

Hope and Help



God's Recovery Manual for Life's Disasters

"Hope and Help" by Johnny Lowrance and Gregg Spilker

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Published in the United States of America by
Turning Point Assembly of God
P.O. Box 11321
Murfreesboro, TN 37219
(615) 895-3845
www.turningpointag.com

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Letter From Pastor

Dear Friends,

A couple weeks after Hurricane “Katrina” had wrought such devastation, I was blessed to lead a wonderful, loving team of volunteer workers from our church into the area. We were there to help distribute supplies, as well as assist individuals and churches in clearing houses and buildings of debris. As we stood in the midst of the rubble of where homes once stood and drove through miles of heavily damaged communities, the whole experience seemed surreal.

The things, however, that impacted us most was the grief and suffering of all the people whose lives had been so undone by this terrible storm. None was more heartbreaking than the man who was seen pulling his pickup truck suddenly over to the shoulder of a high bridge. It happened so suddenly, there was no time to stop him from committing this suicidal act. The hopelessness of that man who became another victim of Katrina broke our hearts and has stayed with us since that time.

After returning to Tennessee, I was remembering the sights, smells, and sorrows of this disaster. While reading my Bible and asking God how we might further help the victims of Katrina, I glanced down at His Word. The scripture **Luke 4:4** was right in my sight. It reads, “**And Jesus answered him, saying, it is written, that man shall not live by bread alone, but every word of God.**” It was then I knew that God not only wanted us to help with physical bread, but to give the spiritual bread also which is

necessary for life. I immediately had the vision of this book you have in hand. The Word of God will help you not only to live through your life disaster, but to live better after this.

I asked a published author in our church, Gregg Spiker, to help me write this book. I thank him for the labor of love he has contributed. He is a compassionate man of God who himself knows firsthand how God can take us through difficult times. Our congregation caught this vision with me, along with other outstanding churches from around the nation. I want to thank all of them for their prayers and financial support which made the publishing of this book possible.

My prayer is that you will truly receive hope and help from these pages for the difficult time you are in.

My love and prayers,

Senior Pastor-Johnny Lowrance
Turning Point Assembly of God

Introduction

But the LORD watches over those who fear him, those who rely on his unfailing love. He rescues them from death and keeps them alive in times of famine. We depend on the LORD alone to save us. Only he can help us, protecting us like a shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we are trusting in his holy name. Let your unfailing love surround us, LORD, for our hope is in you alone.

Psalm 33:18-22 (NLT)

This book is written to each and every person affected by a disaster in your life. Our hearts go out to you in these trying and troubled times. We want you to know that each one of you is important and loved! We are praying for each of you.

We may not know your face or your name, but there is one who does! We may not have all the answers to the feelings you have, but there is one who does! There is someone who knows who you are, where you are, how you feel, and what you need! You are special to God and to us!

We have gathered some verses from the Bible to help encourage you and show you that God is a God of love and mercy and grace! Also included are notes of encouragement and prayers to help you in this time of recovery. God bless each one of you!

Hopelessness

I know you may be feeling hopeless right now. It seems you have lost everything. However, there is always hope, because there is always God! It is not what we have on earth that gives us hope; it is what we have in heaven. He is on your side. When you have nothing left but God, it is then you find out, He is enough. Hope in the Lord God and you will not be disappointed. Speak hopeful things, confess His Word aloud, sing songs of hope and praise, stay around people who have hope. You will find that hope generates more hope within you that will release your faith to go forward.

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.
Roman 15:13

My soul faints for Your salvation, But I hope in Your word.
Psalm 119:81

I wait on the Lord, my soul waits, And in His word I do hope.
Psalm 130:5

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord. And whose hope is the Lord.
Jeremiah 17:7

My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
Psalm 121:2

"And no, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You."
Psalm 39:7

"The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!"
Lamentations 3:24

We have God's hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.
Hebrews 6:19 (NIV)

He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength.
Isaiah 40:29

Be of good courage, And He will strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the Lord.
Psalm 31:24

Heavenly Father,

I thank you that my hope is in you, Lord. I know that my help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. I thank you that your hope is an anchor for my soul, firm and secure. Thank you, Lord, because when I am weak and have no might, you increase my strength. Thank you that I can be of good courage and you will strengthen my heart, because my hope is in the Lord. I give you praise in the name of Jesus – Amen.

Confusion

When your life has been turned upside down, it is easy to be confused as to what to do from here. God always has a plan to save us out of our trouble. Look to him through prayer and by reading and meditating on His Word. The plans and steps that are right for you will come into your heart. Then, just as His Word says, He will help you rebuild your life.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with my eye. Psalm 32:8

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7

Commit your works to the Lord, And your thoughts will be established. Proverbs 16:3

A man's heart plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps. Proverbs 16:9

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Psalm 119:105 (KJV)

Keep your eyes focused on what is right, and look straight ahead to what is good. Be careful what you do, and always do what is right.

Proverbs 4:25-26 (NCV)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way. Psalm 37:7

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in you.

Isaiah 26:3

I thank you, Lord for directing my steps. I thank you that as I commit my works to you, my thoughts will be established. I know that you will instruct me and teach me in the way I should go, and you will guide me with your eye. I thank you that thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Thank you for giving me perfect peace as I keep my mind stayed on you, because I trust in you. I give you all the praise, Lord – Amen.

Fear

When such a disaster as you have experienced happens, you can feel so vulnerable. Maybe you've been saying, "I never thought this would happen to me". God knows fear can torment us, whether it is in reliving the nightmare of what has happened in our thoughts and dreams, or the fear of the future. The love of God is the cure for all your fears. God loves you so much He gave His only Son to die for your sins. If He loves you enough to do that, He will surely give you whatever help you need now.

Yeah, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: For you are with me; Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7

"Fear not, for I am with you: Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fear. Psalm 34:4

God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1

Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in you. Psalm 56:3

The Lord is my light and my salvation: Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life: Of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27:1

When you lie down, you will not be afraid: Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet. Proverbs 3:24

Dear Lord,

I thank you that you are my refuge and my strength. I thank you that you are a present help in trouble. Thank you for being my light, my salvation, and the strength of my life; whenever I feel afraid. I will trust in you. Even if I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not be afraid, for you are with me. Thank you, that when I seek you, you hear me and deliver me from all my fears. In Jesus name – Amen.

Grief

Suffering tragedy in life can bring forth grief in many ways. You may be experiencing grief over the loss of your home, a relationship, precious keepsakes, photos, a job, and most tragically of all, the loss of a loved one or friend. No words on this earth can ever seem to be enough to comfort you at this time. This is why we need a comfort which is greater and that only comes from God. Whatever your loss has been because of this tragedy, be assured that God understands. He watched his innocent Son be unjustly beaten and crucified, therefore, He is touched by the feelings of your grief and sorrows. He is ready to comfort you.

*The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart,
and saves such as have a contrite spirit.*

Psalm 34:18

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Psalm 147:3

Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

1 Peter 5:7

Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."
Revelation 14:13 (NIV)

My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.

Psalm 119:50

For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 Corinthians 5:1

He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.

Psalm 91:15

"Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.
Hebrews 4:15-16 (KJV)

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Matthew 5:4 (KJV)

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:8 (KJV)

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort: Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted by God. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (KJV)

I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. John 14:18 (KJV)

And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Psalm 50:15 (KJV)

Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the Lord. Psalm 31:24

The Lord will guide you continually. And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden. And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. Isaiah 58:11

But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. 1 Peter 5:10

You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness. Psalm 30:11

Your sun shall no longer go down. Nor shall your moon withdraw itself; For the Lord will be your everlasting light. And the days of your mourning shall be ended. Isaiah 60:20

"To console those who mourn in Zion. To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified." Isaiah 61:3

Lord, I thank you that when I call upon you in the day of trouble, you will deliver me and I will glorify you. Thank you for giving me beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. I thank you that I am called a tree of righteousness, and I will once again produce new and good things, so that you may be glorified! I thank you for not leaving me comfortless, because you have come to me. I thank you that your promise preserves my life. I give glory in the name of Jesus – Amen.

Anger

In times of disaster or calamity, it is not unusual to experience feelings of anger. Sometimes, we can feel angry with ourselves for what we could have or should have done. We have feelings of anger towards others or even God. Anger is an emotional pain and can be as much or even more destructive than the calamity itself, if not handled correctly. It can also serve to help us when channeled the right way. God's Word gives us wise counsel on how to handle our anger.

Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret – it only causes harm.
Psalm 37:8

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."
Matthew 6:14

Therefore I desire that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting:
1 Timothy 2:8

Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed and be still.
Psalm 4:4

A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel.
Proverbs 17:4 (NIV)

He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.
Proverbs 16:32

A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, But perverseness in it breaks the spirit.
Proverbs 15:4

Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.
Proverbs 21:23

"Be angry and do not sin," do not let the sun go down on your wrath,
Ephesians 4:26

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.
Proverbs 15:1

Heavenly Father,
I thank you that I have a wholesome tongue; that it is a tree of life. I thank you for helping me to be slow to anger, that I will be better than the mighty. I thank you for helping me to guard my mouth and tongue in order to keep my soul from troubles. Help me to always give a soft answer that will turn away wrath. I pray this in the name of Jesus – Amen.

Depression

You can be subject to the dark cloud of depression as you look around and see your present circumstances. Maybe you are having to live in a public shelter or depending upon handouts from others. You may feel very alone, and like help is coming very slowly, or not at all.

It is said that depression is anger turned inward. Whatever is turned inward and causing you to experience helplessness, turn it toward God. Cry out to Him as honestly as you can. Don't worry about saying a perfect prayer; only let your deepest emotions out to Him. He cares for you and His compassion will not fail you.

"Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them: Are you not of more value than they?"
Matthew 6:26

"I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, And He answered me."
Jonah 2:2

The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed. A refuge in times of trouble.
Psalm 9:9

The eternal God is our refuge, And underneath are the everlasting arms;
Deuteronomy 33:27

"For You are my lamp, O Lord; The Lord shall enlighten my darkness."
2 Samuel 22:29

And you would be secure, because there is hope; Yes, you would dig about you, and take your rest in safety.
Job 11:18

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.
Psalm 30:5

The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust. Psalm 18:2

For you will light my lamp; The Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.
Psalm 18:28

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me."
John 14:1

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

Heavenly Father, I thank you that you are my lamp, and you enlighten my darkness. You are my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my strength in whom I will trust. I know that as I cry out to you in my affliction, you answer me. You are my refuge, and underneath are your everlasting arms. Let not my heart be troubled, for I believe in you. In Jesus' name – Amen.

Regrets

This tragedy may have generated a lot of regrets in you. Some regret not heeding the warnings, others are regretting not having spent more time with their families. Some regret not appreciating or enjoying more of what they had. Others are regretting the way they lived their life or wasted it away. Let these regrets cause a fresh evaluation of the things that are really important. Ask God to forgive you of your failures and sins. He will! Start treating each day as valuable, and exercise thanksgiving for what you have this day. There are no “throw away” days. This is the day the Lord has made, rejoice and be glad in it.

*Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed,
for His compassions never fail.*

Lamentations 3:22 (NIV)

*As far as the east is from the west, So far has He
removed our transgressions from us.* Psalm 103:12

*And by Him all that believe are justified from all things,
from which ye could not be justified by the law of
Moses.* Acts 13:39 (KJV)

*When doubts filled my mind, your comfort gave me
renewed hope and cheer.* Psalm 94:19 (NLT)

*"I am leaving you with a gift – peace of mind and heart.
And the peace I give isn't like the peace the world
gives. So don't be troubled or afraid.*

John 14:27 (NLT)

*For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our
heart, and knows all things.* 1 John 3:20

*For everything that was written in the past was written
to teach us, so that through endurance and
encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope.*

Romans 15:4 (NIV)

*"I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for
My own sake; And I will not remember your sins."*

Isaiah 43:25

Lord, I thank you that you have given me the gift of peace of mind and heart. I thank you that I am free from all guilt and declare that I am right with you, because I believe in you. I praise you because when regrets fill my mind; your forgiveness gives me renewed hope and cheer. Thank you for your love and your compassion that never fails. I give you all glory – Amen.

Children

As much as we want to shelter our children from the harm and suffering, sometimes it is impossible. Two things can greatly help your children. First, if your faith in God and expressing to your children how God can take what has been a bad thing and turn it for our good. Secondly, is to bring them into the recovery process. They have a God-given faith and resilience that will help you and at the same time give them a great sense of worth. Children like to feel as though they can help. Have open dialogue about what has happened and what the plans are from here. Then, pray and count the answers to your prayers together.

Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land! Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell your children about it, let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. Joel 1:2-3

"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. 2 Timothy 1:5

And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:15

"As for you, son of man, the children of your people are talking about you beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, everyone saying to his brothers, 'Please come and hear what the world is that comes from the Lord.'" Ezekiel 33:30

Father,

I thank you for the opportunity to speak to my children about the things happening that have not happened before. Help me to train up my children in the way they should go, so that when they grow old, they will not depart from it. I thank you that I can say to them, "Please come and hear what the word is that comes from the Lord." I pray this in Jesus' name – Amen.

The Sovereignty of God

In time of trouble, our human nature demands to have some explanation as to why this happened to us. We can be tempted to blame God for causing it or not stopping it! The fact is, God has received a lot of blame for bad things He did not cause and little recognition for the good things He has done! We may never have all the answers we want and understand, but God has an outstanding history of being a loving, caring, and forgiving God. Isn't it wonderful to know that no matter what happens, He is making all things work together for good? He will have the final say. He will make this disaster somehow work for your good if you will trust Him and be thankful. He is your god in time of trouble.

As for God, His way is perfect: The word of the Lord is proven: He is a shield to all who trust in Him.

Psalm 18:30

Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth!

Psalm 46:10

For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him.

Psalm 103:11

"When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, And their tongues fail for thirst, I the Lord, will hear them: I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them."

Isaiah 41:17

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

Isaiah 55:9

Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else: I am God, and there is none like me.

Isaiah 46:9 (KJV)

"Am I a God near at hand," says the Lord, "and not a God afar off?"

Jeremiah 23:23

Almighty God,

I thank you that your way is perfect; that your word is proven and you will be a shield for me as I trust in you. There is none like you, Lord. I thank you that you are a God at hand and not a God afar off. I thank you because I know that you hear me and will not forsake me. You are the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending. Thank you for your love, your mercy and your grace. I give you all the glory, Lord – Amen.

Final Encouraging Words

We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed and broken. We are perplexed, but we don't give up and quit. We are hunted down, but God never abandons us. We get knocked down, but we get up again and keep going. 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 (NLV)

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me."

Jeremiah 29:11-13 (NIV)

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 1 John 4:4 (KJV)

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:37-39 (KJV)

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:19 (KJV)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments. Habakkuk 3:17-19 (KJV)

Special Invitation

God loves you so much! But even more than wanting to save you from the troubles you are facing, He wants to save you from your sins and give you a new life!

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:
Romans 3:23 (KJV)

We have all done things in our lives that need to be forgiven. The wonderful fact is; that we can be forgiven and have a personal relationship with the Almighty! But, it is only through Jesus that we can have this relationship.

Jesus said unto him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
John 14:6

God loves you so much that he gave his only Son, Jesus. He sent Jesus to this earth to die on a cross, to save us from our sins.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
John 3:16

All you have to do is believe. Believe that God sent Jesus to this world. Believe Jesus is the Son of God; that He died on the cross for your sins. If you believe, then all you have to do is confess it!

That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
Romans 10:9

Simply say this prayer. God wants to heal you on the inside as well as the outside. True peace only comes from knowing Jesus. He is the answer! He is the way, the truth, and the life! Will you ask Him into your life today?

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Son of God. Thank you for loving me so much that you came to this world and gave your life, in order to free me from my sin. I believe that you are the way, the truth, and the life! I ask you to forgive my sins and be the Lord of my life. Heal me on the inside as well as the outside. I thank you for making me right with God. I pray this in your precious name – Amen.

If you prayed this prayer you are forgiven! The next step is to learn more about Him. Find a Bible teaching, Bible believing church. Grow in the Lord and see that He truly is everything you need in your life! We love you and remember; you are special!