



CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

Finding Hope in A Wishful World

By Erin Burkhardt

**Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess,
for he who promised is faithful.**
(Hebrews 10:23 NIV)

In the Merriam-Webster dictionary, hope is defined as a noun (“a desire accompanied by expectation of or belief in fulfillment”) and a verb (“to trust: to expect with confidence”).

As lovely as it might be to wish upon a star or cross our fingers to get what we think we need, we cannot have trust or confidence in such things. The world tells us that physical means such as financial stability, a further education, and our personal support systems should be our hope and security. It makes sense logically -- have more and we should be safer -- right? However, there is a great flaw in this philosophy because it puts the means of our hope into our own hands. It makes hope something that must be achieved and therefore something that can be taken away.

In scary times and when things are being stripped from us, it can feel like all our hope is being removed at once. With chronic illness, our losses are great and frequent. Perhaps you have taken encouraging steps towards healing only to be knocked back down; perhaps you have contracted the COVID-19 virus that has left the whole world in a state of fear and uncertainty.

There is a wonderful story in the Bible that illustrates the fragility of false hopes using the picture of a house built on the sand (Matthew 7:24-27). If we think our hope lies in our hands, we are choosing sand (a wish), but if we trust that hope is something God can provide for us, we are choosing rock (unshakable and immovable).

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True hope is not something based on circumstances or personal sustainability. All over the world, people are facing disease and death. However, there is this joy: everyone has full access to abundant hope, enough to fill the bitter emptiness and face the scariest circumstances, because we all, whether great or small, have equal access to God.

When your days seem dark and hopeless, don't hold onto wishes or platitudes. Instead, lift your eyes to the heavens and surrender your spirit to the one who is your true hope. He is trustworthy and you can count on him with confidence, knowing the promises found in his Word are true. He proved it on the cross and, if you let him, he will prove it to you today.

Open your heart and ask God to fill you up with a hope and peace that does not come from circumstances.

THINGS TO PRAY

- Pray that you might see God in tangible ways today, perhaps in a hug from a loved one or through a verse from scripture that speaks directly to you.
- Pray for perspective to remember where our hope truly lies. Our world is full of people living in very different ways; God's direction will enable us to discern His right way.
- Ask God to turn your focus outward to others. Pray for the needs you see around you. It's amazing how our attitudes can shift when we take the focus off ourselves.

PRAYER

Lord God, we praise you for being a Sovereign God who can give us peace, joy, and hope in all circumstances. Help us to see beyond what we do or do not have. Enable us to put our trust in You, not in worldly things and empty wishes. We ask you to fill us with the incredible hope you have promised, so that we may live expectantly and faithfully for you even in difficult times. In Jesus name, Amen.

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