



refresh your hope

60 DEVOTIONS FOR TRUSTING GOD
WITH ALL YOUR HEART

LORI HATCHER

“Lori Hatcher has a gift of reminding us of God’s promises and character through her captivating stories and life experiences. As someone who leads an organization that offers Christian hope to hurting and confused people, I value *Refresh Your Hope* as a daily boost of encouragement to persevere in both life and ministry.”

—Mark Baumgartner, founder and executive director of
A Moment of Hope

“You’re longing for renewed hope. This book will lead you to the water of hope that never fades. Biblical, practical, and authentic. Renewed hope beckons like cool water on every page.”

—Lori Stanley Roeleveld, author of *Colorful Connections: 12 Questions about Race That Open Healthy Conversations*

“As a woman who has served in a lifetime of pastoral ministry alongside my husband, I am continually searching for biblically rooted, theologically sound resources to recommend to those who are wrestling with faith in the midst of deep difficulties. If the content is engaging and compelling, it’s a bonus! Lori Hatcher’s new devotional *Refresh Your Hope* is just what I’ve been searching for. Like Jesus, Lori uses the power of story to draw modern-day applications from the timeless truths of Scripture, and she does so in a winsome, relatable way. By focusing on the nature, work, and Word of God, *Refresh Your Hope* leads readers out of despair into a place of joyful faith.”

—Maggie Wallem Rowe, author of *This Life We Share: 52 Reflections on Journeying Well with God and Others*

“‘Hope,’ concludes Lori Hatcher, ‘is the ability to look forward to the future with certainty and joyful anticipation.’ In *Refresh Your Hope*, Lori gives us reason after reason to look beyond the chaos of our current times and put our trust in God, the One who is Lord of all our yesterdays, todays, and tomorrows. Like a master artist, she paints the details of hope into her book as she invites us to explore who God is, what He does, and what He says that give every evidence for us to move forward in hope.”

—Karen Wingate, author of the ECPA Award winner, *With Fresh Eyes: 60 Insights into the Miraculously Ordinary from a Woman Born Blind*



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Refresh Your Hope: 60 Devotions for Trusting God with All Your Heart

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To protect the privacy of individuals, some names, characteristics, and identifying details have been changed; others have been used with permission.

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To my precious Lord and Savior,
the only true and unwavering
source of hope

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Introduction

Our Unshakable Hope Is Rooted in God

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

The poet Emily Dickinson wrote,

“Hope” is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops—at all.

In four simple lines she captured the essence of what lifts every human being out of bed in the morning, moves us through our days, and enables us to persevere when life gets hard.

We hope we'll accomplish something meaningful. We hope someone will love us. We hope our lives will be free from pain. And if it's not, we hope tomorrow will be a better day.

For many, hope is nothing more than a wish. A yearning for something our heart desires. An expectancy that we'll gain the object of our affection. This type of wishful hope rises and falls with the winds of chance and circumstance. It has no solid basis and is usually tied to something or someone temporal.

Thousands of years before Emily Dickinson penned her famous lines, another writer described a different source of hope—a constant and sure One. “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him,” the apostle Paul wrote, “so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

J. I. Packer, in his book *Never beyond Hope*, differentiates between worldly and biblical hope. “Optimism is a wish without warrant; Christian hope is a certainty, guaranteed by God himself. Optimism reflects ignorance as to whether good things will ever actually come. Christian hope expresses knowledge that every day of his life, and every moment beyond it, the believer can say with truth, on the basis of God’s own commitment, that the best is yet to come.”¹

The concept of hope, then, is a biblical one. The word appears 158 times in the New International Version of the Bible. These verses describe three sources of sure and certain hope: God’s character, God’s work, and God’s Word.

“No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame” (Psalm 25:3).

“For what you have done I will always praise you in the presence of your faithful people. And I will hope in your name, for your name is good” (Psalm 52:9).

“You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word” (Psalm 119:114).

Every day we have a choice where to look for hope—to created things or to our Creator. The world tells us to hope in money, luck, determination, relationships, skills, and our own abilities. God tells us to look to Him.

The world disappoints us—again and again—but God will never fail us. The hope He offers doesn’t rise and fall with changing circumstances. It is solid and secure.

God’s version of hope doesn’t promise to deliver our personal definition of happiness. It assures us that He’ll order the events of our lives to refine us and make us more like His Son. Only there will we find the deep and abiding joy we crave.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon once shared that New Zealanders have a word for hope that signifies “the swimming thought.” He used the term to describe the hope God offers, “because when all other thoughts are drowned, hope still swims.”²

I pray that the sixty biblical reasons I share in this book, and thousands more tucked into the pages of Scripture, will “fill you with all joy and peace” and cause you to “overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

May hope swim in your life forever.



Part 1

God's Nature (Who God Is)





God Is Good

I say to myself, “The LORD is my portion;
therefore I will wait for him.” The LORD
is good to those whose hope is in him,
to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait
quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

LAMENTATIONS 3:24-26

Romeo, my friend Alicia’s Rhodesian ridgeback, was amazingly well-trained. His great size and fearsome appearance demanded it. Known as lion hunters on their native continent of Africa, Rhodesian ridgebacks were recognized for their ability to harass a lion while staying out of its reach until a hunter could shoot it.

Romeo’s ancestors may have been lion hunters, but he was a gentle giant. Although he weighed more than one hundred pounds and was tall enough to rest his front paws on his owner’s shoulders, he was docile and, at times, cowardly. Loud noises sent him scurrying behind Alicia’s chair as she sat in her home office.

Nevertheless, because he had the size and strength to injure someone, Alicia knew she had to train him well. She taught him to walk on a leash without pulling and sit and stay on command. To avoid a tussle over food, she taught him she was master over his daily portion. He was not permitted to dive in until she said, “Okay.”

To train Romeo to wait for his food, she commanded him to sit and stay. Then, with one hand on his chest, she set his bowl in front of him. “Wait,” she said. Whenever he moved, she restrained him. “Wait . . .”

At first, she waited thirty seconds or so to release him. Then she said, “Okay, Romeo. Good boy!” She lifted her hand from his chest and allowed him to eat.

As he gained self-control and learned to trust that Alicia would allow him to eat—every time—he no longer needed her hand on his chest to restrain him. She gradually increased the time between when she set the bowl before him and when she allowed him to dig in. Eventually, she could put his food down and leave the room, knowing he’d wait quietly.

One day she commanded him to sit and stay, then set down his bowl.

“Mom,” her daughter called from upstairs, “can you help me get a game down from the closet?” Alicia ran upstairs, snagged the game from the top shelf, and headed back down. On her way to the kitchen, she glanced out the window and noticed the mail carrier making his rounds. She stepped outside, retrieved the mail, and came back in. Settling into her chair, she flipped through the mail.

“Mom,” her daughter called again, this time from the kitchen. “Come look at Romeo.”

“Oh gosh,” Alicia said, jumping up from her chair. “I forgot to release him.”

She rounded the corner to see her trusting and hopeful dog sitting right where she'd left him—waiting in front of his food bowl, saliva dripping from his jowls and forming a puddle at his feet.

In this world, we often use the word *hope* as synonymous with an optimistic emotion, but in the Bible, two Old Testament words translated “hope” (*yakhal* and *qavah*) refer to waiting.

In Lamentations 3:21, “Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope,” Jeremiah used the word *yakhal*. This is the same word translated “will wait for” in verse 24. “I say to myself, ‘The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.’”

The translation of these two words reminds us that biblical hope—waiting in expectation—doesn't require feeling optimistic about whatever's going on in our lives. Our hope is firmly rooted in God's character and faithfulness to bring about a future good.

Thankfully, because God is good, He never forgets us like Alicia forgot Romeo. He doesn't wander away, get distracted by what's going on elsewhere, or direct His attention to someone or something else. He's always working within His nature to accomplish His perfect will for us (Philippians 2:13). When we place our hope in His good nature and seek Him with all our hearts, we can wait in quiet hope for Him to fulfill all His good purposes for us.

Take Heart

God's character and good nature enable us to wait in confident hope for Him to bring about good in our lives.

From the Heart

Father, I'm so grateful that you are unquestioningly good. Because your nature doesn't change, when the circumstances of my life are hard, I can rest in hope. During the waiting times, I can look back on your goodness—to me and to believers down through the ages—and smile at the future. Remind me during the trying times how you've faithfully cared for me all the days of my life. In the strong name of Jesus I ask, amen.



2

God Is Patient

But for that very reason I was shown mercy
so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ
Jesus might display his immense patience as
an example for those who would believe in
him and receive eternal life.

1 TIMOTHY 1:16

When you're so bad they don't even want you in prison, you know you're bad.

Really, really bad.

That was Jimmy MacPhee.

Jimmy didn't start out bad. In high school he was a two-sport athlete who made good grades and enjoyed classes. When a part-time job gave him money and freedom, he made new friends who cared little about school. His new lifestyle included fast cars, promiscuous

sex, a plethora of drugs—and an armed bank robbery. Jimmy pulled the trigger, critically wounding one man and killing another.

A judge sentenced him to die in South Carolina's electric chair. He was twenty years old.

"I had become everything I despised," Jimmy said. Angry. Violent. Condemned.

But God hadn't forsaken him.

He sent Frankie San, a soft-spoken man who served as the jail's volunteer librarian, to shine the light of Christ into Jimmy's dark cell.

"I love you, and Jesus loves you," Frankie said through the bars. "He doesn't care what crimes you've committed. He will forgive you if you let Him."

Jimmy wasn't interested.

While he awaited execution, a technicality in the law commuted his sentence from death to life in prison, but even this lifesaving grace didn't soften Jimmy's heart. Each year he grew more angry and violent.

Although Frankie San continued to speak words of life and hope whenever he delivered books to Jimmy's cell, he sank deeper into a mindset of rage and hopelessness. A final vicious attack on a guard removed him from the prison population and sentenced him to solitary confinement for the duration of his sentence. Jimmy was forty years old.

There in his ten-by-ten cell, he took stock of his life. He'd spent two decades in prison and had nothing to show for it except death and destruction. Hopeless, he wrote to Frankie San, his old friend from death row. "I'm tired of my life. I desperately want something different, but I don't know what."

Frankie wrote back and reiterated the message he'd spoken to Jimmy twenty years before: "I love you, and Jesus Christ loves you."

He doesn't care what crimes you committed. He will forgive you if you let Him. Give all your pain, anger, and brokenness to God, and he will heal you."

This time, Jimmy took Frankie's words to heart. "I bowed my head, and as the tears flowed, I asked God to take what little life I hadn't destroyed and do with it what He would. I prayed, confessed my sins, and asked His forgiveness for all the pain I'd caused."

Silently, almost imperceptibly, a peace settled over his soul. Despite his sentence to spend the rest of his life in solitary confinement, Jimmy knew he'd never be alone again. For the first time in years, he felt a flicker of hope.

Saul of Tarsus followed a very different path than Jimmy. Born a Roman citizen and taught under the esteemed Gamaliel, Saul was an up-and-coming wonder boy. His extensive knowledge of the Torah allowed him to preach in the finest synagogues. He prided himself on his educational and professional credentials.

Yet his heart was as violent as Jimmy's. In his religious zeal, he stood in solidarity while an angry mob stoned Stephen the apostle. "I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man," he confessed in 1 Timothy 1:13. "I persecuted the followers of this Way [Christians] to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison" (Acts 22:4). As was the case for Jimmy, Paul's anger and violence almost consumed him.

"But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me," Paul testified in Galatians 1:15–16, he was transformed. Paul went from denying Christ to proclaiming Him.

After his conversion, Jimmy threw himself into study. He read his Bible and other books for hours each day. Little by little the truth

of God's Word changed him from a blaspheming murderer to a Spirit-filled peacemaker.

Sixteen years after he was sentenced to solitary confinement and twenty-five years after he was sentenced to die in the electric chair, Jimmy was released into the prison population. He continued to apply for parole, but most agreed he'd probably spend the rest of his life behind bars.

Jimmy invested the next twenty years into becoming a writer, speaker, teacher, and mentor to troubled younger prisoners and gang members. He led many men to the Lord as a servant leader. In 2017, he was chosen as one of only a few inmates to pursue a Bible college education from Columbia International University through its prison initiative. There he was trained to be both a missionary and a peacemaker to the most dangerous prison yards in South Carolina.

Paul's transformation, described by the awestruck disciples, was equally glorious: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy" (Galatians 1:23). Paul testified of Christ to Caesar, wrote thirteen books of the New Testament, and planted numerous churches throughout Asia. As the self-proclaimed "worst of sinners," Paul shared his story as living proof of God's immense patience for those who think they are beyond redemption.

Paul became the apostle to the Gentiles and partnered with the disciples he once persecuted, evangelizing most of the known world. Jimmy became an ambassador to the prison population, sharing Christ with the inmates he once terrorized.

Paul was executed by Nero around AD 67 after spending the remainder of his life in prison. Jimmy was released on March 18, 2020, after forty-five years and seventeen parole board hearings.

Now an ordained minister and founder of On the Rock Ministries, Jimmy speaks in churches, youth groups, and prisons. His message brings life and hope to those who wonder if God's patience extends to them.¹

"If He did it for me," Jimmy says, "He can do it for you."

Take Heart

If you or someone you love feel God's Spirit drawing you, no matter what you've done, it's not too late. God's patience makes room for you.

From the Heart

Father, sometimes I lose heart when I see the path my friends and loved ones are taking. I want them to surrender their lives to you, but I see no evidence that you're at work. All I see is death and destruction. Thank you for Paul's and Jimmy's testimonies that prove that you are infinitely patient and always at work, even when I can't see it. Soften my loved ones' hearts toward you. Deepen their desire for your ways. Give me hope, as I continue to pray, that, one day, your patience will bring about their salvation and transformation. In the strong name of Jesus I ask, amen.



3

God Is Ever Present

Do not be afraid, for I am with you.

ISAIAH 43:5

There's nothing like the sound of a child in the throes of a nightmare.

I heard that sound late one night. I'd tucked my grandchildren into bed, cleaned up the kitchen, and settled onto the couch for a few quiet moments when a scream erupted from the bedroom.

My daughter had warned me. Lauren, the oldest, had been experiencing nightmares. Still, I wasn't prepared for the heart-pounding rush of adrenaline that propelled me off the couch and down the hallway. I nearly collided with Lauren in the doorway to her bedroom.

Hair tousled from sleep and eyes wide with fear, she tumbled into my embrace. I couldn't understand her panicked words, but I could feel her heart pounding.

"It's okay, sweetie," I said. "Gigi's here. You don't have to be afraid."

With my arm around her shoulders, I walked her back to bed, then sat beside her. Holding her close to quiet her frantic movements,

I prayed, “Dear Jesus, calm Lauren’s heart and mind. Help her not be afraid. Help her know that you are near.”

She continued to cry out and point to imaginary monsters as I emptied my What-to-Do-in-Case-of-a-Nightmare bag. I sang “Jesus Loves Me.” I spoke comforting words. I quoted Bible verses. I prayed again, inviting God’s peace.

Finally, her cries subsided, and her heart rate slowed. I stretched out beside her, cuddled her close, and asked, “Would you like to hear a story?”

She nodded as I tucked the comforter under her chin.

By the time I finished the story of the beautiful castle in the sky, her breathing had quieted, and her eyes had closed. I hugged her gently, kissed her on the forehead, and rose to leave.

“Thank you, Gigi,” she whispered. “I love you.”

I can sympathize with Lauren’s fright because I’ve experienced more than a few nightmares in my lifetime. Most of them, unfortunately, weren’t caused by an overactive imagination. They were real.

I’ve lived through the scare of my husband’s extended unemployment (twice). I’ve trembled while waiting for biopsy results. I’ve wept as Satan lured away those I love. I’ve wailed as death robbed our family of loved ones.

Yet in the depth of every nightmare, God has been there, wrapping me in His warm embrace and whispering truth into my frightened heart.

“It’s okay,” He’s said, drawing me close. “I’m here. You don’t have to be afraid.”

Through believing friends, timely messages, and His Word, He’s spoken truth into my heart. He’s comforted me with His promises and banished my fears.

He's sung over me, quieting my trembling heart—leading me to understand at the deepest part of me, *Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.*

He's spread the blanket of peace over my troubled soul and tucked it tightly under my chin. Holding me close in the darkest nights, He's invited me to rest in His embrace.

And He's told me stories.

"Then I saw 'a new heaven and a new earth,' for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea" (Revelation 21:1).

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death" or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away'" (Revelation 21:3–4).

Every time I cry out, He comforts me in my nightmare and leaves me with His peace.

My response is simple: *Thank you, Jesus. I love you.*

If you're living through a nightmare right now, know this—God is right there with you.

Because of the comfort of His presence and the assurance of an eternity with no death, mourning, crying, pain—or nightmares—you can have hope.

Take Heart

The comfort of God's presence will carry us through any nightmare we experience.

From the Heart

Father, thank you for the comforting promise of heaven, where nightmares will cease, and I'll live with you forever. Thank you also for the comfort you provide and the promise that you'll walk with me through every trial and comfort me when I cry. When I am afraid, help me trust in you. In the strong name of Jesus I pray, amen.

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**IN A WORLD THAT DISAPPOINTS
AGAIN AND AGAIN, YOU HAVE AN
UNSHAKABLE HOPE.**

In this uplifting, Scripture-driven 60-day devotional, Lori Hatcher invites you to reclaim your hope by returning to the rock-solid foundation of your confidence—God’s amazing promises and His faithful character. Each warm, story-based reading will help you grow closer to God as you reflect on His assurances, His generous nature, and His unwavering commitments. Strengthen your prayer life with thought-provoking prompts. Replace anxiety with joy, peace, and trust while encountering Bible truths about the ultimate Source of hope.

Wherever you are today and whatever your situation tomorrow, know on a whole new level that God is with you, He is for you, and He will never fail you.



LORI HATCHER is an author, blogger, pastor’s wife, and women’s ministry speaker. Her writing has appeared in numerous publications including *Our Daily Bread*, *Guideposts*, *Revive Our Hearts*, and *Crosswalk.com*. A contest-winning Toastmasters International speaker, Lori uses high-impact stories to impart transformational truth. Find out more about Lori and her well-loved 5-minute devotions at LoriHatcher.com.

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