently will never help. I know because I've tried it, again and again, and it does no good—ever.

What does help is going to God in prayer and asking Him all the questions lingering in our hearts and minds, especially when we've gone through something that seems to test our faith. It's as though asking all the questions helps us wrestle with our faith so we can keep living by faith—even when we don't get perfectly clear answers.

I know in my own life I have a ton of unanswered questions from times when I've been hurt. When I've been betrayed. When I've been disappointed or disillusioned. When I've failed and things didn't go as I had expected or planned. When people I loved have died way too soon. When storms have come. When sickness has come. Still, God wants me to ask my questions—and He wants you to ask yours.

When we go to Him, we have to trust in His character, which means that despite what someone has done to us or what pain some circumstance has caused us, we trust in who God is: He is good, holy, faithful, kind, caring, loving, merciful, just, and in control.

Even in the times when we do receive answers, if we are to keep living by faith, our trust is to be in Him—not in the answers or in our understanding. Answers help, but they are not our source of enduring faith. He is.

Is there a lingering question on your mind today? Go ahead and ask Him. Even if it's something you've asked Him about a thousand times before. When you do, be willing to trust Him more than ever. Trust in His character. Trust in who He is. Be willing to live by faith and not by sight, today and forevermore.



Heavenly Father, I trust You and who You are. I put my trust in You, whether I ever understand everything that happens in my life or not. I live by faith and not by sight. In Jesus' name, amen.



3 LIVE BY FAITH

I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

GALATIANS 2:20

We are living in a day and age where we as Christians are often considered foolish if we live by faith. Sometimes, in our schools, workplaces, and communities, we are surrounded by people who believe different things, and we can be considered foolish to believe in Jesus and all that He can do in us and through us. Having grown up in Australia, a nation where less than 2 percent of the people even go to church, I'm used to it. I determined long ago that nothing will stop me from living by faith.

For example, when people ask me if I really believe the Bible, my answer is a quick yes. When they ask if I really believe Jesus' birth was the result of a virgin birth, it's a quick yes. When they ask me if I really believe Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead, it's a quick yes. You can ask me about anything in the Bible. Moses and the Red Sea. Jonah and the fish. Daniel and the lions' den. Pick a story—I believe them all!

Why? Because Christ lives in me and I live by faith. I may not understand it all, but I believe it all. I can't help but believe the world needs us to be people who believe God, who believe in God, who are willing to

act on all that we say we believe and on all we profess to be truth from the Scripture. It's part of how we build endurance.

More than ever, I'm prepared to look foolish in these days, to be that person who is full of the joy of the Lord. Who is full of the love of God. Who is full of the courage, strength, and hope of the Lord. Who dares to believe our best days are ahead of us, and not behind us, solely because God is great. Because He is who He says He is. Because He will do what He says He will do.

Won't you join me? Together, let's renew our personal commitment to Jesus today. Let's remember that we have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us. Let's live by faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us.



*Father, I am thankful that Christ lives in me. I have faith in You,
and I renew my commitment to live by faith. In Jesus' name, amen.*



4 EQUIPPED WITH FAITH

By the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one.

ROMANS 12:3

One of the most important parts of hiking doesn't take place anywhere along the trail. It doesn't take place at the trailhead. It doesn't even take place on the way there. It takes place in the days and weeks ahead. So many times, when I was preparing to climb peaks in Southern California with my friend Dawn, she would send me texts telling me about where we would be going, what the climb in elevation would be, and how many miles we would walk. She would recommend supplements I could begin taking a few days ahead to deal with the altitude and what foods to pack so I stayed energized. She would tell me what to expect from the weather, and then remind me what kind of clothing to wear, what weight of jacket to bring, and what gear I would need.

I came to understand and appreciate that the right equipment is crucial to staying safe and being able to endure all day long—and to succeed at any hike, whether it's up a mountain, through a wilderness, or across a flat plain. I'll never forget when my husband, Nick, ordered me a new hydration vest and set of trekking poles for our Yosemite trip. I laughed

at myself for how excited I got. Who knew equipment would be the key to my heart?

More than once, I've thought about this, and the spiritual implications haven't escaped me. God always ensures we have the right equipment for the life He's called us to live.

God has called us to live by faith, walk by faith, and stay in faith—and He's equipped each one of us with a measure of faith. That means He's given us all the faith we need to do what He's called us to do—and He's called us all to do something. He has plans and purposes for each of our lives. He has good works for us to do.

Do you know what God has called you to do? Does it feel like a mountain that's unscalable? They all look like that when you're at the bottom or somewhere in the middle. But I know from experience, if you will just reach in your pack and pull out what you've been given, if you'll risk activating the faith God's given you, you will accomplish all that He's called you to do.



Father, thank You for the measure of faith You have given me. I will risk trusting You and stepping out in faith to do all that You've called me to do. In Jesus' name, amen.



5 FAITH CALLS THINGS INTO EXISTENCE

As it is written: I have made you [Abraham] the father of many nations—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, the one who gives life to the dead and calls things into existence that do not exist.

ROMANS 4:17

When my mother passed away a number of years ago, it felt like a season when dominoes began falling, because her death not only brought on the grief you would expect; it also triggered grief for a woman I'd never met—my biological mother. I remember thinking, *Really, God? We have to go there? I'm in my fifties. Is this really necessary?*

Of course it was—because God always wants to go for another layer of healing in our lives. While I was grappling with all these emotions, about eight weeks later, a sister-in-law on my side of our family passed away too. Then, over the next year, we lost another sister-in-law on Nick's side, and one of his sisters.

In the midst of these losses, I was deeply hurt by a friend, and a project I had poured my heart and soul into didn't turn out the way I expected. It was a time when I needed my faith in Jesus most of all.

When we go through difficult times, our tendency can be to bury or

deny or ignore our pain and go on, and then sometimes label that faith. But that isn't faith.

Faith isn't calling things that are as though they are not.

Faith is calling those things that are not as though they are.

That's what Abraham did when God promised him He'd make him the father of many nations. Though he was childless, and he and Sarah were past their childbearing years, he did not waver in unbelief. He didn't deny the reality of his circumstances. He was just fully convinced that what God had promised, God was able to do. And He did. He gave them a son in their old age.

When I was hurting, to say that I wasn't hurting would not have been faith. That would have been denial, and that would have gotten me nowhere good. It would have become like a festering wound and eventually seeped everywhere. Into my words. Into my actions. Perhaps as toxicity or negativity or hopelessness or despair.

But to invite Jesus in to heal me, to pray and ask for His help, to declare His truth over the facts—that was faith. That was calling those things that are not as though they are.

I don't know what losses you have endured or what challenges you might be facing today, but the way forward is to put your faith to work. To speak God's Word over your life and circumstances. To call things into existence that do not exist . . . yet.



*Heavenly Father, I call things into my life that do not exist right now.
I put my faith to work, trusting in You and what You will do for me.
In Jesus' name, amen.*



6 FAITH THAT WILL GET YOU THROUGH

If the God we serve exists, then he can rescue us from the furnace of blazing fire, and he can rescue us from the power of you, the king. But even if he does not rescue us, we want you as king to know that we will not serve your gods or worship the gold statue you set up.

DANIEL 3:17–18

Did you catch what today's scripture says? The king had thrown Daniel's three friends into the fire, and still they said that even if God did not rescue them, they wouldn't bow to the king's false gods. Their faith was unwavering. It was *even if* faith!

Even if faith is the kind of faith God wants us to have, because it's the kind of faith that will keep us grounded when we are in the midst of a crisis, when we do not understand what is going on, when our circumstances are painful, confusing, demoralizing, disheartening, or disappointing.

Even if faith is *now* faith! It's faith for the present moment and for whatever fiery trial we're going through, because, let's face it—we're always entering a fire, in the middle of a fire, or coming out of one. What are you facing today? Maybe you're going through a divorce. Maybe you've learned you can't graduate on time. Maybe you have been

given a grim diagnosis. Maybe you've lost a dear friendship. Maybe you have lost your job. Lost your savings. Lost your business. Maybe you've lost someone you loved deeply. And the pain you are feeling is something you've never known and something you never want to feel again. The only kind of faith that will get you through is *even if* faith.

Sitting around looking for Jesus to come rescue us isn't going to equip us to walk through the fires, but *even if* faith will, because it's faith that endures.

Even if faith looks at life this way:

"Even if I can't finish school right now, yet I will trust God!"

"Even if the doctor calls and there's something seriously wrong, yet I will trust God!"

"Even if I lose my job, yet I will trust God!"

"Even if. . . yet I will trust God!"

That's the level of trust and kind of faith I want to have in God! Don't you? That's what will keep us moving forward full of strength. Yes, I understand that in the fiery furnace many times we will feel the heat of the flames. We will get scorched. We will not escape any of the pain, but we will have Jesus to get us through anything that comes our way.



*Father, I declare today that I have even if faith for what's before me.
Whatever happens, yet I will trust You! In Jesus' name, amen.*



7 THE GAP OF FAITH

Faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.

HEBREWS 11:1

Every time I plan a big hike, I watch videos of experienced hikers climbing the actual trail. I follow along as they point out challenging sections and give tips on how to navigate them. I take note when they mention dangerous drop-offs or unending switchbacks. And I always appreciate hearing the joy and excitement in their voices when they highlight the views they want to be sure no one misses.

It's how I prepare my mind and ramp up my enthusiasm for what I know won't be an easy trek but will be well worth it. It's how I build my confidence that I can do it, even though I know I will still be greatly challenged the whole way through. And when I'm actually on the trail, putting one foot in front of the other, I remember what I saw and heard in the video—and it keeps me going.

It's so similar to what I do to live and walk by faith. I encourage my faith in every way I can. I worship. I pray. I fellowship with other Christ followers. I go to God's Word, read it, meditate on it, memorize it . . . and when the pressure is on, the Holy Spirit reminds me of what I've read. I listen to preached messages and read books. Doing all these things regularly—though not necessarily in any particular order—keeps me going.

We have to strengthen our faith daily so when we're in that span of time between where we are and where we want to be, when we're in the gap between what is and what will be, between what is seen and what is unseen, we can keep going. We can endure.

Are you in that gap of faith right now? Maybe you're waiting on a promotion or a new job opportunity. Maybe you're waiting on a relationship to mend or a child to come home. Maybe you're waiting on your body to heal or your mind to recover. Whatever you're waiting on, keep living by faith. Keep walking by faith. Keep making decisions by faith. Because faith is the reality of what you hope for, the proof of what is not seen . . . but will be soon.



Father, thank You for the gift of faith. Thank You for helping me encourage my faith so I can keep walking and living by faith. In Jesus' name, amen.