

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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For Joy

because of all the hope that you
brought to me in that little phrase,
“God is in control.”

Why Am I Feeling So Hopeless?

How is it that something so important is so easy to lose? By the time we realize we've lost it, it's almost too late. Hope is arguably the third-most important element in the universe (second only to love and faith),¹ yet its absence has the power to kill the other two with sniper accuracy. Hope is more than just a necessary ingredient to life; hope is a catalyst that sparks life. Tragically, hopelessness is just the opposite, zapping life from its host like a parasite.

A few winters ago, I went through a severe season of hopelessness. A counselor diagnosed me with burnout but down deep I knew that it was more than just work weighing on me. I felt the heavy weight of anxiety on my chest regularly and I knew that I was discouraged and depressed. I wasn't living, I was merely surviving — and I barely made it out alive and still married. There were many

¹ 1 Corinthians 13:13

reasons that I was so hopeless, but the first was that **I was looking at life the wrong way.**²

When we live looking at the things that are right in front of us, we can get down pretty quickly. The bills are piling up, the kids are complaining at every turn, your body isn't what it used to be. Add to that your spouse isn't living up to your expectations and your boss is breathing down your neck and it only gets worse! When we live by our senses (by what we see, hear, and feel), we are living, as the Bible describes, according to *the flesh*.³ We are living by feeling... *by sight*.⁴ And one of the worst things about living by sight is that it is so terribly exhausting!

² Depression is a serious condition that sometimes requires medical attention. Many factors might contribute to feelings of hopelessness. This is not meant to be a thorough treatise on depression, but more of a testimony of how God brought me through my struggle.

**Seek Biblical counsel from a pastor or Christian therapist that will be able to help you in your journey.

³ Romans 7

⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:7

So what else is there?

Faith. Living by faith... focusing on what you can't see! ⁵ It makes so much more sense to live vertically instead of horizontally. Imagine that you and I went to see a 3-D movie — except you had the special glasses and I did not. Even if I endured the headache of trying to watch the entire movie, I still would not have enjoyed it as it was intended or as you did. The glasses add another dimension to the storyline that others don't see. In that same way, faith gives you a better perspective about how life should be. If you live by faith, you are even able to enjoy life, while others can only endure it.

The day I realized that
I wasn't living by faith
was the day that
my hopelessness
started to flee.

⁵ Hebrews 11:1, 6

The Day Things Started to Change

I remember where I was sitting that February Tuesday morning when it all turned around. I was at a conference in Southern California when the cold, wintry blanket of depression started to thaw.

This was my ‘Aha!’ moment... *The root of my depression was my misplaced confidence.* The issue was a self-esteem problem, but probably not like you’re thinking. The problem was that I had put **too much** stock in myself — too much self-esteem.⁶

Not only was I looking at life the wrong way, I was looking at myself the wrong way, too. I had failed to realize my value and worth in the bigger picture. If things were going to change, I could no longer allow my gifts (or my insecurities) define my value. My image of ME was breaking... and it was one of the best things that could have ever happened!

⁶ 2 Corinthians 1:9-10