

A 3-Ingredient Recipe for Hope That Never Fails You

I have come up with an easy plan that has helped me tremendously to get back to hope when it slips away from me—which usually happens when I forget one of these elements I’m going to share with you. These help me remember what I truly believe and how I want those beliefs to guide my life. This is cut-to-the-core Christianity. And I believe this will help you, too, regardless of how “spiritual” you want to be.

Remember how I mentioned that I believe hope is a posture we can choose every minute of every day? This is only going to be possible if you know what hope is—what it’s rooted in, what fuels your actions, and why you’re choosing to be a person a hope. I’ve come up with a simple formula to help you do this:

Hope = Grounded in Faith + Fueled by Love + Guided by Vision

Let’s take some time to explore what each of these pieces of the formula mean. For me, hope is a three-legged stool—all parts are equally important. When I feel hope slipping away, I need to take time to evaluate which of these three parts I’ve neglected.

Grounded in Faith

Being grounded in faith means I see my life as part of a bigger story. You can still apply this principle to your life, no matter what your faith may be in. I’m unabashedly Christian, so I believe that God, my Creator, is wildly in love with me. God is with me, and also (in some way I can’t understand) has everything under control. In particular, God has *my life* under control. There’s no need for me to worry about or be afraid of anything.

This affords me a foundation that is unshakable. It doesn’t

mean that I'm unflappable; ask anyone who knows me. I still feel all the emotions, most all of the time. But having an unshakeable foundation means that my hope is not in anything I have, it's not in anything I accomplish, and it's not in my circumstances. I believe God is writing an amazing story of love and redemption, and I get to play an awesome part in that story.

Fueled by Love

What fuels you? What is the driving force behind everything you say and do? For me, I want my life to be fueled by love. This love is what compels people to be nice to others, do acts of service and so forth. But as I mentioned earlier, so many of these actions of love can lead to exhaustion when the most important part of this element is missing. Being fueled by love has to start with an understanding of being unbelievably and unconditionally loved by your Creator. This is a love that says: "I made you beautiful and unique, to fulfill a specific part I want you to play in my grand story." This is a love that doesn't roll its eyes. It doesn't wait for you to get your act together (because honestly, who can?).

Being loved is foundational to living hope. The love we give away is a response to the love we have received. When you know you're loved, you can then seek to love others with the same kind of outrageous, unconditional love. I like to think about other people as continually being loved by God with the same kind of crazy love—some just don't know it yet. Viewing others as being loved to the same degree you are, knowing you have done nothing to earn your status as a child of God, lets you view everyone you meet as a fellow brother and sister. If someone doesn't yet know how incredibly they are loved, let's be the ones to tell them!

My mission to be fueled by love is rooted in the invitation from God to be a part of helping build his kingdom. In this kingdom, love is the rule. And we are all brothers and sisters

living in perfect harmony with each other and God. If we can get glimpses of that even yet today, why would we not want to make that happen?

Guided by Vision

I have to have a reason to get out of bed in the morning. Is it just me? When I've got something I'm excited about working on, this looking ahead toward its completion wakes me up and gets me going. This is what most people think of when they think of hope. But when combined with the first two—grounded in faith and fueled by love—life takes on great joy and meaning.

Being guided by vision may include having a project you're working on, but it's usually bigger than that. It's coming alive to your calling, a deeper understanding of what you were made for. It's a compelling, a driving forward, it's about taking steps down a path where you might not be able to see two steps in front of you, but you know where you'd like it to go.

I hear you saying, "But how am I to know what I'm supposed to do? How can I know my calling?" Let me offer a couple of ideas.

First, I believe we all have a general calling to help God build his kingdom here on earth. That's what I was talking about in the Fueled by Love section. Because of this, the path I want to be on, this vision I want to live out, has its primary task of loving people until they can see for themselves how loved they are by God.

My life's mission is to declare the incredible worth and value of every single person I encounter. When a person doesn't believe they have inherent worth, they will be unable to love themselves or anyone else unconditionally, it will always be about performance and scorekeeping (much like my upbringing in the church that I mentioned earlier).

Catch a vision for how you'd like to see the world, or better yet, catch a vision for how God sees the world. To me, God sees the world as his grand love story. All his working is to redeem the lost, the broken, the hurting. He asks us to join him in his mission to heal the world, to serve, to love, to bring hope. {eoa}

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