

Discerning the Enemy's Mass Weapon of Destruction in This Season

With violence raging on American streets, many are losing hope for a better tomorrow. Indeed, pessimism is gripping the nation on many fronts as the signs of the times manifest in our midst.

For the first time in American history, most Americans believe the next generation will be worse off than them, according to a CNNMoney/E*Trade survey. At the same time, strange viruses are spreading, some even causing death and blindness. There are wars and rumors of wars. The economic signs are driving people to store food and water. And persecution of Christians in America is on the rise.

I could go on and on. The point is, as a nation our hope is under attack.

On a personal level, you may have prodigal children that show no sign of turning back to the Lord despite your fervent intercession. Maybe you're fighting health issues that look dire. Perhaps your marriage is on the brink of divorce. Maybe you're battling weight issues you can't overcome no matter what diet you try, financial issues that keep growing worse or some other issue that looks hopeless.

The enemy attacks our faith with fear for a strategic reason. We find that reason in Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." See, you can't have faith without hope. Your faith hangs on hope. If you partner with the fearful voices telling you things will never change—or whatever else those fearful voices are saying—you will move from faith to doubt to unbelief and eventually to hopelessness.

Prisoners of Hope

When I was in jail, falsely accused of a crime I did not commit, the situation looked hopeless. Three times I appeared before a judge seeking bail. Three times my plea was rejected—even with an ankle bracelet on home arrest; and even though I was a manager working with a large company; and even though I had a two-year-old baby whose daddy had just abandoned us.

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My attorney, a firm I paid a pretty penny to defend me against the bogus charges, told me the best I could hope for was five years in prison. That was the minimum sentence on the charge. I felt hopeless, but I had a fighting grandma who refused to tolerate injustice. She prayed and she took action. She found an attorney who was willing to stand up to the devil's plans and pray through to the end.

During the legal battle, I got saved. I heard the voice of the Lord tell me I would be released on the 40th day. I confessed this to anyone who would listen but nobody would believe me. Beyond my grandma, my family didn't hold out much hope. But it was just like the Lord told me it would be. After 40 days, I was released and fully vindicated.

In that jail, I learned to be a prisoner of hope. Since then, I have faced many situations that seemed hopeless. When I encounter these sorts of trials, I remember what the Lord said in Zechariah 9:12 (NKJV), "Return to the stronghold, You prisoners of hope. Even today I declare That I will restore double to you."

Expect Double for Your Trouble

That word hope is not like the world's hope. The world's hope is a wish. Bible hope is an eager expectation. When you expect

something, you watch for it. Think about it for a minute, if you are expecting an important call, you keep your phone right by you, make sure the ringer is on and stop doing anything that would distract you from the ring.

We need to hope in God the same way. We've put in a call to Him—we've prayed—and He is going to answer us. I don't know why it takes so long for some situations to turn around. I don't know why we have to keep praying and believing sometimes for years without any visible results. I do believe our prayers release God's power into a situation and some problems demand more power to chip away at the mountain than others.

We need to guard the hope in our hearts because, again, our faith hangs on our hope. We have many Bible examples of how hope and faith pay off. Moses hoped in God when it looked like the Egyptian army was going to overtake the Israelites. Nehemiah hoped in God when naysayers tried to stop him from doing what God told him to do. David hoped in God when it looked like Saul was going to kill him. Ruth hoped in God that she could escape her past. Esther hoped in God that He would save the Jews from Haman's wicked plot.

Whatever we're going through, we have to hold out hope. Job in the middle of his trial said, "What strength do I have, that I should hope?" (Job 6:11, MEV). Job lost everything he had. He was on the brink of hopelessness. His wife told him to curse God and die. But he held out hope and the Lord kept His promise. Job got double for his trouble (Job 42:10).

Whatever you are going through, put your trust in the Lord. Let hope be the anchor of your soul (Heb. 6:19). Let your praise prophesy to your circumstances. I assure you, what the devil means for evil, God means for good (Gen. 50:20).

Be a prisoner of hope—and believe God for double for your trouble.