

POWER IN HOPE

365 DEVOTIONS FOR MEN




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A list of Bible translations used in this devotional can be found on page 383.

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IN AN INCREASINGLY TROUBLED WORLD, THERE IS POWER IN HOPE.

The apostle Paul prayed, “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)—and this new devotional is designed to help you find the blessings God offers.

Through 365 readings, both contemporary and classic (from the works of Charles Spurgeon, Andrew Murray, D. L. Moody, and John Wesley), *Power in Hope* is designed to spur you on to:

- greater trust in God
- a more positive outlook on life
- a deeper impact on your world

Joy, peace, overflowing hope. . . what could be better than that? *Power in Hope* will guide you to God’s strength for daily life.

DAY 1

THE LORD IS YOUR BANNER

*Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee,
that it may be displayed because of the truth.*

PSALM 60:4 KJV



In a time of suffering, uncertainty, and loss, God desires to be the rallying point for His people, setting up a banner of safety and security for them when disaster strikes.

A time of crisis may prove to be the most revealing moment in showing where we have placed our trust. People set up all kinds of safety nets, from financial protections, to security systems, to personal networks, all of which can provide a measure of shelter in their own right. However, none of these banners are adequate to provide protection in a truly life-altering crisis.

Today is the day to see the reality of God's presence in the world and to respond to Him with a healthy respect and fear, recognizing Him as the Creator of the world and the Sustainer of His people. Just as the people of Israel confessed their failures and faithlessness, there is time today for God's people to confess their misplaced trust.

Times of suffering can upend fragile security networks and demolish our hope for the future. Only God can look ahead into the lives of His people and promise restoration, justice, and His comforting presence. His banner has been extended for all to see. Those whose hearts are hardened against Him will seek their own protection and security, but those who rest in Him will find a ready support in time of need.

DAY 2

STRENGTH THROUGH TRIBULATIONS

Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance.

ROMANS 5:3 NIV



If we had to guess what words flowed through the pen of the apostle Paul following today's verse, we might try this: "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger."

Of course that's not what Paul wrote, but it might make a good summary for what he actually jotted down. He wrote that perseverance produces "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 5:4–5 NIV).

Right! We might think after reading those words. *What doesn't kill me truly can make me stronger.*

Paul knew as well as anyone that God could and did use his suffering and tribulation (and he endured more than his share of both during his ministry) to strengthen him and to give him the character and drive it took to endure whatever a hostile world threw at him.

Just as an athlete's training regimen tears his body down to make it stronger and more fit for competition, tribulation can make us stronger, more Christlike, and better fit for the work God has given us to do.

DAY 3

IF YOU SEEK GOD, YOU'LL FIND HIM

But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

DEUTERONOMY 4:29 KJV



At the lowest point for the people of Israel, the Lord offered them hope for the future. Even if they had trusted in other gods, suffered defeat on the battlefield, saw the Lord's temple destroyed, and were sent off into exile, all was not lost. Even if they were suffering the consequences of their sins, God could not forget His people. They were never cut off from His covenant even though they had often abandoned Him.

On the other side of disobedience, calamity, and exile, the Lord offered His people the hope of restoration if they made a single but significant change to their lives: They could no longer divide their loyalties. They had to be fully committed to the search for God. Israel's problem throughout history was that the people too often sought other deities as sources of comfort and deliverance. They weren't seeking God with all of their hearts.

Those who fully committed themselves to pursuing the Lord, however, were promised that they would find Him. They were assured that God could still be found. They still had hope because of His mercy.

God never plays hard to get with His people. Those who seek will find Him, provided they seek with all their hearts.

DAY 4

Classics: Andrew Murray

CHRIST IN YOU

For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

I THESSALONIANS 1:9-10 KJV



There is such a danger of our being so occupied with the things that are coming more than with Him who is to come; there is such scope in the study of coming events for imagination and reason and human ingenuity, that nothing but deeply humble waiting on God can save us from mistaking the interest and pleasure of intellectual study for the true love of Him and His appearing.

All ye that say ye wait for Christ's coming, *be sure that ye wait on God now*. All ye who seek to wait on God now to reveal His Son in you, see to it that ye do so as men waiting for the revelation of His Son from heaven. The hope of that glorious appearing will strengthen you in waiting upon God for what He is to do in you now: the same omnipotent love that is to reveal that glory is working in you even now to fit you for it.

DAY 5

DESCENDANTS AND DESTINIES

He remembers his covenant forever, the promise he made, for a thousand generations.

PSALM 105:8 NIV



Have you ever wondered what value there is in studying the genealogies in the Bible? If so, today's scripture provides a meaningful answer.

In Psalm 105, the poet uses the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to rehearse how God keeps His promises and to remind His children that they have not been forgotten. The detail in the list of names encouraged the original recipients of the psalm and, by extension, later readers like us, who can take comfort from their encouragement.

First Chronicles also uses genealogy to show God's promise-keeping character, but in addition it shows His interest in individuals, not just nations. The detailed way God kept His promises and showed His compassion to the individuals and families in the Old Testament is the same way He will keep His promises and show His compassion to you and yours.

Paul's sermon in Acts 13 traces the lineage of Jesus from Israel's ancestors through their stay in Egypt, their inheritance of the Promised Land, and their transition from having judges to kings (see Acts 13:14–34). Paul's historical development reminds readers that God's promise of a Messiah was fulfilled in detail—detail that continues to impact every man's destiny.

Will you look for God in the details of your routines today?

DAY 6

BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH

When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

LUKE 7:9-10 KJV



The centurion did an extraordinary thing. In effect, he prayed to Jesus while the Lord still walked earth as a man!

We might petition God for help or healing through heartfelt prayers sent heavenward. We trust they will be answered, but we don't expect God to turn up personally in all His glory. He doesn't need to. We have faith in His power regardless.

After his initial message the centurion sent a postscript affirming that Jesus didn't have to attend in person. He just had to say the word. The centurion had a faith that impressed even Jesus.

But he had more than that. He recognized both the power of God *and* his own unworthiness. He was deemed "worthy" by his Jewish neighbors because he loved their nation and had built a synagogue, but he himself had a humbler view of his standing. Nevertheless, he trusted that God could and would act powerfully on his behalf.

In the book of Mark, Jesus tells us to love God and our neighbor. If you've ever wondered exactly how to do that, follow this centurion's example.

DAY 7

HOPE IN THE LORD

*Unrelenting disappointment leaves you heartsick,
but a sudden good break can turn life around.*

PROVERBS 13:12 MSG



Although difficulties are woven into the very fabric of life (and many are designed by God to draw us close to Himself), He also knows that a constant onslaught of problems can frustrate us and cause us to give up in despair. That's why He frequently sends relief in answer to our prayers.

Sometimes we can get by without the whole problem being solved immediately. But we desperately need a glimmer of hope to know that God is with us and that He will eventually work everything out. So we pray, "Send me a sign of your favor" (Psalm 86:17 NLT).

But how can you know that God even *desires* to do you good? Because He promises this repeatedly in His Word—stating clearly that He will supply what you need, bring peace to troubled situations, and relieve intense pressure. When an unknown psalmist was downhearted and discouraged, he prayed, "I am counting on the LORD; yes, I am counting on him. I have put my hope in his word" (Psalm 130:5 NLT). He put his faith in God's promises.

If you pray for it and look for it, God will not only send you a sign of His favor, thereby giving you hope. He will ultimately send His full cavalry charging in to rescue you.

DAY 8

BETTER DAYS AHEAD

*“You will surely forget your trouble,
recalling it only as waters gone by.”*

JOB 11:16 NIV



Job's friends got a lot of things wrong, but occasionally they swerved into truth. Today's scripture, a statement by Zophar the Naamathite, is supported by other verses throughout the Bible.

No matter how difficult your circumstances may be right now, a time will come when things are better—either on this earth or in heaven. Soon enough you'll be laughing again, forgetting the troubles that had been so severe. They'll be as waters that have evaporated away. It's vital to remember when passing through tests that God's favor lasts forever; His discipline, by contrast, is usually brief. As David said of God, "His anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning" (Psalm 30:5 NIV).

God gets no pleasure from causing suffering to His children. He allows that suffering, true, but only to bring about good in your life. The prophet Isaiah promised that "the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones" (49:13 NIV).

DAY 9

Classics: Andrew Murray

KEEP HIS WAYS

Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.

DEUTERONOMY 8:6 KJV



Let no one give way to the fear, "I cannot keep His ways." It is this that robs one of every confidence.

It is true you have not the strength yet to keep all His ways. But keep carefully those for which you have received strength already. Surrender yourself willingly and trustingly to keep all God's ways, in the strength which will come in waiting on Him.

Give up your whole being to God without reserve and without doubt; He will prove Himself God to you and work in you that which is pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ. Keep His ways as you know them in the Word. Keep His ways, as nature teaches them, in always doing what appears right. Keep His ways as Providence points them out. Keep His ways as the Holy Spirit suggests.

Do not think of waiting on God while you say you are not willing to work in His path. However weak you feel, only be willing, and He who has worked to will, will work to do by His power.