*All I Want for Christmas Is...*

# HOPE



## TRUSTING GOD IN AN UNFINISHED STORY

**AN ADVENT DEVOTIONAL & GUIDED JOURNAL**

November 29 - December 5, 2026 • Or begin any day

**PHONE EDITION / OVERCOME CHURCH**

*An invitation to begin*

# YOU CAN BRING YOUR UNFINISHED LIFE.

Christmas can be beautiful and complicated at the same time. We may enjoy the lights and still carry grief. We may sing about joy while waiting for an answer. Underneath our Christmas wishes, many of us are asking for something deeper: a reason to believe that God is present and that our story is not finished.

This week invites you to bring those longings to Jesus. Through the promises of Isaiah, the stories surrounding Jesus' birth, and the encouragement of Hebrews, we will explore hope rooted in God's character. There is room here for honest questions, tired prayers, and small beginnings. You do not need to arrive feeling hopeful.

Advent means “coming.” We remember Jesus’ first coming and look forward to His return, when His restoring work will be complete. Between promise and fulfillment, we learn to trust Him in ordinary life. Let these pages become a place to listen, tell the truth, and take one faithful step at a time.

Hope grows as we return to the One who is faithful.

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

What do you most need from God in this season? Write the honest answer, rather than the one you think you should give.

## THIS JOURNAL BELONGS TO

*A daily rhythm of hope*

# SMALL BEGINNINGS. A DEEPER JOURNEY.

Allow 15-20 minutes a day. Take longer if a question needs room. Each day has three movements; you can complete them together or return to the prayer and evening reflection later.

### READ & UNDERSTAND

Pause, read the full Scripture, and explore its setting. Mark words that invite your attention.

### GO DEEPER

Connect the passage to daily life. Work through the questions with honesty and curiosity.

### LIVE & PRAY

Choose a practical response. Pray in your own words, then return for an evening reflection.

# Your daily journey

Tap a day to begin. Use the CONTENTS link at the bottom of each page to return. Record your responses in a notes app, journal, or PDF annotation app.

**01 A LITTLE HOPE**
November 29

**02 A REASON TO BELIEVE**
November 30

**03 REASSURANCE**
December 1

**04 AN ANSWER**
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**05 SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTANDS**
December 3

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December 4

**07 STRENGTH TO KEEP GOING**
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Use the daily list as a gentle record, not a scorecard. If you miss a day, return

without trying to make up for it. Readings are also suitable for a conversation with a friend or small group.

*Read & understand*

# 01 A LITTLE HOPE

## Light for an unfinished story

November 29



### AS YOU READ

Circle one description of the child. What does that name reveal about the kind of help you need?

# Read & understand

**ISAIAH 9:2-7 (WEB)**

*2 The people who walked in darkness*
*have seen a great light. Those who lived*
*in the land of the shadow of death, on*
*them the light has shined.*

*3 You have multiplied the nation. You*
*have increased their joy. They rejoice*
*before you according to the joy in*
*harvest, as men rejoice when they divide*
*the plunder.*

*4 For the yoke of his burden, and the*
*staff of his shoulder, the rod of his*
*oppressor, you have broken as in the*
*day of Midian.*

*5 For all the armor of the armed man in*
*the noisy battle, and the garments rolled*
*in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the*
*fire.*

*[6] For to us a child is born. To us a son is given; and the government will be on his shoulders. His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*[7] Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, on David's throne, and on his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from that time on, even forever. The zeal of Yahweh of Armies will perform this.*

*Read & understand*

# BEHIND THE PASSAGE

Isaiah speaks into a world marked by fear, oppression, and conflict. This passage pictures darkness giving way to light, burdens being broken, and a child receiving a kingdom of justice and peace. The reference to Midian recalls God's rescue through Gideon. Christians recognize the promised King in Jesus. His birth begins the fulfillment of this hope; Advent also looks toward the completion of His reign.

## LOOK AGAIN

The candle does not light the whole room. What might "enough light for today" look like in your life?

*Go deeper*

# LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

### TODAY'S MAIN POINT

Our hope begins with who God is, even before our circumstances improve.

The promised light is rooted in God's action. The final sentence places the outcome in His hands: His zeal will accomplish it. Hope rests on His commitment, rather than our ability to make everything turn out well.

*Go deeper*

# PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

### 01 BRING THE DARKNESS INTO THE CONVERSATION

Christmas can make private struggles feel even more lonely. The lights are on, the music is playing, and someone asks whether you are excited. Meanwhile, you are carrying grief, tension at home, or a question you cannot answer. Isaiah does not ask people to pretend their world is bright. God’s promise meets them in the darkness they actually inhabit.

## 02 GIVE HOPE A STRONGER FOUNDATION

We often say, “I’ll have hope when the situation changes.” It is understandable to want relief. Yet if our hope depends entirely on the next result or another person’s response, it remains fragile. Jesus gives us a deeper foundation: God has entered our world, He is faithful, and the story is moving toward His just and peaceful reign. That does not tell us how every personal situation will resolve. It tells us whom we can trust while it remains unfinished.

## 03 TAKE ONE STEP TOWARD THE LIGHT

Imagine someone spending their first Christmas after a loss. They cannot restore the old gathering by trying harder. They can name their grief, ask a friend to sit with them, and make room for a simple act of worship. Hope may begin with that small movement toward God and another person. You do not have to feel cheerful to respond faithfully.

*Go deeper*

# REFLECT & WRITE

1. What circumstance have I been waiting to change before I allow myself to hope?

2. How does the promised King in this passage give me a reason to trust God within that circumstance?

*Live & pray*

# NAME THE DARKNESS. RECEIVE THE PROMISE.

Be specific. You are bringing your real life into prayer, not trying to produce a positive answer.

### 01 THE PLACE THAT FEELS DARK

Name one loss, fear, disappointment, or uncertainty you are carrying.

### 02 THE TRUTH I CAN RETURN TO

Choose one name or promise from Isaiah 9. Explain why it matters here.

## 03 ONE STEP TOWARD THE LIGHT

What small, faithful action can you take today, even if the situation stays the same?

*Live & pray*

# PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Take that one step today. It might be asking for help, making an overdue call, attending worship, or sitting quietly with Jesus for five minutes.

### A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Jesus, I bring You the part of my life that feels dark. Help me trust Your character before I can see the outcome. Meet me in my grief and uncertainty. Give me courage to take the next faithful step with You. Amen.

*Live & pray*

## RETURN THIS EVENING

Where did I notice even a small sign of care, courage, or light today?

You can turn toward the light before the darkness has lifted.

*Read & understand*

# 02 A REASON TO BELIEVE

## When waiting has worn you down

November 30



### AS YOU READ

Mark what the passage says about this couple's faithfulness and what it says about their difficulty. What do you notice when you hold both together?

# Read & understand

**LUKE 1:5-17 (WEB)**

*5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the priestly division of Abijah. He had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.*

*6 They were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.*

*7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they both were well advanced in years.*

*8 Now while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his division,*

*9 according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter into the temple of the Lord and burn incense.*

*10 The whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense.*

*11 An angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.*

*12 Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.*

*13 But the angel said to him, “Don’t be afraid, Zacharias, because your request has been heard, and your wife, Elizabeth, will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.*

*14 You will have joy and gladness; and many will rejoice at his birth.*

*15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.*

*16 He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord, their God.*

*17 He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to prepare a people prepared for the Lord.”*

*Read & understand*

# BEHIND THE PASSAGE

Luke begins with Zacharias, also commonly called Zechariah, and Elizabeth. They are faithful to God and have grown old without a child. During Zechariah's temple service, an angel announces that their son, John, will prepare people for the Lord. The language about Elijah connects John's calling to the prophetic hope of hearts being turned back to God. Their personal joy belongs within God's larger saving purpose.

## LOOK AGAIN

Waiting is often quiet and ordinary. What might be hidden behind the words "I'm fine" in your own life?

*Go deeper*

# LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

### TODAY'S MAIN POINT

A long season of waiting does not place us beyond God's attention.

Luke holds faithfulness and disappointment together: their pain is not presented as evidence of bad faith. This is a particular promise about John's birth, not a guarantee that every prayer will receive the same kind of answer.

*Go deeper*

# PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

### 01 NOTICE WHAT WAITING DOES INSIDE YOU

At first, we may pray with expectation. As time passes, we can begin protecting ourselves from disappointment. We stop asking, change the subject, or tell ourselves that hoping is foolish. That response is understandable, but it can also close us off from bringing our real desires to God.

## 02 KEEP THE STORY'S PROMISE IN ITS SETTING

The angel says that Zechariah's request has been heard. John's birth will bring joy and prepare people for Jesus. We honor the passage by receiving its testimony to God's faithfulness without turning it into a formula. A long wait does not guarantee the exact outcome we want. It also does not prove that we have been forgotten. We are invited to remain in relationship with God while we wait.

## 03 PRAY HONESTLY AND STAY AVAILABLE

Picture someone who has prayed for a relationship to be restored for years. They cannot make the other person change. They can bring their sadness to God, examine their own behavior, and remain open to a wise opportunity for peace. Depending on the situation, love may include boundaries. Faithful waiting can hold desire, honesty, and wisdom together. "Lord, I still hope, and I am tired" is a prayer worth praying.

*Go deeper*

# REFLECT & WRITE

1. How has waiting changed the way I pray or relate to God?

2. What would it look like to remain open to God without demanding one particular outcome?

*Live & pray*

# AN HONEST PRAYER FOR AN UNFINISHED SITUATION

Separate what you desire from what you can control. Both belong in an honest conversation with God.

### 01 WHAT I STILL LONG FOR

Write the request plainly, without editing out the disappointment.

### 02 WHAT I CANNOT CONTROL

Name the response, timing, or outcome that you cannot produce.

## 03 HOW I CAN REMAIN FAITHFUL

Choose one wise action, boundary, or prayerful practice for this season.

*Live & pray*

# PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Bring this request to God today. If the waiting has become isolating, ask one trusted person to pray with you rather than carrying it alone.

### A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Father, You know the request I have nearly stopped praying. Receive my longing and my disappointment. Help me trust Your goodness, recognize Your care, and remain open to Your work. Give me wisdom for what is mine to do. Amen.

*Live & pray*

## RETURN THIS EVENING

What happened inside me when I brought this longing to God honestly?

You can tell God you are tired of waiting and still turn toward Him.

*Read & understand*

# 03 REASSURANCE

God sees your ordinary life

December 1



**AS YOU READ**

Underline what Gabriel says about God's presence and what he says about Jesus' future. How do those truths belong together?

# Read & understand

**LUKE 1:26-33 (WEB)**

*26 Now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,*

*27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man whose name was Joseph, of David's house. The virgin's name was Mary.*

*28 Having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, you highly favored one! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women!"*

*29 But when she saw him, she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered what kind of salutation this might be.*

*30 The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.*

*31 Behold, you will conceive in your womb, and give birth to a son, and will call his name ‘Jesus.’*

*32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David,*

*33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. There will be no end to his Kingdom.”*

*Read & understand*

# BEHIND THE PASSAGE

The “sixth month” refers to Elizabeth’s pregnancy. Gabriel now visits Mary in Nazareth, where she is pledged to marry Joseph. The announcement identifies Jesus as the Son of the Most High and the promised King in David’s line. “The house of Jacob” refers to Israel. God’s great saving purpose enters Mary’s everyday world through a calling she could not have planned.

### LOOK AGAIN

Consider the quiet work in this picture. Whose faithful service helps your life, often without recognition?

*Go deeper*

# LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

### TODAY'S MAIN POINT

God sees us in ordinary places, and our significance begins with belonging to Him.

The center of the announcement is who Jesus is and the kingdom He brings. Mary's unique calling also shows God's attention to a person outside the usual centers of power. His presence precedes her understanding of the assignment.

*Go deeper*

# PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

### 01 LET ORDINARY FAITHFULNESS MATTER

Much of life happens without recognition: preparing meals, caring for a relative, doing honest work, returning to a responsibility tomorrow. We can start measuring our worth by whether anyone notices. Mary's story interrupts that measure. God's messenger knows her name and meets her in Nazareth. She does not need public importance before God can address her personally.

### 02 RECEIVE REASSURANCE BEFORE AN EXPLANATION

“The Lord is with you” does not remove the challenge ahead. Mary is troubled, and the angel tells her not to be afraid. God’s presence does not promise an easy assignment. It gives her a reason to respond. We often ask for certainty about the entire future when what we need first is the assurance that we are not facing it apart from Him.

### 03 NOTICE SOMEONE ELSE’S UNSEEN WORK

Imagine a person caring for an aging parent. Appointments, meals, and interrupted sleep fill the week, while much of the work remains invisible. A specific thank-you and an offer to cover one afternoon can communicate real care. Or think of a volunteer who quietly cleans up after everyone leaves. Because God sees people, we can learn to pay attention, name their contribution, and offer help.

*Go deeper*

## REFLECT & WRITE

1. Whose recognition have I been depending on to feel that my life matters?

2. How might awareness of God's presence change one ordinary responsibility today?

*Live & pray*

# A MAP OF THE PLACES GOD MEETS ME

Choose three ordinary places in your day. Consider how you can become attentive to God in each one.

### 01 A PLACE OF RESPONSIBILITY

At work, at home, or while caregiving: where do I need reassurance?

### 02 A PLACE OF QUIET FAITHFULNESS

What good work can I offer to God even when no one notices?

## 03 A PERSON I CAN NOTICE

Who needs a specific word of appreciation or practical help from me?

*Live & pray*

# PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Turn one routine task into a prayer cue: “Lord, help me recognize Your presence right here.” Then give someone a specific thank-you.

### A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Father, You see me in the ordinary parts of my life. Help me receive Your presence and offer my work to You. Free me from making recognition the measure of my worth. Open my eyes to people who need to be seen and encouraged. Amen.

*Live & pray*

## RETURN THIS EVENING

Where did I become more aware of God or more attentive to another person today?

Your ordinary place is a place where you can meet God.

*Read & understand*

# 04 AN ANSWER

Trust for the next faithful step

December 2



**AS YOU READ**

Notice Mary’s question and her final response. What changes between them, and what remains unknown?

## Read & understand

**LUKE 1:34-38 (WEB)**

*34 Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, seeing I am a virgin?”*

*35 The angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore also the holy one who is born from you will be called the Son of God.*

*36 Behold, Elizabeth, your relative, also has conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.*

*37 For nothing spoken by God is impossible.”*

*38 Mary said, “Behold, the servant of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word.” The angel departed from her.*

*Read & understand*

# BEHIND THE PASSAGE

Mary has just heard that she will bear Jesus. She asks how this can happen, and Gabriel explains that the Holy Spirit will accomplish it. He also points to Elizabeth's pregnancy as a sign of God's power. Mary responds as the Lord's servant. She receives an explanation of God's work without receiving a complete account of everything her calling will involve.

### LOOK AGAIN

The next boards are visible, even though the far end is not. What is the next clear step in front of you?

*Go deeper*

# LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

### TODAY'S MAIN POINT

We can take the next faithful step without knowing every detail of the future.

Mary's trust is directed toward God's word to her. Her response does not make questions unwelcome. It shows that honest questions and willing obedience can exist together. Her unique calling becomes an example of trust when the future remains partly hidden.

*Go deeper*

# PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

### 01 RECOGNIZE THE DESIRE FOR A GUARANTEE

"I'll do it when I know how it will turn out." Sometimes that is careful planning. Sometimes it is fear asking for a guarantee no one can give. Mary receives enough to respond, although she cannot yet see the whole path. Her words express willingness to entrust herself to God.

### 02 DISTINGUISH FAITH FROM IMPULSE

We are not promised an angel for every decision, and a strong feeling is not automatically God's direction. Scripture, prayer, wise counsel, and attention to our responsibilities help us discern a faithful step. Yet some things are already clear: honesty, love, repentance, and care for people in need. We can obey those calls without knowing how others will respond.

### 03 ACT WHERE THE NEXT STEP IS CLEAR

Suppose you owe someone an apology. You have imagined the conversation so often that preparation has become avoidance. You cannot guarantee reconciliation. You can say, “I was wrong, and I would like to listen.” Or perhaps you see a need you can help meet but keep waiting to feel qualified. A small, responsible beginning may be the faithful response available today.

*Go deeper*

# REFLECT & WRITE

1. Where has my search for certainty become a reason to postpone obedience?

2. What is already clear from God's character and Scripture, even if the outcome is not?

*Live & pray*

# FROM UNANSWERED QUESTIONS TO ONE FAITHFUL STEP

Use these three spaces to separate uncertainty from responsibility. You do not have to settle every question today.

### 01 WHAT I DO NOT KNOW

Name the outcome or detail you keep trying to predict.

### 02 WHAT I DO KNOW

What truth, responsibility, or clear call to love applies here?

## 03 THE NEXT STEP I CAN TAKE

Write one action and when you will do it. Identify wise counsel you need, if any.

*Live & pray*

# PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Take the step you identified, or arrange the conversation needed to discern it wisely. Let obedience be concrete rather than only an intention.

### A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Lord, thank You for welcoming my questions. Help me recognize Your direction and distinguish wisdom from fear. Give me courage to obey what is clear and trust You with what comes afterward. Amen.

*Live & pray*

## RETURN THIS EVENING

What did I learn by taking a step rather than rehearsing every possible outcome?

Trust God with what you cannot see; obey Him in what is clear.

*Read & understand*

# 05 SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTANDS

Hope grows through encouragement

December 3



## AS YOU READ

What does Elizabeth recognize about Jesus? What does she affirm in Mary? Mark both before applying the passage to yourself.

# Read & understand

**LUKE 1:39-45 (WEB)**

*39 Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah,*

*40 and entered into the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.*

*41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.*

*42 She called out with a loud voice, and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!*

*43 Why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?*

*44 For behold, when the voice of your greeting came into my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy!*

*45 Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord!”*

*Read & understand*

# BEHIND THE PASSAGE

Mary travels to visit her relative Elizabeth, who is expecting John. When Mary greets her, Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and recognizes Mary as the mother of her Lord. John's joyful movement and Elizabeth's blessing affirm the significance of Jesus' coming. Elizabeth specifically blesses Mary's belief in what the Lord has spoken.

## LOOK AGAIN

Notice the attention between these two people. What would it take to offer someone that kind of listening today?

*Go deeper*

# LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

### TODAY'S MAIN POINT

God often strengthens our hope through people who encourage us to trust Him.

Elizabeth offers more than general optimism: her encouragement points Mary toward God's promise. This scene connects joy, recognition, and faith. It also gives us a picture of how a welcoming relationship can strengthen someone facing a demanding calling.

*Go deeper*

# PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

### 01 RECEIVE THE GIFT OF BEING WELCOMED

Sometimes the most helpful person is the one who listens without immediately fixing, judging, or changing the subject. Mary enters Elizabeth's home and receives a blessing. Scripture does not describe every emotion Mary carried on that journey, but it does show a welcome that affirms her trust in God.

### 02 ENCOURAGE WITH TRUTH RATHER THAN GUARANTEES

We may want to comfort someone by promising, “Everything will happen just as you want.” We do not know that. We can offer something honest: “This is hard. I care about you. God has not made you responsible to face it alone. Let’s consider the next step.” Encouragement becomes substantial when words of care are joined to presence and practical help.

### 03 MAKE HOPE TANGIBLE

Imagine a friend who has lost a job. Instead of predicting a better job next week, you can help with a résumé, offer a meal, or listen without rushing. A person caring for a sick spouse may need someone to sit with them more than another explanation of suffering. We strengthen hope as we make room for the person and point toward God’s faithfulness.

*Go deeper*

## REFLECT & WRITE

1. Who has encouraged my trust in God, and what made their help meaningful?

2. When someone shares a struggle, do I listen, rush to fix it, or make promises I cannot keep?

*Live & pray*

# WORDS THAT STRENGTHEN. HELP THAT FOLLOWS.

Think of one person who could use encouragement. Plan a response that is truthful, personal, and possible.

### 01 WHAT I NEED TO HEAR FIRST

Write a question that invites them to share rather than assumes how they feel.

### 02 WHAT I CAN HONESTLY AFFIRM

Name a specific quality, faithful choice, or biblical truth that may encourage them.

## 03 WHAT I CAN OFFER

Choose practical help you can actually follow through on. Let them decide whether it would help.

*Live & pray*

# PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Reach out to that person. Listen before offering advice. If you need encouragement yourself, ask someone trustworthy for time to talk and pray.

### A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Father, thank You for people who have helped me trust You. Make me an attentive listener and an honest encourager. Let my words and actions strengthen someone today. Help me receive care as willingly as I offer it. Amen.

*Live & pray*

## RETURN THIS EVENING

What did I learn when I listened closely or allowed someone to encourage me?

A faithful presence can help someone hold on to hope for another day.

*Read & understand*

# 06 SOMETHING SOLID

When your feelings keep changing

December 4



## AS YOU READ

Find the reason the writer gives for holding fast. How is that different from relying on the strength of your feelings?

## Read & understand

**HEBREWS 10:23 (WEB)**

*23 let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering; for he who promised is faithful.*

*Read & understand*

# BEHIND THE PASSAGE

Hebrews encourages believers to persevere under pressure. Immediately before this verse, the writer explains that Jesus has opened the way to draw near to God. Immediately after it, believers are called to encourage one another toward love and good works and keep gathering. Holding fast is grounded in Christ's work and supported by life together.

### LOOK AGAIN

The water changes around the stone. What do you need to remember about God while your feelings change?

*Go deeper*

# LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

### TODAY'S MAIN POINT

Our hope rests on God's faithfulness, even when our feelings change.

The "confession of our hope" is the hope believers profess in Christ. The reason to hold fast is God's faithfulness. The verse calls for perseverance without pretending that our emotions are always steady or that we must persevere alone.

*Go deeper*

# PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

### 01 A CHANGING FEELING IS NOT THE WHOLE STORY

The same responsibility can feel manageable one morning and overwhelming the next. Sleep, grief, stress, and disappointment affect us. Emotions deserve attention, but they are not a complete measure of God's presence or the truth of His promises. A hard day does not erase what He has done.



### 02 RETURN TO THE ONE WHO IS FAITHFUL

Hebrews directs our attention toward the promise-maker. Jesus has opened the way to God, and the community is called to keep encouraging one another. We hold fast by returning to that reality: praying honestly, remembering God's faithfulness, gathering with others, and choosing the next act of love. We do not have to manufacture a feeling of certainty before doing those things.

### 03 REMEMBER MORE THAN THE SETBACK

Consider someone working to change a habit. One difficult day convinces them that all their progress was imaginary. A fuller account includes both the setback and the growth: the help they sought, the choices that changed, and the grace that calls them forward. Or consider grief at Christmas. Sadness can be real while trust in God remains real, too. Bring both to Him.

*Go deeper*

## REFLECT & WRITE

1. What conclusion about God or myself am I drawing mainly from how I feel today?

2. Which truth about Jesus helps me examine that conclusion more honestly?

*Live & pray*

# FEELINGS, TRUTH, AND A FAITHFUL RESPONSE

Make room for emotion without asking it to carry the entire weight of your hope.

### 01 TODAY I FEEL...

Name the emotion honestly. What may be contributing to it?

### 02 I CAN ALSO REMEMBER...

Write a truth about God and one concrete way you have received His care.

### 03 THEREFORE, TODAY I WILL...

Choose one act of faithfulness that does not require you to feel different first.

*Live & pray*

# PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Write down three ways God has sustained you. Keep them where you can return to them. Share one with someone who helps you remain grounded in faith.

### A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Faithful God, my feelings rise and fall. Help me bring them honestly to You and remain rooted in what is true. Remind me of Your goodness. Keep me close to people who encourage faith, love, and perseverance. Amen.

*Live & pray*

## RETURN THIS EVENING

How did remembering God's faithfulness influence a choice I made today?

A hard day does not make God less faithful.

*Read & understand*

# 07 STRENGTH TO KEEP GOING

Enough grace for the next step

December 5



## AS YOU READ

List what these verses say about God and what they say about people. How does that contrast invite you to depend on Him?

# Read & understand

**ISAIAH 40:28-31 (WEB)**

*28 Haven't you known? Haven't you heard? The everlasting God, Yahweh, The Creator of the ends of the earth, doesn't faint. He isn't weary. His understanding is unsearchable.*

*29 He gives power to the weak. He increases the strength of him who has no might.*

*30 Even the youths faint and get weary, and the young men utterly fall;*

*31 But those who wait for Yahweh will renew their strength. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run, and not be weary. They will walk, and not faint.*

*Read & understand*

# BEHIND THE PASSAGE

Isaiah 40 comforts God's people and answers the complaint that their situation has been overlooked. These verses turn their attention to the everlasting Creator, whose understanding and strength exceed their own. Even young people become weary; God gives strength to those who wait for Him. "Yahweh" is God's name, often printed as LORD in other translations.

## LOOK AGAIN

Rest can be part of continuing. Where could you make room to receive rather than keep producing?

*Go deeper*

# LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

### TODAY'S MAIN POINT

God invites weary people to depend on His strength one day at a time.

Waiting for the Lord involves hopeful dependence on Him. The passage does not deny human limits or promise that faithful people never need rest. It locates renewal in God, who is able to sustain His people through the journey.

*Go deeper*

# PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

### 01 ADMIT THE WEARINESS

Some tiredness comes from carrying responsibility for a long time: caring for someone, managing uncertainty, or trying to be strong for everyone. Isaiah makes room for human weakness. Even the young and capable run out of strength. You do not have to hide your limits before coming to God.

### 02 RECEIVE THE WAYS GOD SUSTAINS YOU

Depending on God can include prayer, rest, help, and a wiser pace. Imagine a caregiver who believes faithfulness means never taking a break. Accepting a trusted person's help for an afternoon may be part of receiving God's care. Or consider someone with too many commitments. Admitting, "I cannot keep doing all of this," can open the way to a more faithful use of time and strength.

### 03 LET WALKING COUNT

The passage pictures soaring, running, and walking. All three belong in its promise of renewal. Some seasons bring remarkable breakthroughs; others involve quiet perseverance. Making the call, keeping the appointment, receiving help, and offering a simple prayer can be faithful steps. You do not have to turn every day into a dramatic victory. Ask God for strength for the responsibility that is actually yours today.

*Go deeper*

## REFLECT & WRITE

1. Where am I treating my limits as a personal failure rather than a reason to seek God and receive help?

2. What would hopeful dependence look like in my schedule or responsibilities this week?

*Live & pray*

# RELEASE. RECEIVE. CONTINUE.

Let this be a practical prayer about your energy, responsibilities, and support.

### 01 WHAT I NEED TO RELEASE

Name an unnecessary demand, an unrealistic expectation, or an outcome you cannot control.

### 02 WHAT I NEED TO RECEIVE

Identify rest, wise counsel, practical support, or time with God that you need.

## 03 HOW I CAN CONTINUE FAITHFULLY

Choose one manageable step and one person you can ask for help, if needed.

*Live & pray*

# PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Spend ten unhurried minutes with God. Then take one concrete step toward rest or support. Ask for help specifically rather than hoping someone will notice.

### A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Lord, You know my weariness. Help me release what is not mine to carry, receive the care You provide, and take the next faithful step. Renew my strength and teach me to walk with You at a sustainable pace. Amen.

*Live & pray*

## RETURN THIS EVENING

What gave me strength today? What do I want to carry forward from this week of hope?

Sometimes renewed strength looks like grace for the next step.

*Gather what God has shown you*

# WHAT HOPE WILL YOU CARRY?

A week does not finish every story. It can help you recognize whom you are trusting and how you will keep walking with Him. Take time to look back before moving on.

A truth about God I want to remember...

A longing or question I am still bringing to Him...

A practice or relationship that helped me this week...

One faithful step I will carry into the coming week...

## A CONVERSATION TO SHARE

If you meet with a friend or group, share one insight, one unfinished question, and one way you can pray for each other. No one needs to share more than they are ready to.

*Keep walking in hope*

# THE PROMISE CONTINUES.



Hope grows as we keep turning toward Jesus.

You can return to these pages whenever you need reassurance. Bring your waiting, your questions, your need for encouragement, and your weariness. Keep listening to God's Word. Keep receiving the care of His people. Keep taking the next faithful step.

## A CLOSING PRAYER

Faithful God, thank You for meeting me in this week. Help me remember what You have shown me and live what I have learned. Keep my hope rooted in Jesus as I wait, serve, receive help, and begin again. Amen.

# About this edition

Design proof for review. Scripture quotations: World English Bible (WEB), public domain. Full selected passages are printed in red italics. Biblical context and devotional applications are distinguished throughout. Images are AI-generated photographic illustrations, not documentary photographs of real people or biblical events. Original teaching and workbook design prepared for Overcome Church.

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