

Fight for Your Hope

When you think about the future, are you hopeful? Or do you struggle with a sense of dread?

People who have seen God's faithfulness in the past tend to be very hopeful about the future. They know a bad situation can turn into a wonderful testimony in a matter of minutes. They know how to hold on to hope and they refuse to give up.

On the other hand, people who have lost all hope view life from the perspective of dread. A close cousin to fear, dread steals the ability to enjoy ordinary life and makes people anxious about the future.

It keeps them from looking forward to the next day, month or decade. Their thoughts about the present are negative and their outlook on the future is filled with fear, pessimism, doubt and worry.

Hope is the opposite of dread—and a close relative of faith. Hebrews 11:1 tells us faith is “the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for” (*The Amplified Bible*). When we have hope, our outlook on life and the future is positive. We can have hope because we trust in God's love, His power to provide for us, and His ability to lead us in every situation.

Hope allows us to leave our unanswered questions in God's hands; it empowers us to remain at peace; and it enables us to believe the best about the days to come. Generally, people who have hope are happy, optimistic, and full of inner strength and courage.

Because hope is such a powerful force, the devil goes after it with a vengeance. If he can steal your hope, he can set you on the path to total despair and depression—and that's his intention. He will work hard to plant thoughts like these in

your mind:

"You have always been this way. You will never change." "No one will ever want to marry you." "You might as well buy some larger clothes—you'll never lose weight."

"Your children will never amount to anything." "You will not have enough money for retirement." "No one in your family has lived more than 70 years, so you cannot expect a long life." "You will never get out of debt."

If you read these statements carefully, you will notice they have a common thread running through them: self-pity. The devil puts thoughts in our minds to make us feel sorry for ourselves and resent the people who have what we are convinced we can never have.

Self-pity is a destructive and negative emotion. It blinds us to our blessings and the possibilities before us—which means it steals our hope for both today and tomorrow. People who pity themselves think: *Why should I try to do anything? I'll just fail.*

I used to love to sit and drink my coffee, feeling sorry for myself and thinking about how mistreated I was. But I finally realized that my self-pity is actually idolatry because it is self-focus carried to the extreme. When I allow myself to fall into self-pity, I am essentially rejecting God's love and His ability to change things for me.

I encourage you to be determined not to waste one more day of your life in self-pity. When you lose hope and begin to feel sorry for yourself, stop right that minute and say:

"I refuse to feel sorry for myself. I may be in a difficult season of life right now, but I will not stop hoping for better things!"

The enemy wants you to be consumed with hopelessness and will

tell you all sorts of lies about yourself, your life, other people, and even about God. But you must remember that the devil is a liar. You must not believe *anything* he says.

God has thoughts and plans for your good, to give you hope for your future (see Jer. 29:11). If you will hold on to your hope and fight for it when the enemy tries to take it away, you will see amazing things take place in your life.

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