

**Assignment:**

Heavenly Hope – Rapture Ready article by Lis

Since we have a brief assignment to read this week, I would suggest you do a little reading from Scripture. These are two of my favorite chapters that remind me of God’s care during times of adversity: all of Psalm 18 and Psalm 27.

**Questions:****Assaulted**

We’re all experiencing it, unprecedented assaults by the enemy against our family, friends, and ourselves. Sadly, that won’t be changing. If anything, we can expect our trials to only get worse the closer we get to Jesus’ return.

- 1) How can our level of hope determine how we respond to adversity?
- 2) Read 2 Chronicles 20:12 and Hebrews 12:2. Discuss how fixing our eyes on Jesus can restore hope in the toughest of times.

**Our prodigals**

Our children, young and grown alike, are in the enemy’s crosshairs as he wages an all-out offensive against them. Not much can steal hope from the heart of a parent, grandparent, or sibling more than the faraway walk of a prodigal child or family member. If you don’t have a prodigal in your life, you’ve likely been a prodigal at some time in your walk.

- 1) Read Proverbs 22:6. Is this verse a promise or a principle?
- 2) How can this passage give hope to the parents/family of a prodigal?
- 3) How can apathy over spending time in the Word of God lead to a deceived prodigal life?

**Opposition to Oppression**

The enemy’s attacks can rapidly shift from upsetting opposition to downright oppression.

- 1) What’s the difference between opposition and oppression? Give examples of each.
- 2) Can born-again believers experience demonic oppression?
- 3) Why are a weakened and vulnerable mind and soul more susceptible to oppression?
- 4) What are some consequences of the believer remaining under oppression?
- 5) Are there times when it’s understandable to “sit out a round” when dealing with life’s tragedies?

When the darts keep coming and life feels most hopeless, there are a few practical principles that might help to restore your hope.

### **Goodness of God**

Even during the worst of life's circumstances, when you truly look for it, you can find sprinkles of joy, glimpses of God's goodness. I shared in the article that in order to reach for hope, I've chosen to swim in the goodness of God rather than to wallow in a sea of misery.

- 1) Is finding the good in the midst of the bad always an easy task?
- 2) If you consider with a hindsight perspective, can you now see God's goodness in some of your worst times of trouble? Share details only if you feel so led.
- 3) How can God using past tragedy for good bring comfort in the present?
- 4) In what ways has God used adversity to grow you or change your ultimate direction?

### **Lift My Eyes**

Though Jesus tarries still, waiting for the command from His Father to go and get His bride, we can stake our lives on His glorious appearing.

"I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord."  
(Psalm 27:13-14)

- 1) Do you consider yourself brave in this time of waiting?
- 2) How can knowing there's Light at the end of the dark tunnel fuel our hope and keep us engaged in battle?
- 3) What are your methods of coping while you wait for the Lord?

### **Lift My Sword**

Another principle I use to renew my strength in the heat of battle is to utilize the greatest and most effective weapon at any believer's disposal, Scripture, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Ephesians 6:17).

- 1) Why do so few Christians utilize the weapon of the Word?
- 2) How can a believer's inattention to the Word (the Sword) leave them defenseless in battle?

Body parts of weakened, undernourished believers are strewn across the battlefield because they have no ability to withstand the assaults and temptations of the enemy.

- 3) Have you had seasons when your own inattention to the Word has hindered your walk and area of ministry?
- 4) Do you know people who are more focused on the future rapture than the present Word? How can that make them susceptible to deception and oppression?

There is so much hope in the Word of God for us war-weary soldiers, so many passages that strengthen our arms for battle. Don't miss out. If you don't have an established quiet time each day spent in prayer and time reading and studying God's Word, I encourage you to get started.

Note: Even if you can't make it to the Gathering next Thursday night, don't miss the assignment, "More Heavenly Hope," as it will be a continuation of the principles that can aid us in holding on to hope when opposition and oppression try their best to steal it away.

Thank you all for your participation in the Gathering and your willingness to share each week. Thursdays are one way I keep my heavenly hopes high in Jesus. You all truly bless me.

### **Bonus Activity**

Time permitting, choose verses from the list below and discuss how each can give strength to the weary soul. If not, I hope you will consider these verses during your own time of study.

Scriptures that offer hope:

"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31)

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

"You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word." (Psalm 119:114)

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful." (Hebrews 10:23)

"But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance." (Romans 8:25)

"Therefore I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; My God will hear me." (Micah 7:7)

"Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (Romans 5:5)

"Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, just as we hope in You." (Psalm 33:22)

"I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope." (Psalm 130:5)

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” (1 Peter 3:15)

“...the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...” (Ephesians 1:18)

“[Love} does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” (1 Corinthians 13:6-7)

“My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him.” (Psalm 62:5)