

HOPE

The Anchor of Your Soul



June Hunt



HOPE
for the Heart

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BY JUNE HUNT

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Publishing Group



Hope: The Anchor of Your Soul

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Dear friend,

Never will I forget the time when a woman—a medical professional—began attending my evening Bible study. She was a smart, serious 30-year-old who was, at the same time, emotionally stuck. (Both of her parents had died of alcoholism at a relatively young age, a background that had caused her to feel adrift, somewhat floating in a sea of uncertainty.)

Immediately “Freda” responded to the wonderful scriptural truths and to our warm fellowship, much as a duck takes to water.

Two years later, Freda experienced a flood of sexual flashbacks—lewd, unnerving flashbacks that quickly increased with intensity. Late one evening as we talked, she described the graphic, disturbing scenes washing through her mind. Finally, she named the offender—her own father.

Freda became so frustrated—so full of anger—that she wanted to commit suicide. This was her statement: “Why live? I don’t want to be alive any longer.”

The more she focused on being a victim of incest, the more fragile she became. She couldn’t read the Word. She couldn’t hear the truth. She couldn’t see the light. Although I rehearsed God’s hope with her (hope she knew in her head), she had no hope for her heart. She said, “June, it will work for you, but it won’t work for me.” And she stopped taking part in our group.

Then one day I received a call from Presbyterian Hospital—the hospital where she worked—except this call was from the Psychiatric Unit. Freda had tried to commit suicide—and had almost succeeded. Freda had lost all hope.

Immediately, I went to the Psych Unit to have a heart-to-heart with her. “There are no hopeless situations,” I said, “Only those who have grown hopeless. Freda, you have all the hope in the world—you have the God of hope indwelling you.” Still she did not respond.

Eventually Freda’s medical insurance ran out and she was sent to the state hospital. (Not good!) Two days later, I received a call, “June, you’ve got to get me out of here! These people here are like zombies. I’m not like these people.”

Later in the conversation she said, “I’ve just been thinking. God does promise hope—and I can see that hope is for me. I can overcome this pain. I can do all things through Christ, who gives me strength.” Interesting timing. I smiled.

Once Freda began focusing on the promises of God for herself personally, she improved dramatically. Within days she walked out of that asylum. As Freda was willing to work through the pain of the past, she began to walk in victory.

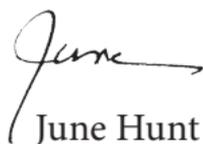
Let me share with you what I learned from Freda. When people need help, what is most important for them to receive? Truth, compassion, mercy? The most important of all is hope. Realize, even if

they have truth in their heads, if they do not have hope that the truth will work, they can still walk away from your compassion and mercy and give up on life.

My prayer is that through this book, you will take hold of the hope God has for you so that you can live the life God has planned for you. The Lord says, *“I know the plans I have for you ... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”* (Jeremiah 29:11). This means the Lord has a plan for your life, even amidst the pain.

When you put all the hurt into His hands, He will be your Healer, your Redeemer. And, ultimately, no pain is wasted.

Yours in the Lord's hope,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "June". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, horizontal tail extending to the right.

June Hunt

HOPE

The Anchor of Your Soul

The day is a cold January 25th. Two gale force storms have already shattered the main mast of the ship. In the third month at sea, a third terrifying storm, a “nor’easter,” caused the Englishman to fear for his life—so much so, that he writes, “It was as if the great deep had already swallowed us up.” Yet, on the same ship during the same storm, a group of German Christians appear completely calm as they quote the Psalms. According to young John Wesley, their lack of fear unsettled him more than the storm itself!

How can they be calm when their ship faces catastrophe? How can they be at peace when their lives are in peril? What makes their hope strong and his so weak?¹ All on the same battered ship, all weary from the same raging storm, all tossed by the same crashing waves—yet while one man feels frantic, the others keep calm. Why? Simply put: *Their lives were anchored in Christ, and they knew their anchor would hold.*

Some 150 years ago, these Mennonites, who clearly had a *peace that passes all understanding*, displayed their hope as though they were speaking directly to the Lord, “*When I am afraid, I will trust in you*” (Psalm 56:3). Not, *if I am afraid*, but “*When I am afraid, I will trust in you.*”

What an anchor is to a ship, hope is to the soul. They both stabilize whatever needs to be held steady amidst the storms in life. Every Christian has been given a secure anchor in the person of Christ, for the Bible says about Jesus:

**“We have this hope as an anchor
for the soul, firm and secure.”
(Hebrews 6:19)**



DEFINITIONS OF HOPE

We have all been “in the same boat,” with cloudy thinking about hope. The *common view* of hope in our culture is quite different from *Christian hope*. If you live by *cultural hope*, you will have a boatful of wishful thinking, and what you hope for will sometimes happen, and sometimes not.

However, *Christian hope* is based on the Bible—God’s unchanging Word. By patiently relying on what God says, you will have all the hope necessary with all the certainty you will ever need. The apostle Paul states the source of our hope:

**“Everything that was written in the past
was written to teach us,
so that through endurance
and the encouragement of the Scriptures
we might have hope.”
(Romans 15:4)**

WHAT IS Hope?

When we live with biblical hope, we have an anchored life. We are held steady in the midst of any storm. Because hope is often misunderstood, an accurate understanding of the meaning of hope is crucial. The Bible says that when your hope is anchored in God, He will teach you His truth and lead you in the way you should go. This prayer is yours to claim:

**“Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long.”
(Psalm 25:5)**

- ▶ **Hope** identified as *cultural hope* is merely an *optimistic desire* that something will be fulfilled. This hope is not a guaranteed hope because it is subject to changeable people and circumstances.²
- ▶ **Hope** identified as *Christian hope* is an *optimistic assurance* that something will be fulfilled. This hope is a guaranteed hope not subject to change, but rather anchored in our unchangeable Savior and Lord.³
- ▶ **Hope** in the New Testament is conveyed by the Greek word *elpis*, which means a “favorable and confident expectation” relating to the future.⁴

Although the Bible uses the word *hope* in both the secular and the spiritual sense, the focus of our

Christian hope is always based on the *guaranteed* promises of God. Thus, this hope will never be a disappointment. As Christians, we are promised peace with God:

“We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.

And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”

(Romans 5:3–5)

WHAT IS Hopelessness?

When zealous religious leaders sought to kill the apostle Paul, he—a Roman citizen—appealed to Caesar. Soon Paul found himself a prisoner on a ship headed to Rome. A treacherous storm arose, and eventually all on board lost hope. All on board believed they would die. All on board saw the situation as *hopeless*. Paul admitted,

“When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.”
(Acts 27:20)

- ▶ **Hopelessness** is characterized by absolute despair with no expectation of good.⁵ The Bible refers to those who have only a hope that perishes,

**“Such is the destiny of all who forget God;
so perishes the hope of the godless.”
(Job 8:13)**

- ▶ **Hopelessness in the New Testament** is conveyed by the Greek word *apelpizo*, which is also translated “despair.” (*Apo* means “away from” and *elpizo* means “to hope.” When combined, this word literally means “to be away from hope.”)⁶
- ▶ **Hopeless thinking** can result in a desire to die. Those who feel hopeless are unable to envision any viable option for their problems—death seems the only solution.

A ship without an anchor is vulnerable on the open seas—those aboard can lose hope of survival when a storm is severe. But, in the midst of our personal storms, rather than drowning in a sea of hopelessness, the Lord calls us to put our hope in Him, allowing Him to be our Anchor and relying on His promises. Let this be your personal prayer,

**“Sustain me according to your
promise, and I will live;
do not let my hopes be dashed.”
(Psalm 119:116)**

WHAT IS the Significance of Anchors?

For centuries, anchors have been a symbol of hope. This emblem was especially significant to the early persecuted church. Many etchings of anchors were discovered in the catacombs of Rome, where Christians held their meetings in hiding. Threatened with death because of their faith, these committed Christians used the anchor as a *disguised cross* and as a marker to guide the way to their secret meetings. Located beneath the ancient city, 600 miles of these tomb-like burial chambers served as a place of refuge during perilous times of persecution. Thus, the anchor—found even on some tombstones today—has become the symbol of guaranteed hope for the eternal security of true Christians. In the book of Proverbs, God, who is the Source of Wisdom, says ...

**“Whoever listens to me will live in safety
and be at ease, without fear of harm.”
(Proverbs 1:33)**

- ▶ **Anchors** are objects typically connected to a boat or ship by a long chain or a heavy line with a short chain for the purpose of holding a vessel in place. Some anchors are fastened securely to the water’s flooring to hold down a large object (such as an oil rig). Other anchors are like large sheets or parachutes thrown into deep water in order to slow down or stabilize a vessel.