

# HOPE

AN ANCHOR FOR THE SOUL

**30 Daily Devotions**



**Amy Welborn**

## DAY 1

...Christ Jesus our hope... **1 TIMOTHY 1:1**

Just as I began work on this devotional, my son experienced an injury. Not quite serious, but still significant enough to derail a lot of plans. Life has changed for him. The hope he had for upcoming opportunities and experiences has been challenged. Dashed, even.

We've all been there, haven't we? It might happen in small ways in daily life: We'd hope to complete a project by the end of the day, but unexpected events—and those people!—interrupted. On a bigger scale: We'd hoped (and assumed) our life's journey would go a certain way, but life—and yes, even death—intervene. We trusted. Yes, we hoped.

Hope, they say, is a virtue. Well, it's not just "they." It's our faith. Hope is one of the theological virtues along with faith and charity.

Those challenges to hope might lead us to think that hope is simply the optimism that things will work out for the best. But hope—as a virtue—is something else. The hopes for happiness, accomplishment and love are certainly expressions of natural hope. The theological virtue of hope is directed, not towards what we would like to see happen in this life—but the reason we're doing anything at all.

And the reason? Paul tells us right up there, and he challenges us. Where, in the end, is my hope, really?

**REFLECT:** What does it mean to me to put my hope in Christ?

## DAY 2

Therefore, we are not discouraged; rather, although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

### **2 CORINTHIANS 4:16**

**I**n the midst of the consuming pain of childbirth, struggling to stay focused, a laboring woman reminds herself—or might be reminded by those supporting her—“The baby! At the end of this, you’re going to be holding your baby!”

Even if you’ve never given birth, you’ve probably experienced something similar: enduring months of physical therapy or cancer treatment. Sacrificing big chunks of your life in pursuit of a worthy goal. How do we keep going and do so in a fruitful way? We think of what awaits us at the end of our labor and suffering.

The theological virtue of hope is the gift, given to us at our baptisms, that helps us remember what awaits us at the end of the labor and suffering of this life. It’s the desire for eternal life above all things—and the trust in Jesus’ promises and mercy to guide us there.

The Lord knows that this life is hard. We can be tempted to stew in those difficult moments and forget God’s love, forget that we’re here because God loves us and so deeply desires us to dwell with him forever. And so, in the midst of the suffering, we’re invited to hope: to let God in and allow that hope to grow and renew us.

**PRAY:** Lord, strengthen my hope in you.

## DAY 3

He has helped Israel his servant,  
remembering his mercy,  
according to his promise to our fathers... **LUKE 1:54-55**

**H**ope is a gift from God and is found, like so many of God's gifts, in the most unexpected places.

So it is here in this scene from Nazareth. For centuries, a people had suffered and waited. The prophets had assured them of God's promise to save. They listened, they responded but still they suffered. Still they waited.

And then finally, in God's own time, he gave them—and us—a sure sign, a reason to hope. Where? In the backwaters of a mighty empire. How? Through the “yes” of a teenaged girl.

Through Mary, the Lord fulfills his promises and comes and dwells with his people, just as he promised he would.

But of course, this hope that lives within the womb of this young woman is not just for her, and this is something she understands. This hope—Emmanuel—must be shared! She carries this hope within her to her cousin Elizabeth, and her prayer at this moment is a celebration of what God has done for all of his people.

Like Mary, God gifts us with signs of hope unexpectedly. Like Mary, journeying from her own home and singing praise to God, we share that gift—pilgrims of hope, all.

**ACT:** Be conscious of ways you can share hope with others this week.

## DAY 4

Therefore, since we have such hope, we act very boldly...

### 2 CORINTHIANS 3:12

**H**ope is that virtue given to us by God that helps us place the pursuit of holiness at the center of all we do.

That's why the saints can be so helpful as we seek to develop the virtue of hope amid life's challenges.

Pope Benedict XVI wrote an entire encyclical on hope, titled *Spe Salvi*. In it, he highlighted the examples of several holy men and women, notably St. Josephine Bakhita.

St. Josephine Bakhita, born in the Sudan in the mid-19th century, was enslaved and then moved to Italy with a family that had purchased her. She eventually won her legal freedom and, when she came to know the Lord and became a Christian, her spiritual freedom as well. Then she knew that no matter what happened to her on earth—in her own words—“I am awaited by this Love. And so my life is good.”

Once freed, Josephine Bakhita shared this good news of hope. She ministered to others in small ways but also spoke of the hope that God had given her. She was loving; she was bold.

As Pope Benedict wrote: “The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life.”

**REFLECT:** How does hope help you to “live differently?”

You can read *Spe Salvi* (“On Christian Hope”) for free on the Vatican website. ([vatican.va](http://vatican.va))

## DAY 5

Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God's upward calling, in Christ Jesus.

### **PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14**

One of the great anthems of the American Civil Rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s was the stirring “Keep Your Eyes on the Prize.” The song begins with Paul and Silas’ miraculous release from prison described in Acts. It continues to describe various types of imprisonment and chains. Yet, it encourages us to “hold on...hold on,” and yes, keep our eyes on the prize.

But not just “hold on” in a waiting pattern, right? Those activists were inspired by hope to act and move forward.

Keeping our eyes on the prize—as Paul indicates here—is not a passive stance. The virtue of hope energizes us. It helps us accept the challenges and the pain and even the possibility that those challenges may not end in this life. But hope, at the same time, orients us to Christ. Not just in terms of our future hopes, though, but also in terms of the present. We know that our Lord waits at the end—but that he’s also present right now with us, as well, giving us the grace to grow—to be more like him as we share love and work for justice.

**PRAY:** In the quiet, Lord, I open my heart to you. Build hope within me so that I might serve you in truth and love.

## DAY 6

When you pass through waters, I will be with you;  
through rivers, you shall not be swept away. **ISAIAH 43:2**

One of my sons is a musician. Sometimes the new pieces his teacher gave him seemed especially daunting. We would look over it, then at each other. He would say, “How does he expect me to do this?” I would be thinking the exact same thing, but I’d think it best to keep my doubts to myself. Instead, I’d remember what I’d told him before and what I actually believed.

“He knows you and your capabilities. He’s giving you this piece because he’s confident that you can play it. You need to trust his judgment.”

And, of course, the teacher was always right. Always.

In confusing moments, it’s helpful to remember who’s given me this gift of life. The One who knows me and loves me beyond what I can imagine. The One who doesn’t leave me on my own either. He gives me, among other gifts, this virtue of hope: the trust that the journey of this life is taking me to life with him. The hope that each day he’s present with me, guiding.

But as it is with the musician, the fulfillment of this promise just doesn’t happen. It takes effort on my part. The seed of hope has been planted. It’s up to me to nurture it.

**ACT:** As you take on a challenging task, let hope deepen your sense of God’s help.

In sync with the 2025 Jubilee Year, popular author Amy Welborn takes readers on a 30-day personal pilgrimage of hope. Each day's devotional reflection is anchored by Scripture, prayerful reminders, encouragement and virtuous actions for grounding readers in Christian hope and equipping them to bring that hope to the world.



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