



JESUS, OUR PERFECT HOPE

365 DEVOTIONS

CHARLES F.
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THOMAS NELSON
Since 1798



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JANUARY

Sing to the LORD a new song, for He has done wonderful things, His right hand and His holy arm have gained the victory for Him.

PSALM 98:1



JANUARY 1

SOMETHING NEW

“Behold, I will do something new . . . will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness.”

ISAIAH 43:19

Perhaps you’ve grown hopeful about something new—whether it’s a new year, the start of a relationship, an exciting opportunity, or something else. Maybe you feel optimistic that you can shake free from your past mistakes and tiresome burdens. But then your heart sinks when you realize that the issues that plagued you December 31 will continue on into January 1 and beyond.

No doubt, that was the way the people of Israel felt as they awaited the Messiah year after year. What they didn’t realize was that even when they couldn’t see the incredible plan the Lord was setting in motion, He was working to fulfill His promises to them in an incredible way they could never have imagined (John 1:12–13).

The same is true for you. God is making a way for you even when you don’t see it. So don’t be discouraged because everything looks the same from one day to the next, your burdens remain, and new opportunities don’t seem to work out. Trust that at the right time, He will make you aware of all He’s done on your behalf.

Lord, thank You for working in the unseen and in unimagined ways to set me free of the things that bind me. Amen.

**My hope is in Jesus because He
is making a new way for me.**

JANUARY 2

FIXED ON JESUS

*Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom
our faith depends from beginning to end.*

HEBREWS 12:2 GNT

When you read the news headlines or think about the daily struggles you and your loved ones face, it is easy to lose heart. The challenges can certainly seem too overwhelming to overcome.

But that is why Scripture calls you to have a different focus—not looking at the circumstances before you, but having a gaze fixed on Jesus. Why? Because He is greater than whatever is happening to you. Your relationship with Christ opens the door to every blessing the Father has promised in His Word and provides all the resources you will ever need. Jesus is the reason you can have an unshakable, eternal hope that everything is going to be okay, regardless of the situation.

So no matter what you're facing today, don't think of it in terms of your strength or knowledge. Instead, consider what Jesus—the all-powerful, all-wise Savior who defeated sin and death on your behalf—can do. Certainly, He is the anchor that will always hold you steady, no matter how severe the storm may be.

*Jesus, when I get distracted or overwrought by circumstances,
always remind me to look to You. Amen.*

**My hope is in Jesus because He
is greater than anything I face.**

JANUARY 3

HIS LOVE

*We have come to know and have believed
the love which God has for us.*

1 JOHN 4:16

Read today's verse again. We *know* and *believe* God's love. Do you realize the incredible love the Father has for you? Many times, our perception of love may be marred because of our past experiences—we may think of it as conditional, having unsustainable requirements, being easily lost, or even a tool of manipulation.

Yet, John painted a different picture: "God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him" (1 John 4:9 NLT). His is not unattainable or pain-causing love. Rather, the cross is the ultimate expression of God's care—it is unconditional, generous, healing, and always seeking the best for you.

Friend, you don't have to be afraid of God's attitude toward you even when you face difficult circumstances. What's crucial is that you *know* and *believe* that He loves you in increasing measure. Because when you do, you realize that everything that touches your life must first pass through His loving purposes for you, and that even the challenges are sent for your good (Romans 8:28–39).

*Jesus, help me to embrace Your perfect love
and love You more in return. Amen.*

**My hope is in Jesus because
He loves me unconditionally.**

JANUARY 4

THE WORD OF PRAYER

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word
was with God, and the Word was God.*

JOHN 1:1

We know that in the beginning, the Lord spoke the world into creation. “God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light” (Genesis 1:3). His agent of creation was His Word, and John 1:14–18 tells us that His Word has a name: *Jesus*.

In Hebrews 7:25, we read that Jesus “lives to make intercession” for us. Think about that. The One who carried out creation is the One who prays for you. But consider what that means—what happens when He speaks out His desire to help you.

The same voice that called the universe into existence is moving people, engineering situations, and orchestrating circumstances so as to carry out His wonderful will for your life. He declares the details, the limits, the solutions of your experiences—all to teach you, to prepare you, and to draw you closer to Him.

Jesus uses His unfathomable wisdom and creative power in order to help you. So when you grow disheartened, remember who your Advocate is. He was there before the beginning, He *is* God, and He always speaks for your good. Praise Jesus’ holy name.

*Jesus, with a word, You make all things possible
for me. I trust You and praise You. Amen.*

**My hope is in Jesus because
His voice moves the universe.**

JANUARY 5

HE SEES YOU

*“How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered,
“I saw you while you were still under the fig tree.”*

JOHN 1:48 NIV

Jesus sees you—the real you. If you’ve ever felt that people don’t truly understand who you are or what’s in your heart, then know for certain there’s One who does.

This may be surprising to you. It certainly was to Nathanael. John 1:47 reports Jesus saw Nathanael and said, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” This was astounding to Nathanael because Jesus saw him under the fig tree. We are never told what Nathanael was doing there, but apparently, he was having a holy moment—one only observed by heaven. We know this because of Nathanael’s response: “You are the Son of God!” (v. 49). Nathanael recognized that Jesus saw his inmost being—his heart laid bare.

Jesus sees your inmost being as well. Regardless of how others treat you, you never have to feel unloved, unrecognized, or even invisible because your Savior *sees* you—your past, present, and future. Jesus knows your hopes, thoughts, fears, struggles, and wounds. And He loves you deeply. So trust that you matter to Him and that He leads you in the best way forward.

Jesus, thank You for seeing, loving, and providing for me. Amen.

**My hope is in Jesus because He knows
me fully and loves me completely.**

JANUARY 6

TRUTH IN PROFOUND PLACES

Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.

PSALM 51:6

Sometimes our most enduring childhood memories are formed when we feel lonely and fearful. For example, my first memory is from when I was two years old. I had an earache, my mother was at work, and I felt miserably alone with no one to comfort me.

Such experiences make an impact on our young hearts—at times creating wounds that have a profound influence on unanticipated areas of our lives. Whether we realize it or not, they ingrain certain survival instincts within us. And often, our pervasive feelings of anxiety, loneliness, unworthiness, and anger, as well as our needs for self-reliance and control, can be traced back to those early ordeals. But these are the wounds we must overcome if we are to experience the fullness of the life Jesus has made available to us.

So today, pay attention to the early memories you have. Seek God to make sense of them for you. Ask Him how they impact the trials you're facing today and why you're responding to them as you are. Then trust Him to heal those areas of your life in the way only He can.

Jesus, You know my blind spots. Expose these areas of my life so I can trust You fully. Amen.

**My hope is in Jesus because
He sets me free with His truth.**

JANUARY 7

THE FAITHFUL WITNESS

Jesus Christ, the faithful witness. . . Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood.

REVELATION 1:5

If you ever want an idea of what God is really like, all you have to do is look at Jesus. Jesus is the exact representation of the Father's unconditional love, mercy, and presence (Hebrews 1:3). He is "GOD WITH US" (Matthew 1:23).

Before the incarnation, people could only catch a glimpse of the Lord through the Law, the testimony of the prophets, and His intervention in Israel's national situation. Sadly, they tended to view Him as legalistic, distant, and full of wrath.

But Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). So when we read about Jesus forgiving sins, healing the sick, and comforting those who suffer, we see an incredible picture of who God *really* is.

Jesus gave His life so you could be liberated from everything that enslaves you. That's who your loving God is. So trust Him with whatever is troubling you. Certainly, He provides everything necessary so you can live the abundant life He created you to enjoy (Romans 8:32).

Jesus, thank You for making such a sacrifice to show me who You really are. Amen.

**My hope is in Jesus because
He is God, and He loves me.**

JANUARY 8

INVESTING IN FOREVER

“Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”

MATTHEW 16:25

Do you know why it’s important how you live your earthly life? It matters because you set the stage for eternity with it. This life may only last a few decades. But eternity is everlasting—infinite. And right now, you are creating your résumé for how you will exist forevermore—for how you will serve and the privileges and responsibilities you’re given in the unending kingdom of God (2 Timothy 2:12).

This is what Jesus meant when He spoke about storing up your treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19–21). This life is only a breath in comparison to what is to come, so it only makes sense for us to invest in those things that will last. Not worrying about titles here, but exalting the ever-reigning King of kings and Lord of lords. Not agonizing about who you rule on earth, but focusing on who you serve and witness to here so that more souls may enjoy heaven.

So live for Jesus! Certainly, that’s an investment you’ll be glad you made forevermore.

Jesus, sometimes my vision is too earth-bound. Help me always to invest my energy and passion in Your eternal kingdom. Amen.

My hope is in Jesus because He leads me to bear fruit that lasts in eternity.

JANUARY 9

DREAMING

“Listen to this dream which I have had.”

GENESIS 37:6

Joseph had a dream—a vision of his life that came from almighty God. Who wouldn't be excited about that, especially when such a dream promised great blessing and authority? Yet the mistake that Joseph made was thinking that the dream was an immediate reality rather than something the Lord would work in and through his life over the years.

It is an honest mistake that many of us make. We may believe that the path of God's plan will be easy and full of blessing. However, when we look at Joseph, David, and even Jesus, we see that the fulfillment of the Father's plan takes commitment, faith, and patience. Yes, the path of God's will *is* glorious—eternally so! But if you are struggling today because what the Lord has shown you has not yet come to pass, fret not (Psalm 37:3–9). This time of pressure and waiting are part of the process of making you into the vessel worthy of carrying out all He has planned for you to accomplish (Ephesians 2:10).

Lord, the waiting and the challenges are so difficult, but I will trust in You because You always fulfill all Your promises. Amen.

**My hope is in Jesus because He is making
the dreams He has given me into reality.**

JANUARY 10

STOP SHIFTING BLAME

*When I refused to confess my sin, my body
wasted away, and I groaned all day long.*

PSALM 32:3 NLT

It is human nature to deflect responsibility for the things we do wrong. We see it as early as the garden of Eden, when Adam said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate” (Genesis 3:12).

However, blaming someone else for our sins—though perhaps making us feel better temporarily—does nothing but damage our relationship with God and increase our woundedness. Our heavenly Father is calling out, “Stop doing this—it’s destroying you.” And we’re hiding behind excuses: “They hurt me, so I’m justified in hurting myself.” Do you see the problem?

God is calling you away from sin so you can experience the fullness of the life for which He created you. Not to shame you or make you feel worthless, but so you can enjoy His abundant purpose and peace. So stop hiding behind others and focus on Jesus. Agree with what He says. He is pointing out your sins to liberate you from them. Cease looking for people to blame and start walking in His freedom.

*Jesus, it’s difficult to stop sinning. Please help
me to confess, repent, and be free. Amen.*

**My hope is in Jesus because He
addresses issues in my life for my good.**

JANUARY 11

IN A MOMENT

*Weeping may last for the night, but a shout
of joy comes in the morning.*

PSALM 30:5

In just a moment, everything can change.

Joseph spent many seemingly interminable days in an Egyptian prison, during which it certainly must have appeared that the great dreams God had given him would never come to pass (Genesis 39–41). But then, in the twinkling of an eye, Joseph’s circumstances were transformed *radically*.

Genesis 41:14 reports, “Pharaoh sent for Joseph *at once*, and he was *quickly* brought from the prison” (NLT, emphasis added). A few verses later we read that Pharaoh proclaimed, “You will be in charge of my court, and all my people will take orders from you. Only I . . . will have a rank higher than yours” (v. 40 NLT). Joseph went from prisoner to ruling the palace—just like that.

However your circumstances may appear, the one thing that’s certain is that *they will eventually change*. So appreciate and cling to what’s good while you have it and don’t despair over the burdens and disappointments. God’s help *will come*. And just like that, He will transform your situation in ways you could never imagine.

*Jesus, help me to hold on until Your help comes.
My life is in Your hands. Amen.*

**My hope is in Jesus because He can change
everything in the twinkling of an eye.**

JANUARY 12

DECIDE TO BELIEVE

*“Did I not say to you that if you believe,
you will see the glory of God?”*

JOHN 11:40

There may be times when your struggles are so overwhelming that you'll pray, “Lord, I just can't do this anymore—not one more day, hour, second.” It may be the emotional pain that has you devastated. Or perhaps the toll on your body is too much to handle. Or maybe you've just gone too long without a glimpse that God will make a way for you. If that's where you are today, I can honestly say I know how you feel.

However, I can also confirm that Jesus consistently used those times to stretch my faith—just as He is doing with yours now. And no matter how impossible the situation, He *always* came through for me. He will for you too. But if you want to make it through the next day, hour, or minute, *you've got to get your focus on what He can do*. You must *decide in your heart you will trust Him*. Because when you do, He will comfort you with a peace that transcends understanding.

Jesus, help me see You and love You more so I can trust You more deeply—even when things are at their worst. Amen.

**My hope is in Jesus because
He always comes through for me.**

JANUARY 13

THE MORE IMPORTANT WAR

*He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and
he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.*

PROVERBS 16:32

There are people who will irritate and even infuriate you every time you see them. When you lay eyes on them, the anger rises up and you find yourself tempted to tell them what you really think of their character and behavior—even if your opinion is based on second-hand information.

In the world today, it may seem normal to air your grievances as long and as loudly as your heart desires. You may tell yourself you're standing for what's right and prevailing in an important battle. But the truth is, when you spout off uncontrollably, you're really losing—hurting yourself, others, and even Jesus' work through you.

Friend, it is always better to act like Christ in every situation: remaining patient, being loving, understanding the hurts of others, forgiving freely, and praying for those who persecute you. In that way, you're always sure to win the more important war for the greater kingdom—the one that really counts.

Jesus, purge this anger from me and replace it with compassion. Help me to forgive, love, and be the peacemaker You call me to be. Amen.

**My hope is in Jesus because He
leads me to the victories that count.**

JANUARY 14

DON'T FORGET

I shall remember the deeds of the LORD. . . . You are the God who works wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples.

PSALM 77:11, 14

Unless you are a brand-new believer, you have most likely had experiences in your life that have taught you that God is always there for you. You've bowed before Him in prayer when you were heartbroken and felt His comfort. You've turned to Him in time of need and seen His provision. You've laid the messes of your life on the altar before Him and been surprised at the good He has brought from them.

Today's struggle may be greater than all the previous ones and may tear at your heart more deeply, but the result will undoubtedly be the same. God *will* come through for you when you submit yourself to Him. The problem is that it is too easy to forget how loving and kind He really is when circumstances block your view. So today, take time to remember all the ways He has helped you and praise Him for that. Certainly, whatever is troubling you now will not seem so overwhelming.

Jesus, thank You for always helping me. Bring to mind all the ways You have blessed my life so I can praise You. Amen.

**My hope is in Jesus because
He has never let me down.**

JANUARY 15

BE IN AWE

I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted.

ISAIAH 6:1

Have you embraced the wonder and majesty of the living God? In your heart, is He the Great I AM? Do you recognize that the all-powerful Lord of creation is near to you and aware of your every need? Does a sense of worship characterize your relationship with Him?

Scripture instructs that we should “fear the LORD” (Deuteronomy 6:24; 10:12, 20; Joshua 24:14, etc.). But don’t mistake that to mean God wants you to be so afraid of Him that you avoid approaching Him. Rather, His desire is that you stand in awe of His wondrous power and ability so you’ll be confident of His loving help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

With this in mind, imagine God lifted up, exalted, with all of creation as His footstool. Picture Him easily coordinating the workings of the universe with His unfathomable wisdom and might. Then remember that His desire is for you to know Him and be known by Him. Worship, love, and honor Him, recognizing that of every creature that exists, He has singled you out as His own to love, and He will never leave you or forsake you.

Lord, I don't deserve You, but how grateful I am for Your loving-kindness. To You be all honor and glory forever. Amen.

**My hope is in Jesus because He
is sovereign over all creation.**

JANUARY 16

OVERCOME

*In all these things we overwhelmingly
conquer through Him who loved us.*

ROMANS 8:37

There are experiences in life that are extremely difficult to get over. Whether it's the loss of a loved one, the end of a career, failing health, or other circumstances—the impact can be devastating. We can be left feeling that our identity, worth, and security have been undermined and even destroyed. Those difficulties can also rock our understanding of God to the core. We may try to move on, but really, it takes everything we have just to exist; our progress is strangled by the hurts of the past.

Is this you? Are you unable to move forward because of something that's happened to you? Certainly, there are losses that take time to heal. But you know when you're stuck—when you feel you'll never get over something.

Don't just exist—there's *more* for you! Release your injury to the Great Physician. Forgive whomever God reveals is a source of bitterness—even if it's Him; even if it's yourself. Not only will He help you get over your experience, but He will give you meaning in it. So allow Jesus to lead you to victory by submitting even your greatest hurts to Him.

*Lord, You know how painful this experience is. But I trust
You to bring healing and significance from it. Amen.*

**My hope is in Jesus because
He helps me overcome.**

JANUARY 17

TRUSTWORTHY GUIDANCE

Study this Book of Instruction continually. . . . Be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.

JOSHUA 1:8 NLT

Guidance. It's one of those important things we all long for. We want to take the best path for our lives—the one that leads to success. However, it seems many people ignore or reject the one source for godly direction that never fails. They mistakenly believe that God's Word is intended to deny us pleasure or keep us oppressed. However, nothing could be further from the truth.

The Lord has given us Scripture for our good. He made us—He understands our limitations, drives, and faults. He recognizes what will give us the greatest sense of freedom, fulfillment, purpose, and hope. He also desires to teach us the best way to give and receive love so we can function in a healthy manner. In other words, He has given us His Word so that we can experience the fullness of the life He's given us.

So, don't ignore God's Word. Embrace Scripture and allow Him to teach and guide you through it. In it is the path of success for which you long.

Jesus, increase my love for Your Word and guide me through it—for Yours is the only success I truly long for. Amen.

**My hope is in Jesus because
He is the living Word of God.**

JANUARY 18

MOTIVATED TO CLEANSE

*He poured water into the basin,
and began to wash the disciples' feet.*

JOHN 13:5

It's one of the most beautiful pictures in the Word of God: the Savior of the world takes on the task of the lowliest servant of a household and bathes His disciples' feet. He does so to foreshadow the greater cleansing He will accomplish on the cross, washing us free from our sins.

Yet notice what motivated His loving act: "Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. So he got up from the table . . . and poured water into a basin" (John 13:3–5 NLT). Knowing all power was His, understanding that He would soon return to His heavenly throne, recognizing that He could do absolutely anything—*He chose to cleanse them.*

That is the Savior you serve. With every resource at His disposal, He sets out to free you of whatever may hinder you from experiencing His love. So don't be afraid of what He is doing in your life, no matter how confusing it may seem. Trust and obey Him because He truly has your best interests at heart.

Jesus, thank You for not rejecting me because of the impurity in my life, but instead choosing to free me from it. Amen.

**My hope is in Jesus because
He does what's best for me.**

JANUARY 19

ASPIRE TO SERVICE

“Since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other’s feet.”

JOHN 13:14 NLT

We often think about the pinnacle of success as being a great leader or achieving astounding feats. Yet, what we read yesterday was that with all power and authority at His disposal, Jesus chose to wash the disciples’ feet in a beautiful act of service. And the wonderful thing is that He did that in order to help us.

When Jesus models what He wants us to do, it is something that any of us can accomplish: *we can serve others.*

The world may not put a premium on what you do and may even look down on you for it. But when you are lovingly serving others in Jesus’ name, you are pleasing the only One who counts—and that is God Himself. So don’t fret when you’re asked to complete a task that appears “below you.” Instead, think of Jesus, serve faithfully, and count on the fact that when you “humble [yourself] in the presence of the Lord . . . He will exalt you” (James 4:10).

Lord Jesus, being humble is difficult, but I will follow Your example and serve with love. Amen.

My hope is in Jesus because He’s the One who gives worth to my service.