

HOPE DEFERRED



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Hope deferred makes the heart sick

The Old Testament Book of Wisdom says,

Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

Proverbs 13:12 KJV

Other translations read:

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life. (NIV)

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when dreams come true, there is life and joy. (NLT)

Recently, the Holy Spirit illuminated the above Proverb during a prayer time with a saintly woman in the course of a phone conversation. I was going through an increasingly difficult time spiritually, emotionally, and physically, though I hadn't voiced it to anyone. On this day, I had simply asked for prayer for pain throughout the left side of my back. As she began to pray, she suddenly stopped in mid-sentence and said, "Oh my, you're suffering from deferred hope." I thought, "What is deferred hope?" Then calmly, yet with noticeable authority, she spoke directly to the problem, "Deferred hope, in the Name of Jesus Christ, I break you off my Brother's life right now and order you not to return to him again."

Instantly, I was delivered! The pain in my back left simultaneously. It was miraculous. The only way I can describe what occurred is to say that all the chronic pain in my back, neck, and shoulders that had been increasing in intensity for the last 6-8 months time snapped off me like a tightly stretched rubber band being cut with a knife. I was free! Then in the same gentle voice of authority she said, "I now replace these areas in your life with God's desire fulfilled, which the Bible says is a tree of life."

When she spoke these words my mind which had been saturated with frustration and tormented with stress and chronic disappointment was

suddenly purged with the in-flooding mind of Christ. My faith level spiked instantaneously. My spiritual vision was renewed like an eagle. Said another way, it was as if my viewpoint and understanding of my life and its seemingly arduous circumstances suddenly changed. It was as though God showed me heaven's perspective – His aerial point of view – on the same life-issues and delayed hope I had been struggling with. At the same time, my heart was filled with new anticipation and godly optimism of what the Lord was about to do for me, as well as through my life for others. In a word, Hope was restored!

As I stood amazed and praised God for this mighty deliverance, a renewed vigor and strength to finish the course set before me filled my soul. I then realized God had just supernaturally delivered me from unseen spiritual forces that had been hindering my life, oppressing my mind, and tormenting my body, spiritual forces that had been increasing in effect against me for a period of nearly three years. During this time, I knew something was awry, but couldn't, until being delivered, quite put my finger on it. Yet now, it all crystallized instantly.

These forces of darkness had been subtle. Somehow, through my ignorance, they had increasingly hindered and oppressed my mind and body, and had begun to vex my spirit. After hanging up the phone from this prayer encounter, the Holy Spirit began to reveal to me how subtle yet devastating deferred hope can be to a person.

In reality, if it wasn't for the intervening Hand of God through that saintly woman, deferred hope could have easily prevailed against me, derailing me in my walk with the Lord. I could have become shipwrecked in my faith as the Bible warns (see 1 Timothy 1:18-20). I became aware of how I had nearly been destroyed because of my ignorance regarding this overlooked Biblical subject of deferred hope.

What exactly is deferred hope?

Deferred hope is one of the spiritual weapons the enemy employs against Christians. This weapon, if not recognized and properly guarded against, can cause our hearts to become sick. *“Hope deferred makes the heart sick”* (Proverbs 13:12). This is why God’s wisest Old Testament King admonishes, *“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life”* (Proverbs 4:23).

If our hearts become sick through deferred hope, then other areas of our life will suffer as well. This includes our attitude, spiritual vision, physical and mental health, our love relationships with Jesus and others. All these things had been severely affected prior to my deliverance, all because I was ignorant of this strategic tool of the enemy. (Keep in mind that I had been saved for seventeen years, won souls to Christ, and taught Bible studies to others.) The Old Testament Prophet Hosea said it this way, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6).

Under the New Covenant the Apostle Paul admonished, *“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices”* (2 Corinthians 2:11). I believe it is a safe statement to say that the devil’s ability to keep us defeated is directly related to his ability to keep us ignorant on spiritual matters. This is why I am sharing this victory from the Lord against deferred hope with you.

My heartfelt desire is that by the time you finish reading what the Holy Spirit revealed to me from the Scriptures and my experience, you too will be delivered from any of the negative affects that deferred hope has sent against your life. *“For God is no respecter of persons”* (Acts 10:34).

Let us not be ignorant of the enemy's devices

The first thing the Lord showed me about deferred hope was that it comes against us through three primary elements:

1. the very real circumstances of life that come to delay our God-given desires from being fulfilled bringing disappointment;
2. the mindset that develops in us that is contrary to the Word of God, and finally;
3. an evil spirit that comes to hinder and oppress us to sicken us in heart once these first two natural forces are in place.

When these three elements of deferred hope arrive in combination they can be *"a three-ply cord that is not easily broken"* (Ecclesiastes 4:12). At this point, we need supernatural deliverance from Heaven to set us free. The ironic part is once we get to this third stage of bondage we usually don't even realize we've been trapped and brought into captivity by the enemy.

I believe most people will experience hope deferred at one time or another in their life. In fact, hope deferred can be a common experience, more common than most would like to admit, or are aware of. I know I was ignorant. Because of this fact, once deferred hope has a stronghold in our lives the enemy of our souls will try to capitalize on this weakness in our spiritual armor. Satan will test our spirit by sending a spirit of discouragement to compound the matter.

If we aren't careful (or we are ignorant of the enemy's strategies), this can catapult us into a spiritual tailspin and eventual crash, or as Scripture calls it, "shipwrecked in our faith." I believe this is what may have happened to Hymenaeus and Alexander:

Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked

their faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

1 Timothy 1:18-20, NIV

Paul was warning Timothy against losing his focus, or taking his eye off the prize. Paul had prophesied over Timothy, but warfare was coming against him to contradict these prophetic words. Evidently, Paul had also spoken words of prophecy over Hymenaeus and Alexander, but something caused them to lose focus.

I believe life's circumstances contradicted the prophecies, which is common to man. This is why Abraham *"hoped against hope, and continued to believe in hope,"* and then finally received his promise from God and became *"the father of many nations"* (Genesis 17:4-5). Abraham had to stand against deferred hope for 25 years before Isaac was born. If Abraham had yielded to deferred hope, or shrank back from the promise of God, he would have missed God's best for him.

In fact, at one point, Abraham yielded to the very real circumstances of Sarah's dead womb coupled with her worldly advice to sleep with Hagar. This fleshly union produced a child named Ishmael, the father of the Arab people. Many within this people group in the Middle East have persecuted Jews and Christians for the last 4,000 years, relentlessly murdering them in the name of Allah. Deferred hope was at the root of this birthing and its negative fruit continues unabated to this very day. If only Abraham had known! God recovered Abraham in time, and Isaac, the child of promise, was born through the supernaturally resurrected womb of Sarah. Christ came through this bloodline and the blessing of Abraham has come upon all who receive Jesus. Hallelujah!

In the case of Hymenaeus and Alexander, the outcome was ugly. When they experienced the spiritual warfare of deferred hope instead of standing on the prophetic word spoken through Paul, they yielded to the trap set for them. The circumstances of life, its accompanying mindset of defeat, and the demonic influence that turned them against the Apostle Paul won that round. Their hearts became sick and they began to slander God's anointed leaders. As a result, they were *"handed over to Satan so they might learn*

not to blaspheme" (1 Timothy 1:20). Ouch! May we learn from their wretched example and not make the same mistake. May we rather be like the numerous heroes of the faith who stood firm in the face of such trials and emerged victorious in Christ Jesus.

12 examples of God's people who experienced deferred hope

Abraham

Abraham, the father of faith, experienced hope deferred for 25 years waiting for the promise of a child who would make him the “father of many nations.” Finally at age 100, Abraham laughed at (disbelieved) the possibility of having a child when the messenger angel visited him (Genesis 17:17).

Sarah

Sarah experienced hope deferred until she was 90 years old and then laughed when the angel spoke to her (Genesis 18:12). In her disbelief, she gave her husband bad advice and Ishmael was birthed through an unholy union that still inflicts harm against the people of God 4,000 years later.

Joseph

Joseph effectively stood against hope deferred while in prison on false rape charges. He was called by God to be the deliverer of Egypt, the Egyptians, and his own Israelite family. Even after God's intervention with a sign for good to show that God was still with Joseph, he still waited in faith for two more years behind bars (Genesis 40:13-14 & 41:1). Twenty-two years later, God performed the miracle. Result, God was able to raise Joseph up to become deliverer of two nations.

Moses

Moses experienced hope deferred on the backside of the mountain as an outcast and murderer for forty years (Exodus 3:1). God made him the deliverer of three million souls out of Egypt. Then, in the wilderness, Moses faced forty more years of hope deferred along with these same three million souls, who now were corporately blaming him for bringing them out to die in the desert. As a result, Moses became angry, striking the rock twice, and

disqualified himself from entering the Promised Land (see Numbers 20:8-12).

Children of Israel

The Children of Israel experienced hope deferred as slaves to a pagan king in Egypt for 430 years (Exodus 12:40).

Children of Israel

The Children of Israel then experienced hope deferred for 40 years in the wilderness (Exodus 16:35). However, God was faithful because they never lacked anything.

For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.

Deuteronomy 2:7, KJV

Children of Israel

The Children of Israel yielded to hope deferred in less than forty days while waiting for their spiritual leader, Moses, to return from the mountain with instructions from God (Deuteronomy 9:9). Their hearts became sick and they began worshiping a golden calf and having an orgy.

Anna the Prophetess

Anna the Prophetess stood faithfully against hope deferred for 60 years, praying and fasting in the temple of God. She received the promise of the consolation of Israel, the birth of Jesus the Messiah (Luke 2:25-38). She kept focused and steadfast on the vision and refused to “cast off restraint.”

The Disciples

The Disciples experienced hope deferred while waiting for Jesus to take over Rome as their King. They expected Him to deliver the children of Israel from Roman rule and to restore Jerusalem to its rightful place in history. Judas

tried to expedite the process by selling out Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. His plan was to force Him to use His divine authority as Messiah to defeat the Romans and fulfill the Old Testament prophecies of His eternal government. Instead, Judas' heart became sick and he committed suicide. The disciples' hearts became sick when Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27:38). They went back to fishing! (See John 21:3).

The Zealots

The Zealots experienced hope deferred while waiting for the Messiah for an undetermined number of years. They yielded to deferred hope and their hearts became sick; they turned to violence to accomplish the prophecy in their own strength and power, killing Romans in the name of God. Consequently, they were arrested and executed. More than 30,000 were crucified by the Roman government during this time.

Gehazi

Gehazi experienced deferred hope while waiting to be commissioned by God as a prophet after Elisha. Gehazi lost vision, cast off restraint, and then stole money from the ministry (two talents or 150 pounds of silver and two high quality garments). This self-realized vision, in his mind, would enable him to leave the ministry and go into private business (2 Kings 5:20-27). Gehazi became leprous as a result (v. 27).

Lot's daughters

Lot's two daughters suffered from deferred hope. Once fire destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, there were no men left alive. Instead of waiting for proper husbands from the Lord, they yielded to the spirit of deferred hope. Their hearts became sick; they schemed to get their father intoxicated in order to have sex with him. Both daughters became pregnant as a result of these incestuous unions, and then gave birth to two wicked nations; the Ammonites and Moabites, Biblical enemies of God's people.

Hope deferred is a common test for every man

Hope deferred is a common test and temptation for every Believer.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man...

1 Corinthians 10:13, KJV

With each temptation, God always makes a way of escape. If we will seek Him, He will always lead us in triumph (2 Corinthians 2:14). As we discussed above, hope deferred can also be accompanied by an evil spirit, *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood...”* (Ephesians 6:10-18, NIV).

Job’s wife suffered from deferred hope also. When she lost her children and everything they owned, her hope was deferred. She then told her husband to “Curse God and die” (Job 2:9). It is interesting to note that these are the same words Satan told God that Job would say if God *“lifted Job’s hedge of protection and allowed Satan to afflict him”* (see Job 2:5).

Satan was attacking Job through Job’s distressed wife with demonically inspired words. The same is true today, for *“there is nothing new under the sun...what has been done will be done again”* (Ecclesiastes 1:9, NIV).

When your miracle is delayed, the devil may also send people to ask you, “Where is the promise of His coming!” They may word it this way, “If your God is with you, where is He at today? Give up this silly Christian stuff and try something that really works!”

Peter warned against this demonic strategy, *“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation’”* (2 Peter 3:3-4, KJV).

Satan will send scoffers to add insult to the injury that hope deferred inflicted. What he seeks is for you to “curse God to his face.” Don’t yield to this temptation, but press on, hoping against hope, in Jesus’ Mighty Name.

God is able to *“hasten his word to perform it in your life”* (Jeremiah 1:12, KJV). When you stand firm in faith, eventually, you will receive the promise, so don't give up!

Common wrong reactions to hope deferred

Moses, at age forty, killed an Egyptian in the power of his own flesh instead of waiting for God's instructions on how to properly fulfill the call of Deliverer on his life. As a result, Moses was banished from Egypt and the very people he was called to deliver. He was stuck on the backside of the mountain for forty years, waiting on God a second time, until he was age eighty.

Why are you on the backside of the mountain during this season of your life? Do not despair, God still has a plan and if you are patient and don't lose focus again, He will raise you up to fulfill the destiny He has for you.

The Apostles went back to fishing; in effect, they left the ministry (John 21:3).

The Religious Hebrew Zealots rebelled against civil authority, committed murders and sedition; they used the arm of their own flesh instead of the power of the Spirit. Haven't you met a few of these anti-government types? They never want to talk about how their sin got them into this mess, but rather about the sin of those who are their captors, the snitch, prosecutor, unfair appeals court, their attorney, the IRS, the credit card companies, etc.

Abraham slept with his concubine, Hagar, at the prompting of his wife, Sarah. Sarah had also lost the vision of giving her husband a child. She was suffering from hope deferred. They both, in effect, tried to help God do the miracle. God called it a work of the flesh. So, an Ishmael was born, costing the lives of hundreds of thousands of Jews and Christians through wars and Islamic Jihad over the last 4,000 years.

Sometimes, the accusing voice of Satan will speak into our minds in the first person, causing us to perceive his words as a product of our own thinking. This causes us to accept his words as our own instead of combating his lies. He speaks statements like, "I guess God wants me to help him fulfill the promise myself. The Bible does say, 'Faith without works is dead.' Besides, God helps those who help themselves." This is not what the Bible says in

proper context. In fact, Scripture after Scripture warns against such action without God's timing.

The Children of Israel lost patience while Moses was up on the mountain forty days. Consequently, they yielded to the spirit of deferred hope and sought out another god of their own making, saying, *"This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt"* (Exodus 32:8). They blasphemed God, attributing the works of God to the devil. As a result, they began worshiping a golden calf and having an orgy (1 Corinthians 10:7-11).

The Children of Israel lost restraint and demanded meat instead of angel's food because they were tired of manna every day (See Numbers Chapter 11). God answered their prayers by giving them an abundance of quail for the next thirty days straight. It got to the point that they loathed this food and wanted to return to manna again (Numbers 11:20). Many died with the meat still in their mouths, while others suffered a plague (Numbers 11:33).

The Children of Israel spent forty years walking in circles because of their unwillingness to believe the promise of God. When it was their divinely appointed hour to take the Promised Land, they shrank back in fear instead of stepping out in faith. Then, after God pronounced judgment on them for their disobedience and unbelief, they reacted wrongly to the spirit of hope deferred. They foolishly went up against the Amalekites without God's blessing and were driven back in the process (see Numbers 14:24-33; 40-45). They, like the Pharisees and Sadducees, missed their day of visitation (Luke 19:44). Let's learn from their example. Don't miss your day of visitation when the Lord's anointing is in the house; receive your healing, your day of salvation (being born again), your deliverance from nicotine, drugs, alcohol, sex addiction, masturbation, etc.

The Children of Israel reacted wrongly to hope deferred and their hearts became sick. The Bible says they tempted God ten times in the wilderness by murmuring against Him. This caused their own destruction by serpents (1 Corinthians 10:9).

Again and again they turned away and tempted God to kill them,
and limited the Holy One of Israel from giving them his blessings.

Psalms. 78:41, LVB

Herod reacted wrongly to hope deferred while under Roman rule. Herod joined the Romans and their wicked Hellenistic ways, bringing destruction on himself and the Jews in agreement with him. Be very careful with whom you align yourself. What has deferred hope tempted you to do recently?

Are you tired of waiting for your promotion at work?

- Are you ready to quit before you get your promotion? Don't let deferred hope steal your day of advancement. Whatever test you fail here, God will require you to repeat at the next job.

- Maybe you are considering compromising your integrity to gain favor with your boss or the company? This will only leave you empty and is spiritual fool's gold that won't last.

- Maybe you are thinking of giving yourself a supplemental pay raise paying by:
 - Taking office supplies, gas, some extra computer accessories, or other items for home use?
 - Using the company car or credit card for personal gain?
 - Charging personal lunches on the company account?
 - Adding extra hours to your time card or pay sheet?
 - Taking credit for work or projects someone else performed?

Are you tired of waiting for the godly mate of your dreams from the Lord?

Maybe you are considering compromising by dating God's second best. Don't make the same mistake Abraham did with his concubine Hagar, or Samson's mistake with the hairdresser named Delilah. You could end up with an Ishmael to rear for the next 21 years, or worse yet, like Samson, your eyes could be plucked out and you could die in prison. God will forgive you, but its better not to have to go through such problems in the first place.

Don't compromise yourself emotionally or sexually. If you desire God's best, give God your best. A Proverbs 31 man will receive a Proverbs 31 woman. On the other hand, Ray Ray will be drawn to Shaneka and all the baggage she brings with her. Therefore, allow God to change your name spiritually, from Jacob (deceiver) to Israel (Soldier of God). Allow God to first develop you into the man or woman of God and you will receive the mate of your dreams from God. Stand firm, and do not compromise what you know is God's standard!

Are you tired of waiting for promotion in ministry at Church?

- Maybe you have been tempted to speak against the person who is already in that position, or even the Pastor or Chaplain in charge because they failed to recognize you and your spectacular gifting.
- Maybe you are tempted to change churches. Maybe they will recognize your gifting, while being blind to your undeveloped character. Korah rebelled against Moses because he wanted his position. Korah, along with his 250 rebellious followers, was subsequently swallowed up in an earthquake sent by God. Don't make their mistake. Repent today, and be free from deferred hope.

Remember, King David didn't speak against Saul during his character development process from the Lord. It lasted nine long years while David was on the run from the Lord's ex-anointed. David inherited the kingdom when God promoted him and is recorded as *"a man after God's own heart"* (Acts 13:22). Saul, on the other hand, died an early death by his own hand. Make the right decision today by obeying God's way and not deferred hope's ways.

Are you tired of waiting to hear a fresh word from the Lord?

- Maybe you didn't do what God told you to do last time. Jonah ran from his calling (Jonah 1:1-3), and ended up in the whale's belly. After he repented, God commanded the giant fish to vomit Jonah onto the beach. The word of the Lord then came to Jonah a second time. It was the same word God told him the first time (Jonah 3:1-2). If this is your situation, then go back to the first word, and do it, asking the Lord to redeem the time, or give you a second opportunity to obey Him.
- Or maybe you, like King Saul, went to a witch for advice from the spirit realm. Maybe you did it by phone with a 1-(900) Psychic Line at \$3.99 a minute. Or was it a Tarot Card Reader at a fair? Maybe it was a prophet or prophetess for hire through whom you are seeking the supernatural for advice. If so, repent and return to God right now, and then He will forgive your sin and begin speaking to you clearly once again.

The spirit of Herod is also a spirit of worldliness. This spirit offers a variety of false comforters to administer to our needs while we suffer from deferred hope. Of course, these false comforters also stand between us and God. Let's identify some of the false comforters this spirit tempts us with while suffering from hope deferred that makes our hearts sick.

False comforters

What are some of your false comforters? What do you spend your time doing? How have you compromised with the world to feel better (or more comfortable) while you wait for the fulfillment of His promise? Are you like Herod, who waited in his man-made temple of religion, satisfying himself with all kinds of food and drink while sleeping with his brother's wife? Remember, self-righteous Herod chopped off the righteous head of John the Baptist after watching Herod's daughter perform a seducing dance.

What are you watching on TV? The Internet? What magazines have caught your attention recently? Maybe you even purchased a full subscription? How have you been distracted from the course set before you? Are you on the narrow road that leads to everlasting life, or the wide road that leads to destruction? Have you lost spiritual vision? Have you cast off restraint? Or are you like Joseph who would rather take a false rape charge and do untold years in prison than sin against God? Remember the faithful example of Anna the Prophetess who waited 60 years in the temple with prayer and fasting? Stand firm against the spirit of deferred hope and the many false comforters it offers.

The Spirit of Religion is also a false comforter from Satan. Religion can be defined as *"having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof"* (2 Timothy 3:5, KJV). Examine the lives of the Pharisees and Sadducees. This spirit of religion displaces a personal relationship with God with a set of man-made religious rules and standards. It produces only two extremes, condemnation for failing to comply with these standards or self-righteousness based on performance.

The Pharisees were self-righteous while the common people of the day felt condemned. Jesus came to set the captives free. The Pharisees and Sadducees spirit of religiosity helped orchestrate the murder of Jesus, directly and indirectly through its manipulation.

Cain was religious in the way he served God on his own terms. Are you serving God on your own terms or His? When God tried to correct Cain, he responded by murdering his brother Abel. This spirit of religion is still alive and well today. Who in the Church are you murdering with your tongue? Don't yield to deferred hope and its influence through the fine sounding arguments of false religion (form without power) that it offers you.

Correct responses to hope deferred

Joseph was tried by the word of the Lord and found faithful. He properly stood against the spirit of hope deferred and emerged victorious to fulfill God's call on his life.

And he sent a man before them – Joseph, sold as a slave. They bruised his feet with shackles; his neck was put in irons, till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the LORD proved him true. The king sent and released him; the ruler of peoples set him free. He made him master of his household, ruler over all he possessed, to instruct his princes as he pleased and teach his elders wisdom.

Psalms 105:17-22, NIV

Joseph stood against deferred hope and reaped a harvest of leadership as prime minister over Egypt. God used him to save hundreds of thousands of lives. He remembered God's promise to him and after twenty-two years, the dreams came to pass. God will do the same for you!

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

Galatians 6:9, NIV

Elisha waited faithfully upon the Prophet Elijah for fifteen years. He rejected the spirit of deferred hope and received a double portion of the Holy Spirit (see 2 Kings 2:9, 13-14). Scripture records Elisha performing twice as many miracles as Elijah. God will do the same for you if you faithfully serve the person in ministerial authority over you until your day of promotion comes.

Don't be like Gehazi, who fell prey to deferred hope and ended up leprous and disqualified for the ministry. The mantle will be passed in due season, if you wait for it.

Anna the prophetess waited faithfully on the consolation of Israel (Jesus) in the temple with prayer and fasting (Luke 2:25-38). She received her promised Messiah, Jesus Christ. Such examples should encourage us to “... *be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises*” (Hebrews 6:12, KJV).

“...when a desire cometh it is a tree of life” (Proverbs 13:12).

When a desire is fulfilled, it is like a tree of life being planted in our lives. This tree from the Lord bears fruit unto all around us; even non-believers know that God has done something great for us. For example, when God delivered the children of Israel this is what they sang as a song of praise:

When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.

Psalms 126:1-3, KJV

Your desired day is coming! Stand firm and don't lose hope.

Do you need release from some sort of captivity? Do you need a sign from heaven that God is still with you? John the Baptist, while in prison, asked for one.

When the men came to Jesus, they said, 'John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"'

Luke 7:20, NIV

Jesus responded by showing John a sign for good, saying, *"Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me"* (Luke 7:22-23, NIV). With this sign for good, John was strengthened in his faith and able to finish the course that was set before him.

John was then able to confidently give his own head for his faith. *"So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, and brought back his head on a platter"*

(Mark 6:27-28, NIV). Jesus then said this about John, *“I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John”* (Luke 7:28, NIV). Today, we know John the Baptist is in Heaven, but where is Herod? What about his wife and seductively dancing daughter? How are you going to finish the course? Stand firm, do not compromise!

We could all use an injection of fresh hope from the Lord

A desire fulfilled is like a tree of life (Proverbs 13:12). Do you need God to fulfill your desire? To stand against deferred hope and all its false comforters, we need a fresh injection of hope from the Lord. But, is it appropriate to ask God for an injection of hope while combating this spirit? Can we ask God for a sign for good to encourage us and to silence our enemies? Let's look at three different translations of Psalms 86:17:

"Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, LORD, hast holpen (helped) me, and comforted me" (KJV).

"Give me a sign of your goodness, that my enemies may see it and be put to shame, for you, O LORD, have helped me and comforted me" (NIV)

"Show me a sign of thy favor, that those who hate me may see and be put to shame because thou, LORD, hast helped me and comforted me" (RSV).

The answer in the above verse is a resounding yes. A supernatural injection of hope is something the Lord desires to give us. It strengthens us in our faith and provides us with fresh vision and patience so that we might then *"inherit the promises of God"* (Hebrews 6:12). Remember, *"We have not because we ask not"* (James 4:2). Are you in need of an injection of fresh hope from the Lord to cast off and dispossess the spirit of deferred hope? If so, get ready because we are about to do a brief recap and then, together, ask God for His power to come upon us in the Mighty Name of Jesus!

Brief recap

Deferred hope is both a mindset and a spirit. Our battle is not against flesh and blood (see Ephesians. 6:12). The spirit of deferred hope is subtle and can be a powerful deterrent against the realization of God's promises for our lives. We are no longer ignorant of the enemy's devices. Satan and his tactics have been exposed! Let's deal with this spirit right now through the authority Jesus gave us.

Prayer for deliverance

Lord, I recognize my need for deliverance from deferred hope. I ask you now in the Name of Jesus to set me free from every stronghold of the enemy in my life. I humbly yet boldly ask for complete deliverance from the enemy's mindset, spiritual forces, and words that have been spoken into my life. I believe your promises concerning my life and will accept no compromise. I want all you have for me. Father, I ask for a sign for good as the Psalmist asked. Show me your faithfulness in some way today and in the days ahead so that I might know you are with me. I thank you for a fresh injection of hope right now, in Jesus' Mighty Name. Amen.

Now, let me pray for you like that dear saintly woman calmly prayed for me.

Deferred hope, I name you and break you off of this life right now in Jesus' Name. I command you to both depart from them and never return. In its place, I release a desire fulfilled from the Lord right now over your life, which the Bible says is like a tree of life. I speak the shed blood of Jesus Christ between you and the adversary of your soul and I release a blessing of perseverance upon you right now. By the authority of Jesus' Name, I release renewed vision and the mind of Christ to fill your mind now. I speak full restoration of hope to your soul from this point forward. Amen.

About the author



In 1989 David C. Hairabedian conspired to steal a jet airplane to import drugs for the Columbian cartel. As a result, he spent the next 20 years incarcerated in the U.S. Federal Prison System. At age 26, while in a dirty prison cell inside the super-max building at Leavenworth Penitentiary David experienced a visitation from the Lord calling him to deep repentance, salvation and also into the ministry. David responded to this call. The vision David received inspired the founding of HEART of America Prison Ministries, a ministry that provides first quality leather-bound study Bibles, Christian resource materials and a discipleship newsletter to those behind bars. HEART currently serves approximately 5,000 inmates in more than 800 facilities. David is a regular contributor to its newsletter. He has his Bachelor's Degree in Theology from Zoe University. He has authored more than thirty teachings, booklets, and tracts. He has a paralegal degree and is presently in his final semesters' work in International Business.

From 1990 to 2008 the Lord has used David mightily to educate and build up the body of Christ behind bars. Through the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God, he has ministered and preached at several facilities around the Midwest. David was released in September 2008 and is currently ministering in churches around the Kansas City area. David has a powerful and compelling testimony to share with not only the Body of Christ, but our young people, as well.

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HEART Prison Ministries

If you would be interested in reading more of David's or Jeff's teachings, or for speaking/preaching engagements, please contact HEART of America Prison Ministries at PO Box 1685 Independence, MO 64055 or visit our website www.HeartPrisonMinistries.org.

HEART Ministries provides leather-bound study Bibles, devotionals, Bible study courses, videos, and newsletters to inmates in over 800 prisons and jails nationally and internationally. As HEART grows in the future we look forward to contributing to your ministry efforts in the areas of prevention, prisoner support, and aftercare. HEART has a vision to become a clearinghouse for ministry resource materials for free use by chaplains and inmates across the nation.

HEART Publishing

HEART Publishing is the media subsidiary of HEART of America Prison Ministries. Our primary purpose is to provide Christ-centered educational material for our brothers and sisters behind prison walls.

We also provide services to others in the body of Christ who may not have the experience or ability to produce high quality material to supplement their ministry efforts. Contact us at the above address to discuss your needs.

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