

Spiritual Keys to Get Your Double Blessing

God is good. And He has a good plan for each of our lives. No matter what may be going on right now, God's plan is unfolding. In the meantime, Romans 12:12 (NLT) tells us to "rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying."

I think that's good advice, especially when it feels like we've been waiting and waiting and waiting for something to happen in our lives. Hope is vital in times like these, and it will keep us looking ahead, anticipating, expecting whatever it is we're hoping for.

Over the years, I've learned how to lock myself up in a prison of hope, knowing God has nothing but His best planned for me. He put big dreams in my heart regarding my ministry and my life, and most of them took years to come to pass. Hope is what helped me hold on in those early years when it got hard.

The Effects of Expectation

I remember it was just three weeks into my marriage to Dave, when he asked me one day, "What's wrong with you? You have such a negative attitude!" And I said, "Well, if you don't expect anything good to happen, then you won't be disappointed when it doesn't."

That was what I believed based on my past experiences. I had a very negative outlook on life, so I spoke negatively about it.

This is the way I used to live—before I became a prisoner of hope. As I grew in my relationship with God, I learned how to trust Him, how to stand on His Word, and how to stand my ground in prayer when circumstances got tough.

Today my outlook on life is completely different from what it was many years ago. Now I enjoy my life and I encourage others to enjoy theirs as well. Jesus died for us to live an abundant, fulfilling life (see John 10:10), and hope is the confident, favorable expectation of this life.

Double for Your Trouble

I do realize there are many things that can happen to us that aren't so enjoyable. And that can make it difficult to grasp the idea of enjoying life. So, think of it this way: What are you hoping for or expecting in life? What are you looking forward to? Focus on that.

My negative outlook was due to my attitude about all the bad things that had happened to me. I was stuck in the pain of my past, so I didn't believe anything good would happen in my future. My experiences from years ago caused me to believe negative things would always happen. I had no hope.

But God was there, and He knew that. And He kept loving me and dealing with me, promising me what Isaiah 61:7 (ESV) says: "Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion; instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot; therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; they shall have everlasting joy."

That's a promise for us all—a promise of double for your trouble! Double the blessing, double the joy, double the peace! Doesn't that inspire hope in your heart?

Be Single-Minded About Your Double Blessing

This double-blessing promise isn't for the double-minded. When you walk it out in everyday life, there will be times when doubt, fear, unbelief and weariness will come against you. It's in these times you will need to fight a good fight of faith.

You will need to guard your mind against negativity about your situation. I encourage you to find out what God says about it and then stand on the promises in His Word.

We must hold on to whatever He promises us and be confident that He is working in our situation no matter how things look, how we feel or what we think. Because hope releases the power of the Holy Spirit in these times.

I want to encourage you to make a decision to cultivate an attitude of hope in your life. Speak positive things about your future, and refuse to be negative. You may not always feel hopeful, but don't give in to your feelings. Catering to bad feelings feeds and empowers them. But standing our ground and not giving in to negative feelings starves them and causes them to lose their power over us.

Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you. Line your will up with His and get excited about serving God. You could even be one who inspires others to become prisoners of hope!