

WAVE

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About the Book

A few years ago, I sensed a hopelessness in my heart that I didn't know how to cope with. It nearly took me under. The pages in this book are the simple lessons the Lord has taught me since then about how to find "My Hope" in Him.

Here are a few creative ways for you to make the best use of this book:

1. As a Jump-Starter - read it in one sitting to help you get out of the 'funk' of discouragement
2. As a Daily Devotional - the 'chapters' are short... meditate on the truths that will transform your life!
3. As a Weekly Group Study - tackle a section a week - for 4 weeks - in your small group

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Hope in God

Let's learn from the Biblical account of David, the shepherd-king. When we pick up the story (in Ps. 42-43), he is **discouraged**, struggling emotionally, and sinking in the quicksand of **discontentment**. He is complaining because he feels that his needs aren't being met. He feels **distant** from God and lacks a good perspective of life.

He is fighting the battle of his life on all fronts: physically, spiritually, emotionally, and socially.

Do you ever talk to yourself? It was at this point that David did. He began to preach HOPE to himself — fighting the battle of hopelessness *from the inside- out*, rather than letting the outside overcome him.

Three times, he repeats this tiny sermon:

Hope in God!¹¹

¹¹ Psalm 42:5, 42:11, 43:5

Lies We Believe

“It’s **hopeless**. You are alone. You’re trapped. You are a **failure**. No one cares. Things will **never change**. You’re doomed. You can’t do anything about it, so **why even try?** It’s over...”

These words ring out long and loud in our hearts. You hear the message so often, you begin to believe it. You’ve convinced yourself that it’s hopeless! And you’re not alone. The CDC predicts that depression will be the world’s second-most common health problem by 2020.¹²

Some will look for hope in relationships, in accomplishments, in more wealth, in better health. Some will seek for it in pills or in a bottle, while others will try to find it through fantasy and escapism. But all of these attempts just leave us more empty, more broken, more hopeless... even further from the truth, buried deeper in the pit of despair.

¹² <http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/basics.htm>

In our brokenness, we must remember that these lies are born nowhere but *Hell itself!*¹³

One of the Seven Deadliest

Frankly, I came upon it by accident. I was doing a search for a message series that I was developing about the Seven Deadly Sins when there it stood. It crawled off the page and looked me right in the face. I had known this enemy many times but never had seen its face — and now it was finally uncovered, the mystery of this demon was revealed. I nearly wept at the discovery.

Have you ever heard of *Acedia*? Don't feel bad, neither had I. It's the latin word for the sin of apathy.¹⁴ Nobody every really talks about it like they do lust, greed, or anger, which is amazing to me considering how many people I

¹³ John 8:44

¹⁴ Early in the Catholic church, *acedia* was actually listed as the 8th of the Seven Deadly Sins (and then Pope Gregory combined it with *tristitia* to make SLOTH as the seventh).

know who struggle with it. Aldous Huxley, author of *Brave New World*, called it the primary affliction of his age (mid-20th century).

Acedia is the darkness to which I am often tempted to yield. It is a spiritual and social apathy that rolls in like high tide, drowning out voices of hope and truth. It comes out of nowhere, tempting me to indifference (and sometimes even negligence of important responsibilities). If you consider depression a medical condition, then acedia would be its spiritual counterpart. It is to the spirit what depression / anxiety are to the soul. It often leads to indecision, inertia, and restlessness.

It can most properly be defined as “a willful refusal to enjoy the goodness of God and the world God created.”

The wisest man who ever lived, Solomon, often spoke honestly of being victimized by its overwhelming sorry, convincing him of futility and emptiness. And I believe that even Jesus

himself was tempted with this while in the Garden before his death.¹⁵

I've discovered that the way out from under that apathy and misery has two steps: first, I must recognize what I'm feeling and struggling with deep in my spirit; secondly, I make a conscious effort to spend time enjoying one of God's good gifts to me. Lately, I've found hope reconnecting with my crazy little toddler on her level. It's amazing what an hour of playing with slime, dolls, pillow-fights, and tickling does to acedia. It re-centers me. So if you're struggling with acedia, I challenge you to find a good gift from God to enjoy — and then enjoy it! Take pleasure in your spouse. Make time to play with your kids on the living room floor. Find something that reminds you of God's love for you. It shouldn't be that hard. If Henry Blackaby is right, God is chasing you with daily evidences of His love for you.¹⁶ So look around until you see them. Until you see Him!

¹⁵ Matthew 26:38

¹⁶ Experiencing God, Henry Blackaby