

When Believing and Confessing the Word of God Isn't Enough

I can appreciate a good cliché. Phrases like “The early bird catches the worm,” or “People in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones,” are effective, although they are overused and have lost power. At one time, that was very good writing. We just said it too much, wrote it too much, thought it too much and it became trite. So now those kinds of phrases are off limits for any serious communicator.

Still, when people ask what it looks like to be a hope hunter, I keep coming back to the same clichés. And it may help for me to define a hope hunter by using them. First, let me tell you what a hope hunter is not.

A hope hunter is not just an optimist.

An optimist relates to clichés such as “Every cloud has a silver lining” or “Just see the glass as half-full instead of half-empty.” A hope hunter admits that sometimes the silver lining in a cloud is actually lightning and sometimes the glass is just empty. But they keep going with what they’ve got. An optimist says, “This isn’t that bad!” A hope hunter says, “This is that bad. Now what are we going to do about it?”

My favorite cliché is “You can’t make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear.” But a hope hunter flips that. A hope hunter says, “Oh, this situation is bad, all right. But, with God, you *can* make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear. He can use anything in your life to bring about good.”

A couple of years ago, a friend contacted me, asking me to pray with her about her husband, who had abandoned their family and had become addicted to drugs. When I agreed to meet her for one prayer, I had no idea we were beginning a two-year

journey of chasing after God's heart together. She was in in a hopeless situation. There was *no way* I could tell her to "look on the bright side." There was no silver lining in her clouds. So I told her the only thing I knew to tell her: If we look for God in this situation, we will find Him. But there is work to be done in the process.

My friend wanted her husband back, I wanted my friend back, and neither one of us were willing to let him go without storming the gates of heaven like hope hunters on his behalf.

One night we were inspired by the story of the Israelites walking around the city of Jericho, and we actually drove to the dingy motel where he was staying and drove around and around it, declaring his true identity as a man of God. That was one physical act of hope hunting we pursued. But there were more. Every day for two years, we prayed simple prayers, walking around the walls of abandonment and addiction in the spirit, in expectation that those walls would fall. My friend's desperate situation did not change instantly, but because we continued to do the work of praying around those walls, asking-expecting-God to tear them down, we were changed. And, in time, so was her difficulty.

At the end of two years of focused prayer, my friend's marriage and family were restored. Her husband is now free from addiction and pursues God with all of his heart, soul, mind and strength. We cannot stop praising the Lord for this miracle.

In Jeremiah 1:9-10, we read how God has empowered us to tear down the work of the enemy:

"Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, 'Now, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.' Then the Lord reached out

and touched my mouth and said, 'Look, I have put my words in your mouth!'"

We are to be about tearing down and destroying the things that set themselves against God's kingdom. And notice how we are to be doing this tearing down. "Look, I have put My words in your mouth!" God says. His Word is sharper than a double-edged sword, capable of defeating every foe. His word created heaven and earth with just a syllable, and is capable of creating exactly what you need in your life.

If you are reading this, it might be because you need to tear something down in your life. If you ask Him, you *are* going to hear from Him about what you need to do next in your life.

Now I must warn you, if the work He wants you to do is to tear down, then use some elements of my story with my friend, but use the right ones. Since the time we prayed around and around that motel, we have told that story many times. A number of people have indicated to us that they are going to "pull a Jericho" and drive or walk around something in their own life. I would be careful about that.

First of all, I would never recommend putting yourself in a dangerous situation in an effort to emulate me. Second, the reason that event was effective was because it was a response in obedience. If you attempt a "Jericho" when God has not asked that of you, it will not work. Third, becoming focused on that method might distract you from what God is *really* asking you to do, the thing that *will* work for you.

If you are facing a high wall of adversity, there is a lot of good work you can do while you wait for God to move on your behalf. Ask Him how you should pray. Look for Scriptures that specifically address the problems in your way. Whatever He asks you to do, do it! He will be faithful to accomplish everything He puts on your heart.

Most importantly, He will change your heart to look more like

His.

Nika Maples is the author of *Hunting Hope and Twelve Clean Pages*, the memoir of her survival of lupus and a massive brainstem stroke that left her quadriplegic at age 20. She could not speak, swallow or blink, but her faith sustained her and a year later she walked back onto her college campus on her own two feet. She writes and speaks full time, sharing messages of hope and endurance with education, business and church groups across the country. When not traveling, she lives, writes and laughs as much as possible in Fort Worth, Texas.

Keep up with Nika Maples and *Hunting Hope* by visiting or following her on Facebook ([nikamaples](#)) or Twitter ([@nikamaples](#)).