

The Prayer Jar

DEVOTIONAL

H O P E





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HOPE



According to Webster's Dictionary, the word *hope* means "desire with expectation of obtaining what is desired, or belief that it is obtainable." The Bible's definition of hope is "the anticipation of a favorable outcome under God's guidance."

If ever there was a time that our world needs hope, it's now. Some people sink into depression when they feel there is no hope; others turn to alcohol, drugs, and other addictions. The truth is, without Christ, there is no hope. That is why those who are Christians can feel hopeful even during the most unsettling circumstances.

We have hope because we have faith in a trustworthy God. People who've placed their hope in someone or something other than Jesus are often disappointed. The Lord wants us to live each day with spiritual and emotional anticipation that a favorable outcome is in our future. We are to remind ourselves of the promises of God—and trust in the One who is faithful in keeping His promises.

It is my prayer that each person who reads this devotional will find within its pages the true hope that comes from having a personal relationship with God's one and only Son, Jesus—the Savior of the world. Every believer can have hope for the future, a renewed faith in God, and the assurance that He is always with us. It's because of Him that we can always have hope.

*Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us,
according as we hope in thee.*

PSALM 33:22 KJV



WHAT IS A PRAYER JAR?



One of the most important things we can do to keep hope alive is pray. The Bible tells us in James 4:8 that if we want to draw closer to God, we are to reach out to Him. By going to God in prayer, we are able to offer our adoration, petitions, intercession, and thanks to Him. One thing we can do to remind ourselves to pray often is make a prayer jar and place it where we will see it every day. Each time we look at the jar, we will think of who and what we want to pray for. A prayer jar can deepen our relationship with God and strengthen our faith.

A prayer jar can be something as simple as a canning jar. It can be left plain or decorated with ribbon, stickers, buttons, sequins, feathers, or glitter. The one I use is an antique canning jar, which I've left plain. I write my prayer requests, verses of scripture, or notes of thanks to God on small pieces of paper. After praying about the request or reflecting on the Bible verse, I fold the paper in half and place it in the prayer jar. From time to time, I take out one or more of the prayers—and if that particular prayer has been answered, I thank the Lord for answered prayer and then write down the date. If my prayer request has not yet been answered, it goes back into the jar. Do you have a special prayer request today? If so, consider creating your own prayer jar.





HOPE

for Strength



Have you ever felt so weak, physically or emotionally, that you thought you couldn't go on? In your own strength, did you try to keep forging ahead, or did you take time to pray about it? If you're like me, you sometimes try to do things in your own strength, hoping everything will turn out as it should. But hoping for strength isn't enough. As Christians, we need to rely on God's power to strengthen and help us with all the challenges we face. Isaiah 40:31 (KJV) is a good verse to focus on during times when you feel that your strength is gone: "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

My greatest times of growth have been when I reached the end of my resources and realized that all I had left was Jesus. God uses suffering and our weaknesses to make us rely on Him. His grace is sufficient even when we feel weak, and during such times, God can make us stronger than we have ever been.

Aren't you glad that whenever we face trials in this life, God is with us and He renews our strength and faith? "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD" (Psalm 31:24 KJV).

RENEWABLE STRENGTH

*Those who trust in the LORD will renew their strength;
they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and
not grow weary; they will walk and not faint.*

ISAIAH 40:31 HCSB



The alarm goes off. Still heavy with sleep, you reluctantly pull your arm out from underneath the covers and hit the SNOOZE button. *Just one more minute*, you think to yourself, *and then I'll get up. Perhaps then I'll have the energy to face this day.*

Those kinds of thoughts speak to the spirit of women who aren't necessarily morning people. We wonder how and where we're going to get the strength to accomplish all the things we want or need to do today.

Yet God has another message He'd like you to engrave on your mind. And that's the hope that *He* will give you all the strength you need to get through your day. Only one ingredient is necessary: your trust in Him.

Each day, ask God what He would have you do. And He will give you the energy to do it. How is this possible? Well, He's God. "He never grows faint or weary" (Isaiah 40:28 HCSB).

Lord, I hope in Your strength, knowing You will give me the energy to do what You would have me do today. Amen.

PRAYER JAR INSPIRATION:

God will renew my strength each day.



PERSONALLY AHEAD

“So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the LORD your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you.”

DEUTERONOMY 31:6 NLT



The world can be a very scary place. We never know what might be waiting for us around the next corner, the next bend in the road. And overloading ourselves on news about wars, viruses, random shootings, and such makes us even more anxious and fearful. Yet that is *not* what God wants for us.

Moses had gotten God’s people as far as the Jordan River. And just beyond that river was the Promised Land. From that moment on, Joshua would have to lead God’s people. So, in his farewell address to the Israelites, Moses told them that they could be strong and brave. They need not panic nor be afraid—because God Himself was going ahead of them. He would always be there for them.

The same holds true for you. You are one of God’s followers. So put all panic, fear, and weakness behind you. Instead, walk in the hope that God is going ahead of you personally. And always will.

Thank You, Lord, for giving me the strength and courage to go on, to go where You lead. Amen.

PRAYER JAR INSPIRATION:

God, lead the way in Your strength.



CALLED FOR

On the day I called, You answered me; and You made me bold and confident with [renewed] strength in my life.

PSALM 138:3 AMP



Day after day goes by, and still you cannot seem to find the strength to do what your heart truly desires: to fulfill the plans God has set before you. What's a woman to do?

Pray. Go to God. Sit, kneel, prostrate yourself before Him. Push from your mind all the ifs, ands, or buts that stand between you and the goals God has planted in your heart. Allow yourself to be filled with the Spirit's presence. Focus on your breath, allowing it to match the endless rhythm of God's heartbeat. And when you sense God within and without, call on Him. Make your request known. If you cannot put it into words, present your groans and moans, knowing the Spirit will translate your petition, knowing that God will answer your request or change it so that your desire matches His will.

Ask God to give you the courage and strength you need to do what He has called you to do—no matter how impossible or improbable it may seem. Then rise up, filled with the hope and certainty that what God deems to be will become your reality.

Lord, I call on You for strength to realize my dream.

PRAYER JAR INSPIRATION:

God of all living, renew my strength; embolden my heart.



ALWAYS FOUND

God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found in times of trouble. Therefore we will not be afraid.

PSALM 46:1-2 HCSB



The world is constantly changing. Things we never imagined would ever happen are becoming the norm—especially the unpredictable weather. Because of climate change, we’re seeing extreme weather patterns raging all around us.

Fortunately, we have God in our lives. We have a Savior, an eternal Helper, who has proved in the past and the present that He’s always there for us. In Him, we can put all our hope and find our refuge and strength amid troubled times. “Therefore we will not be afraid, though the earth trembles and the mountains topple into the depths of the seas, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with its turmoil” (Psalm 46:2-3 HCSB).

Woman of God, you never need to fear or feel too weak to find your footing in the flood or to secure a safe place behind the flames of fire. God will always be there for you to give you strength.

Holy Refuge and Strength, thank You for always being there when trouble comes. Because of Your constant presence amid flood, wind, and fire, I will find the strength when I need it.

PRAYER JAR INSPIRATION:

God of strength, be my constant Refuge in this time. Help me keep my eyes on You.



REMADE

After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace [who imparts His blessing and favor], who called you to His own eternal glory in Christ, will Himself complete, confirm, strengthen, and establish you [making you what you ought to be].

I PETER 5:10 AMP



Life can be difficult. But even though you may experience some suffering now and then, you are not to lose hope. Instead, remember that the Lord of all creation—the One who fashioned you for a special purpose that only *you* can live out—may allow some trouble to come your way so that you become the woman He created you to be. It's true! God will use those difficulties to strengthen you, to transform you into the precious daughter *He already considers you to be*.

When God saw Gideon cowering in a corner, He addressed him as a mighty warrior! How could this man in hiding—the one whose family was the weakest in his tribe and who was the youngest in his family—be a warrior? By going in the strength he had, knowing God was with him (Judges 6:11–14).

So, woman of God, go in the strength you have. Be the woman the Lord already knows you are. And do so without fear, knowing He goes with you.

Thank You, Lord, for making me complete in Your eyes.

PRAYER JAR INSPIRATION:

God remakes me in His strength and presence.



FALSE HOPE

A king is not saved by a large army; a warrior will not be delivered by great strength. The horse is a false hope for safety; it provides no escape by its great power.

PSALM 33:16-17 HCSB



When you find yourself in trouble, you might look to friends and family for strength and power. You may even look to money or possessions to help you escape the evil that is coming your way.

Yet other people—no matter how much they love you or how much wisdom they possess—cannot deliver you. Neither can money or possessions. But God—the One before whom the entire earth trembles, the One who parted seas and made the earth open up—can save you. For the Lord is the One who “spoke, and it [the world] came into being; He commanded, and it came into existence” (Psalm 33:9 HCSB).

If you are looking to be saved, to get yourself out of an impossible situation, turn to God. He is the One who has the strength to save you. He is the One who rules all peoples and all nature. He is the One who will remove the mountain of obstacles standing in your way and the evils barreling toward you. Put your hope in Him, the One who is never false.

Save me, Lord, by Your great strength.

PRAYER JAR INSPIRATION:

God, the All-Powerful, is my only true hope.

I entrust myself and all that I am to Him.



PEP TALK

“No man will [be able to] stand before you [to oppose you] as long as you live. Just as I was [present] with Moses, so will I be with you; I will not fail you or abandon you. Be strong and confident and courageous.”

JOSHUA 1:5-6 AMP



After Moses died, God gave Joshua a good pep talk. He told him that just as He had been with Moses—guiding him, giving him encouragement and strength—He would be with Joshua. He would never fail him nor leave him. It was these words that gave Joshua the power to go on with the grand plan God had outlined for him as an individual and for the people he would lead.

God has a grand plan for you as well. And even though you may at times feel alone on the road He has set before you, He is walking right beside you. He will neither fail nor abandon you. Knowing that will give you all the strength, confidence, and courage you need to see things through.

Thank You, Lord, for this pep talk. I needed it so much right now. Knowing that You are walking at my side and will never abandon me gives me the strength and courage to do whatever You would have me do. In Jesus' name. Amen.

PRAYER JAR INSPIRATION:

God forever walks by my side, enabling me to do what He has called me to do.



A STRONG TOWER

The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous runs to it and is safe and set on high [far above evil].

PROVERBS 18:10 AMP



When the world is crumbling down around you, when the load on you is so heavy you can barely breathe, when you are feeling weaker than weak, there is a place you can go. To Yahweh, the Lord. His name is a strong tower. You can run to Him and find safety from all that bedevils and bewilders you. In His name, you can rise above every evil that threatens you. As you look down from His tower, all the troubles of this world become mere flotsam floating by, drifting way below you and out to an endless sea.

For the Lord's name is faithfulness, power, mercy, compassion, love, protection, safety, grace, goodness, and wisdom. All those things—all that He is—surround you when you reside in the tower of His strength.

So the next time troubles tap on your door or worries threaten to wound you, run to the name of the Lord. Shut the door behind you. And allow Him to renew you, to replenish your strength, to shield you from what threatens to harm you. In Him, you are safe.

Lord, my Mercy and Strength, to You I run.

PRAYER JAR INSPIRATION:

I find hope, shelter, and strength in the name of my Lord.



A DIFFERENT TUNE

“The LORD is my strength and my song; he has given me victory. This is my God, and I will praise him—my father’s God, and I will exalt him! The LORD is a warrior; Yahweh is his name!”

EXODUS 15:2–3 NLT



Trouble is a relative term. To some it can mean a broken fingernail that snags some yarn while knitting. To others it can mean losing a job and not being able to pay the mortgage, or being ill and not having a way to get to the doctor, or being asked for a divorce just after moving to a new town, or being diagnosed with breast cancer and waiting to hear your options, or having a tree fall on your house just when you’ve finished remodeling the kitchen.

Yet none of those scenarios seem as troublesome as when the Israelites found themselves standing between an Egyptian army and the Red Sea. But God brought them out of that predicament. He did the impossible, parting the waters so His people could cross on dry land. Then He brought the waters back so their enemy would drown and never be seen again!

When you find yourself between a rock and a hard place, remember your Strength and Song. Call on God’s power. And you’ll find yourself singing a different tune in no time!

Help me, Lord! Give me strength amid trouble!

PRAYER JAR INSPIRATION:

God will change my song of pain to one of praise!



CONTINUALLY LOOKING

*Search for the LORD and for his strength; continually seek him.
Remember the wonders he has performed. . . . Honor and
majesty surround him; strength and joy fill his dwelling.*

1 CHRONICLES 16:11-12, 27 NLT



Every day a woman has her full list of chores before her—if not on paper then on the screen of her mind. With such a long list of have-to-dos or want-to-dos, she can easily get caught up in the busyness of her day and rarely take a moment to think about God, maybe forgetting Him entirely. Before she knows it, the sun has set, and she's too weak to do anything but flop into bed.

Yet that's not what God has envisioned for His Eves. He wants them to be continually looking for His presence and His strength. To be seeking Him every moment of every day. God wants His daughters to remind themselves of the wonders He has done and is doing and will do in the future. For only in the Lord will His girls find all the strength and joy they hope for at the beginning, middle, and end of each day.

*Help me, Lord, to keep my mind and eyes
looking for You in every moment of my day.*

PRAYER JAR INSPIRATION:

I'll be looking for You, Lord, around every corner!



STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you [My lovingkindness and My mercy are more than enough—always available—regardless of the situation]; for [My] power is being perfected [and is completed and shows itself most effectively] in [your] weakness.” Therefore, I will all the more gladly boast in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ [may completely enfold me and] may dwell in me.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9 AMP



What do you do with your hope when you've prayed and prayed and prayed and still gotten no relief from God for your physical, mental, or emotional trouble? Do you give up on Him, or do you turn to Him even more?

The apostle Paul had a “thorn in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:7) that tormented him. Three times he asked the Lord to take it away from him. But Jesus told him that His grace, His abundant and continual supply of love and mercy, was enough to carry Paul through his trouble. That *His* strength and power were going to work best through Paul's weakness.

So, don't lean into the enemy's whispers that God has abandoned you. Instead, tap into the abundant grace and power that Christ is pouring into you. Then you too will find the joy of Christ's strength dwelling in and enfolding you even in moments of weakness.

Enfold me, Lord, in Your power and strength.

PRAYER JAR INSPIRATION:

My hope in Christ lives on!



GOOD THINGS TO COME

*“The grass withers and the flowers fade,
but the word of our God stands forever.”*

ISAIAH 40:8 NLT



The things of this world are always changing. Every year, the grass turns brown and the flowers shrivel. The leaves fall and the trees stand bare. The butterflies and birds find other places to display their beauty. The snow comes, transforming the world into a white wonderland. Then just when you cannot take another day of ice and frigid winds, the crocuses begin to pop up, displaying their beauty once more. Upon seeing them, your hope of new things to come bursts through your winter doldrums, just as it did the year before.

Yes, much in this world is changeable. There's not much you can count on, as nothing remains the same. Except for God. And His Word. They never change. And because they never change, you can find your rock-solid strength in both.

Today, sink your mind into God's Word. Let Him and His promises give you the strength you need to love as He loves, to live as He would have you live—in the hope that good things are within your reach, with even more to come.

*Thank You, Lord, for the strength I find in
Your eternal presence and Word. Amen.*

PRAYER JAR INSPIRATION:

In God's never-changing Word, I find my hope and strength.



ENCIRCLED WITH STRENGTH

The God who encircles me with strength and makes my way blameless? He makes my feet like hinds' feet [able to stand firmly and tread safely on paths of testing and trouble]; He sets me [securely] upon my high places.

PSALM 18:32-33 AMP



Society may consider you, as a female, to be a member of the weaker sex. But in God's eyes you are anything but weak. Why? Because it is God, the One who created and sustains the planet you're standing on, who encircles you with His strength. It is God who aims you in the right direction so that you won't run afoul of any evil.

And it is this same Lord of lords who helps you so that you can have a firm footing. You can walk safely on life's roadway of challenges and troubles. With God in your life, you can stand strong on the highest of heights!

Today, remember in whom all your hopes lie. Feel the Lord's power encircling your entire being—mind, body, spirit, and soul. Get it into your head that He not only shields you but gives you the energy and power to do all you need to do. Who knows how high you will grow!

*Encircle me with Your strength, Lord,
and my feet will stay steady on Your path.*

PRAYER JAR INSPIRATION:

God encircles my entire being with His strength!

