

Hope for a New Day

From the Writings of Norman Vincent Peale



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Here to reassure and comfort,
Here to inspire and energize,
Here to pray and strengthen,
Here to bring joy and laughter.

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Introduction

God Is With Us

EVERYONE, AT some time in their lives, deals with a crisis. For some, the crisis is overwhelming: a hurricane; a devastating fire; a tragic car accident. For others, crises are more intimate: the death of a loved one; the disappointment of a dream; a setback at work.

No matter their size, crises can make people feel like God has abandoned them. How could God allow this to happen, they wonder? If you're feeling that way right now, don't worry. You're not alone. A common reaction to crisis is fear of abandonment. *I have lost everything*, you think. *No one can help me now.*

Well, I have good news for you. You have not lost everything. And someone can help you: God. God did not cause your crisis to happen. But even as you read this, He is right beside you, waiting patiently for you turn to him. That might seem hard to believe. But it is true. And if you let yourself believe it, even just a little bit at first, you

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will find that your impossible-seeming situation has a solution. For with God, all things are possible.

This booklet will give you practical ideas for coping with a crisis. It will show you how to calm your fears, deal with sorrow, regain your strength and, ultimately, live a life of hope. The Bible tells us that a person who turns to God “shall not be afraid of evil tidings. His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.” With God, you will not only overcome your crisis, you will emerge intellectually, emotionally and spiritually fortified. Just remember: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” The crisis you face right now may seem daunting. But God will see you through it. He will give you hope for a new day.

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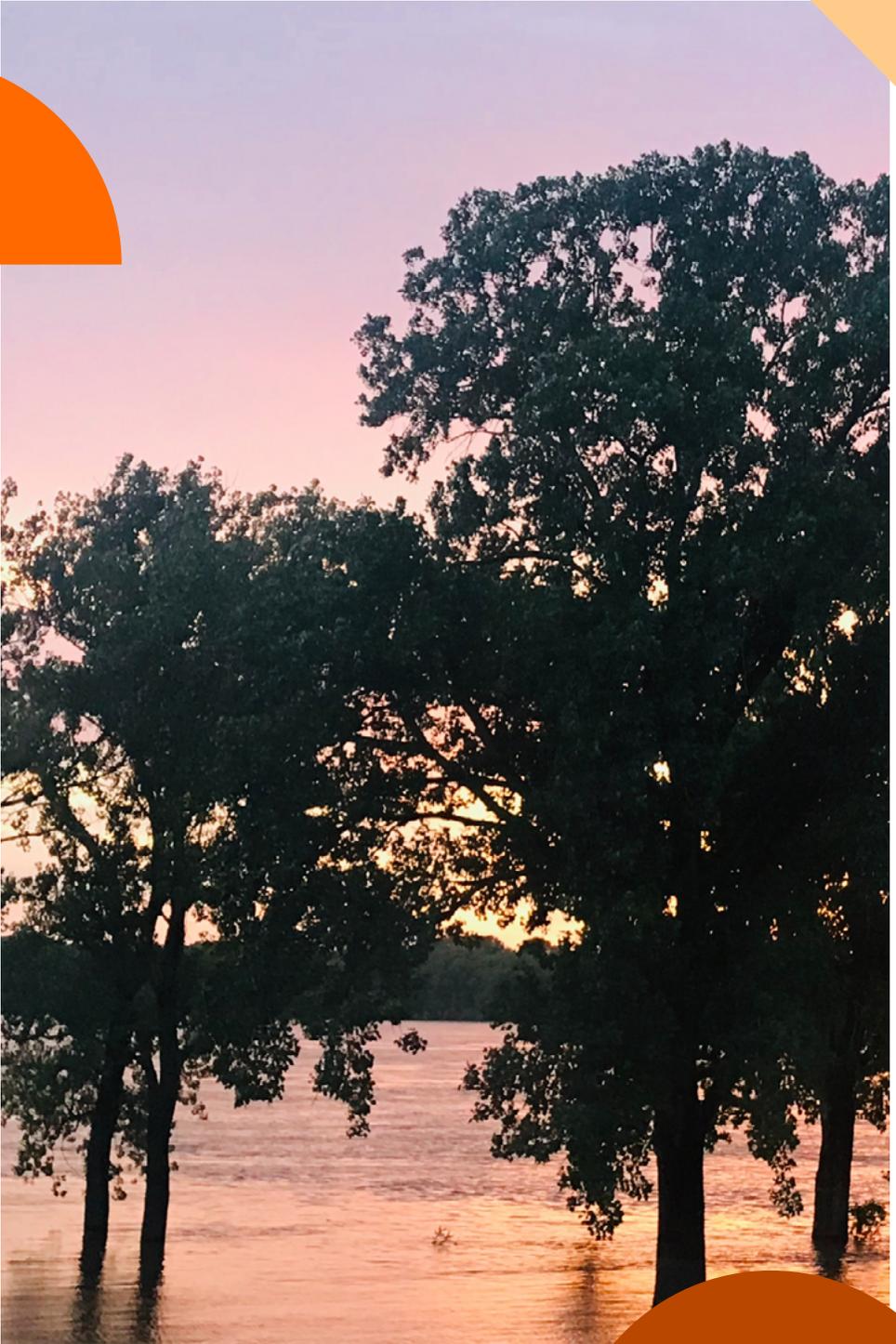


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Have No Fear

ONCE, A young couple named Charles and Lucinda Sears were caught in a surprise hurricane. Before they knew it, mud and water were surging around their Florida house. The only place they could climb high enough was an old bent tree in the yard. The water rose to the top branches, until the couple and their three children could barely keep their heads up.

“Cindy, we’re going to die!” cried Charles into the raging wind. But Lucinda shouted back, “We are not going to die! The Lord is here with us!” And she began singing hymns. After some lightning flashes, the winds calmed and the water began to recede. By the middle of the next day, the family was able to climb down from the tree. They were safe.

Often, the first reaction to crisis is fear. You feel out of control, threatened by danger. And so you cower in the shadows, trembling and focusing on your worry. Giving in to fear is a great temptation. But, like Lucinda Sears, you must resist that temptation with all your might. The

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more you talk about your fears, the more fearful you'll become.

The Bible gives good advice for handling fear: "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."

There are four parts to this. First, stop talking about your worry and pray. Second, ask God to show you how to deal with the situation. Third, and this is so important, after you ask for God's help, thank Him for it, thus letting Him know you believe He is there. Fourth, tell Him what you need.

Jesus says in the Bible, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." By turning your mind and heart to God, you rest in his promises and fortify yourself with his peace. Try it. Turn to God now and feel your fear gradually ebb away.

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Stay Calm

OFTEN, AFTER a crisis, we find ourselves terribly anxious, unable to think or function in a constructive way. Usually, this anxiety comes not from our bodies, but from our minds. We are thinking the wrong thoughts. So take some time right now to drain those tense thoughts and replace them with thoughts of peace, calmness and faith.

First, open your Bible to the 23rd Psalm and read it aloud. Then, whenever anxiety strikes, pray, beginning with this passage from Psalm 46: “Be still, and know that I am God.” Ask God to take worrisome thoughts from your mind and replace them with his “peace that passes all understanding.” If you are sincere in seeking God’s wisdom, you will be uplifted and strengthened.

Once, a young woman named Phyllis was taking the subway home after seeing a play in New York. She was walking toward the gate at the station when five tough-looking men blocked her way. “You’re out pretty late tonight, aren’t you, lady?” one of them sneered.

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Phyllis thought about her husband and two small boys at home. There was nowhere to run. So she prayed, and a small voice in her head replied, “He is a shield to them that walk uprightly.” She pulled herself up to her full height of five-feet-six-inches and walked straight at the men. “Let me pass, please,” she said calmly. The men looked at her, astonished. Then they parted and she walked through the gate. As she climbed the steps toward the street, she heard the men say appreciatively, “That’s right, lady, walk tall!”

When you call on God and take his promises seriously, you can meet any crisis with calmness, intelligence and dignity.



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A Time For Sorrow

LIFE DEALS us some chilling blows, and at times we find ourselves in despair. We don't know which way to turn, our loss is so great.

God yearns to heal you of sadness. But before turning to Him for help, it is important to remember that feelings of sorrow are nothing to be ashamed of. When you mourn the loss of a loved one or something else significant in your life, you acknowledge the great value that person or thing had for you. Your sadness honors their memory and celebrates their life.

No one, however, should remain sad forever. So when you feel yourself overwhelmed by sorrow, pray to God, asking Him to heal your wounded heart. Rest assured, He will do exactly that.

If you find it hard to pray in the depths of despair, don't worry. Just pour it all out to God, as a hurt child cries out to a parent. And it's perfectly okay to cry. Tears are a safety valve for eliminating tension.

After praying, tell yourself you can make it. Say over

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and over, “We know that in everything, God works for good with those who love him, who are called to his purpose.” Commit yourself to the Lord, trust Him, and He will act. And you will find that one day soon, all this will be behind you, and you will look back on your sorrow as someone who has crossed a stormy sea to a calm shore.

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Be Strong

ONE OF the great truths in life is that you are bigger than anything that can happen to you—as long as you know it and act accordingly. Rebuilding from a crisis is a perfect opportunity to ask God to release the creative ingenuity, wisdom and strength that lie within you.

How do you do this? First, pray to God and place your entire situation in his hands. Say, “God, I commit my challenges to you. Show me the way through them. Give me eyes to see your solutions and strength to act on them.”

Then sit down and lay out your entire problem, perhaps on a piece of paper. Sketch out possible solutions and pray over them, asking God to show you which is right. When you feel you have an idea of how to proceed, move forward resolutely, praying all the time for strength.

If doubts creep in, set them firmly aside with a quick prayer: “God, quell these fears and give me your strength.” God will answer that prayer, and, step by step,

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you will find yourself drawing upon an inner power you perhaps never knew you had.

“Babe” Didrikson Zaharias was one of the world’s greatest female athletes. Javelin thrower, tennis ace, golf star—there was nothing “Babe” couldn’t do. She even struck out major league baseball players at an exhibition game. Then she got cancer. She could have given up. But she didn’t. She fought cancer like an opponent in a game, contesting every inch. When she died, long after doctors had predicted, she said, “I have put everything in the hands of God, and it is all right.”

We outmatch our difficulties by the presence of Christ, for He is stronger than all of them, a wonderful antidote to discouragement. Draw upon his power. Walk tall. Stand up to your situation. Go into the darkness unafraid.

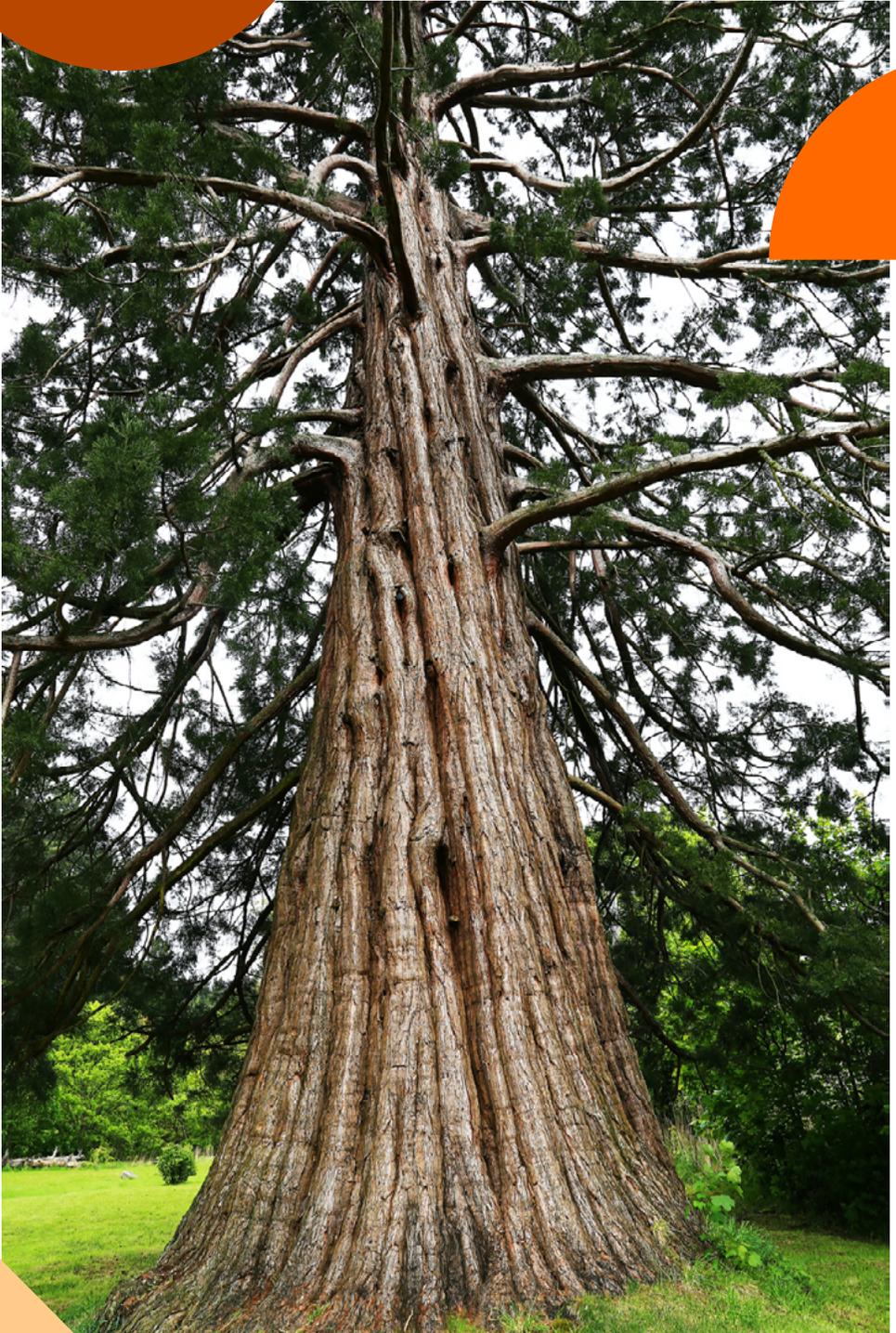


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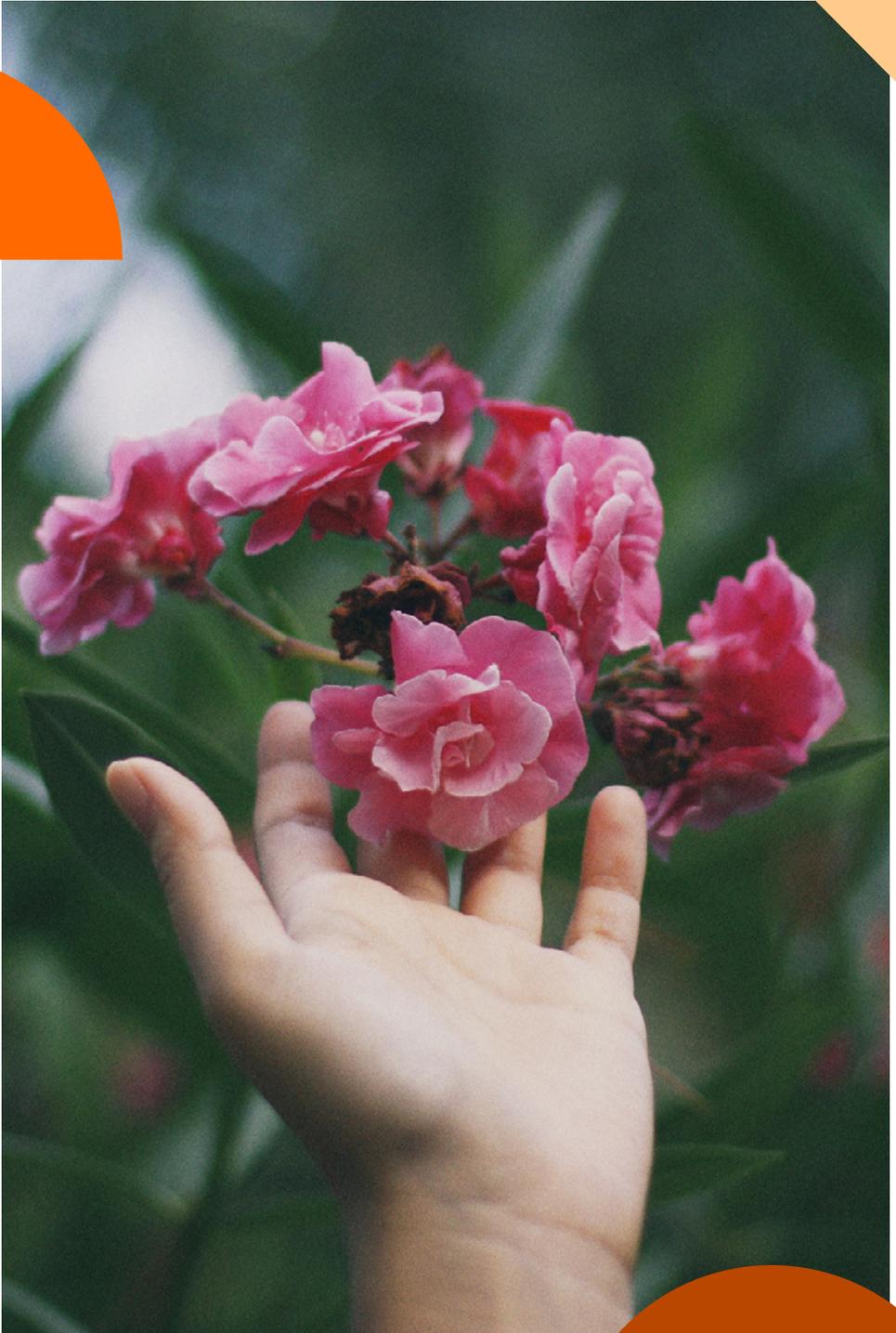


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Small Steps

HUMAN BEINGS can be very impatient. We want things right away. We believe our time is our own, and, when we have to wait, we become frustrated. God, however, is patient. His timetable is different from ours. And though that timetable often seems uncomfortably slow, rest assured that God's timing is not only perfect, it is just what we need.

It is important to remember this when recovering from a crisis. Often we pray for solutions, for strength, for calm, for change—only to find our troubles persisting past what we thought was our breaking point. The temptation is great to conclude, *God has forgotten about me.*

That is the wrong conclusion. God has not forgotten about you. Rest assured, He is working mightily on your behalf. However, He is working toward the right solution, not necessarily the solution you want right now.

This can be hard to accept. But you must remember that God sees your whole life, not just this difficult

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moment. He does not simply want to put things back the way they were. He wants to make a new and better life for you from the ashes of the old.

So stick to your plans. Go through them step by step. And if you're feeling discouraged, remind yourself of God's great truth: hard experiences will pass away. Not on our timetable. On God's timetable. The best timetable.

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Live By Faith

SOME PEOPLE think faith means a skill of belief you must acquire before you can start calling upon God. That is not what faith means. Faith is simply the decision, each day, to act as if God's promises are true and present in your life.

It is important to understand this quality of faith because, without it, your work toward overcoming crisis will be much more difficult. Faith is not a state of mind. It is a practice, a daily practice of calling upon God and trusting that He will respond—even when, sometimes, it seems He is far away.

How do you acquire this practice? By doing it. An easy way to start is simply to affirm your faith verbally. Say, “I believe. God is with me right now.” Even if you haven't completely taken the words to heart, saying them will cause your mind gradually to follow along.

Then pray this prayer: “Dear Jesus, in this time of trouble, I place my life and the lives of my loved ones in the shelter of Your loving arms. I'm going to trust You to

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care for us in every way today. You only want good for your children, so whatever happens, You'll work today for our benefit."

Once you have done this, approach each of the day's tasks with the assumption that God is working beside you. The key is to hold on to this conviction even when events seem to be going against you. Remember St. Paul's great promise: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

And don't be surprised if living by faith brings you victory more quickly than you had expected. When you arm yourself with faith, you tap a wellspring of intellectual and emotional strength. Before you know it, you'll be overcoming the calamities you face.

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Reach Out

ONCE, A tremendous hurricane slammed into the West Indies. Huge waves came ashore and wiped out many homes and lives. When a group of relief workers approached the small village that had been hit hardest, they heard voices raised in song.

“What can that be?” the relief workers asked one another. When they reached the village, they saw. The villagers were already working together to rebuild. They had formed a team, and were expressing their faith and hope by singing.

One of the best ways to recover from a crisis is to reach out to others. This may sound counterintuitive. But giving your time and energy to other people is one of the greatest boosters of strength and spirit.

How do you do this? First, reach out to God. Talk to Him about everything, no matter how small, just as you would to a close friend or a loved one. Ask Him for strength and creativity—and the discernment to see others who need your help.



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Then look around. There is always someone in need. If your area has been devastated, pitch in when rebuilding begins. If you have lost a loved one, think about counseling others facing loss once you have recovered your own equilibrium.

Remember that all human beings experience troubles similar to your own. And, though it seems paradoxical, remember that the more you give, the more you grow. Alone, you might find this giving hard to do. But with God, it is not only possible, it is one of the key ways to recover your strength and sense of belonging in the world.

Try it now. Reach out to God. Then reach out to others.

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The Power of Hope

HERE ARE some of the truest, most beautiful words ever written: “Why are you downcast, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God. For I shall again praise Him, my help and my God.”

Hope is a small word. But it is one of the most powerful. Why? Because in hope lies the power of the human soul to turn to God and live as if his promises are going to come true.

Some people think hope is an emotion. “I’m feeling hopeful,” they say. But true hope is a discipline, a determination to believe in God’s reality and power, even when the world seems to be crashing down around you.

That is the genius and the power of hope. It flies in the face of calamity, saying, “The world can do its worst to me. But still I will hope. Still I will know that this is the day the Lord has made, and He will take care of me.”

The key to surviving a crisis is hope. Hope that Jesus loves you. Hope that He is, right now, working out a solution for you. Hope that the future you place in His

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hands will be better than the present you hold in your own.

Practice this hope, even if you have to will yourself to do it. With its power, you will overcome all things. You will pass from the night into hope for a new day.



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