



NEW YEAR *new mercies*

A BIBLE STUDY FOR THE NEW YEAR

BY SARAH E. FRAZER





introduction

Dear Bible Study Friend,

I can call you friend, right? Thank you for taking this journey with me. Let me introduce myself. I'm Sarah: a wife and a mother to five children. I spend my days answering silly and serious questions, making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and reheating my coffee thirty times a day. Let me say this first:

It is ok to be new at this.

It is ok to not know what to pray or where to start reading the Bible. Just know you are not behind! I want to walk alongside you, offer a cup of coffee, and give you a chance to change. I know you are ready.

Ten years ago I had a new baby (my third child), a two-year-old, and a crazy four-year-old who was a "runner." You know those kids. They run everywhere and don't even look back. I was overwhelmed and my plans for my life looked nothing like I had pictured. Disillusionment and discouragement crept into my heart. It was during that desperate time I searched for God. In the pages of His Word I found Him to be my strength, peace, and rest.

Get ready, set, and go. A brand new year makes us feel as if we are starting a race. We get excited about our resolutions or promises to ourselves. We think "This will be the year of change." Only I'm tired as I limp into this coming year. If I'm honest the past year has worn me down both spiritually and emotionally. It was a year of heartbreak and loss. Maybe you can relate to this. You want to make progress in the coming year, but life is hard and the future feels so cloudy.

The other day I wrote in my journal, "Dear God, help me be productive today, but let it be from a place of rest." My heart's prayer for the new year is rooted in Lamentations 3. It is a family passage, but it speaks to us here, at a new year. Jeremiah, the author, has been mourning the hard things in his life (and the life of Israel). Lamentation means "act of expressing grief." In chapter three we find that his lamentation has come to the conclusion that God will make things new.

Great is God's faithfulness to us. Every morning we wake up to new mercies and each year we have a chance to experience the faithful love of God. No matter what we faced in the previous year and no matter what waits for us this year, may we remember God is our hope!

As we walk through some of the passages in this study I hope and pray God leads you to Himself. Use this study to set a solid foundation of God's love, mercy, and faithfulness in your life. Let's walk through together.

Sarah



what's included



Week 1: A New Spiritual Way

What does Jesus give us? When we become a Christian, what do we have when it comes to a "new life"? What does this even mean? We will discover that we have a new life, a new hope, a new song, and a new type of mercy.

Week 2: A New Sanctified Way

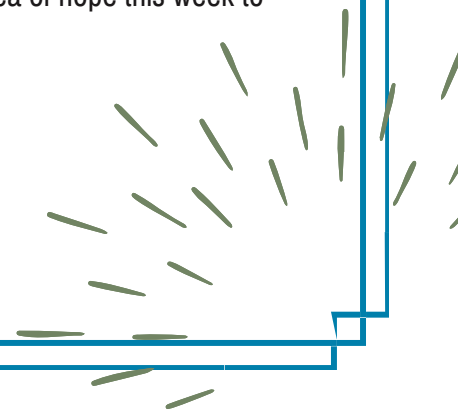
Because of this new life we now walk in a new sanctified way. Christ invites us into a new way to live. We will look at the putting off and putting on & forgiveness and love. What does it really mean to trust and obey and live with a renewed mind?

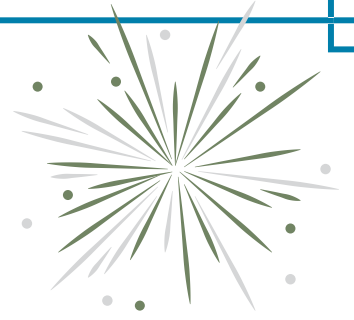
Week 3: A New Way Through Suffering

Even with this new life and a new way of living we will still have trials and troubles. Let's look at what the Bible says about suffering and how we can find peace and a rest-filled heart, even when it hurts. God will show up in this week.

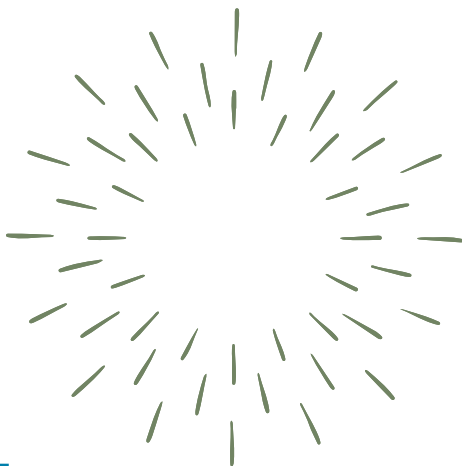
Week 4: A New Hope

Because of all of this, what's next? When we think about the new year we all have a sense of hope, don't we? We hope things will turn around this year. But let's take a deeper dive into the idea of hope this week to discover how we can have new hope in Christ.



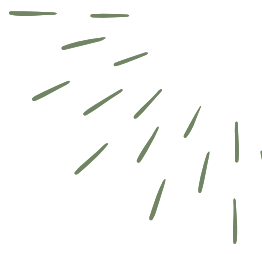


Week 1:
A New Spiritual Way



LET'S READ THE BIBLE

NEW YEAR
new mercies



Day 1: A New Spirit

Read 1 Peter 1:3-5. In this passage, how does Peter describe our salvation? What words stand out to you?

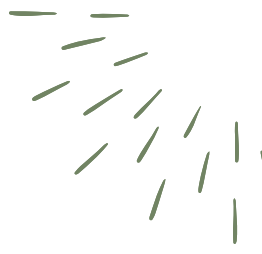
This passage says that God “has begotten us.” What do you think this means?

According to BlueLetterBible.org, the word “begotten” means to be born again, or born anew. How does Peter’s use of this word relate to what Jesus said in John 3:1-9?

The Pharisee Nicodemous had a hard time understanding this idea of “being born again.” If you were standing there with Jesus, what would you say to them?

Read Ez. 11:19; 36:26. Why do you think Jesus and Peter use the term “new birth” to explain salvation?

Read John 3:16-17. How do we obtain this new spiritual life?



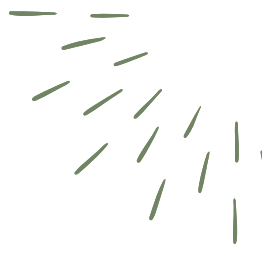
Day 1: A New Spirit

Jesus described salvation as having a new life. Although we will not get our new physical bodies until heaven, there is a spiritual birth that happens when we accept Jesus as our Savior. According to John 1:12, what makes us able to be children of God - born again?

Have you had this new birth? Have you ever accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? Have you confessed your sins? Have you asked Him to be the Lord of your life? Are you certain you are a Christian and will be in heaven when you die?

When I was eight years old, I was asked this question. As a child I knew I would not be going to heaven because I could never remember a time I had specifically asked Jesus to be my Savior. So a sweet teacher at church led me in a prayer to accept Jesus as my Savior. I followed my Savior in baptism that summer to be a witness to what God had done in my heart. Did I understand everything as an eight-year old? No. But even a child can accept Jesus as their savior and surrender to Him. If you have never done so, believe in Jesus today.

If you have, write out your own testimony here.



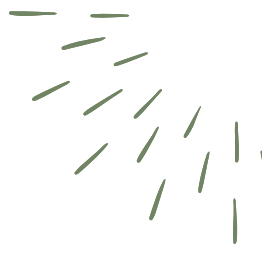
Day 2: A New Hope

When we think about salvation we might think of “new birth” or “new creation” but I love the phrase Peter uses when he says we have a “living hope.” Read 1 Peter 1:3-5 again. According to verse 4, what is this hope resting on?

Jesus’ death on the cross satisfied God’s wrath and paid the price for our sin, but Jesus’ resurrection is the reason we have no need to fear the future – even if that future involves death. Peter also describes our salvation as an “inheritance.” Where is this inheritance kept for us? And who keeps this salvation for us?

Why do you think Peter describes salvation as a “living hope”?

Make a list of things you “hope for” in this new year.



Day 2: A New Hope

Read these verses on God being our hope. What do you notice about this type of hope?

Psalm 42:11

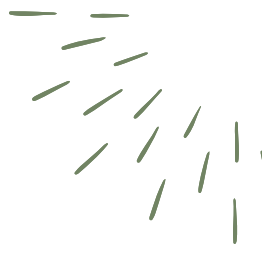
Psalm 119:114

Micah 7:7

Romans 5:5

How does it feel knowing our hopes, and even our dreams, for the new year rest in God? Hope is a choice. Yes, our salvation provides for us hope. But we must choose to have hope. At the beginning of the year I am cautiously hopeful, but this year I want to be fully hopeful. Not because I know the future or trust what will happen. It is all based on trusting God. Remember, God is still working your heart. You have all you need in Christ. Rest and be secure in this truth. Reading God's word, praying, and serving others will lift our eyes away from our heartache and onto God's purpose for our life. Don't give way to the darkness – God is still working on you!

Say a prayer of praise to God and Father for giving us a salvation filled with living hope, kept by His own power!



Day 3: A New Song

What a wonderful, beautiful gift we have because of God and His faithfulness! We can praise Him, even if everything in our life feels hard, because He has given us the greatest promise for the new year - salvation! Read Psalm 98. Write down all of the things the Lord has done according to these verses. (HINT: Look for verbs!)

Now, what should our response be because of God's great salvation? Once again, look at these verses and see what the author of Psalm 98 is inviting us to do.

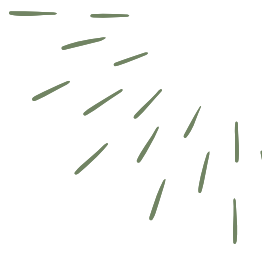
I love Psalm 98:3. Fill in the blanks:

He has remembered His _____ and His _____ to

the house of Israel; All the _____ of the _____

have seen the _____ of our _____.

(New King James Version)

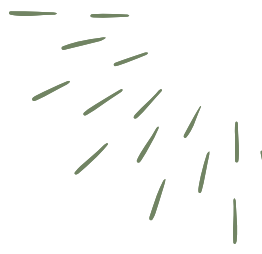


Day 3: A New Song

Don't forget God's salvation and mercy! God won't forget it, so let us keep reminding ourselves as well. We can sing to God a new song this year. We can praise Him for keeping us close to Himself the previous year. He has not let us down. Circumstances might have been hard and people most assuredly let us down, but God is faithful! There is a hymn that says, "Ponder a new what the Almighty can do." Think about and meditate on all the things God can do in this new year.

Take a moment today to write out what you would like to see God do in your life (or the life of someone you love) this coming year. Now pray over these things and believe He will do all according to His will. And His will means whatever happens will be for His glory and our good.

Sing of God's love and don't forget the strength found in His everlasting lovingkindness. We will endure because of the love of God. Pondering anew the old truths will create in me a gentle reminder to be still. To rely on God for strength. To rest in His provision. To not let the weariness of life, social media, politics, or the news weigh on my heart. They weigh on His heart, and He can bear it. Trust the truth of who God is!



Day 4: A New Life

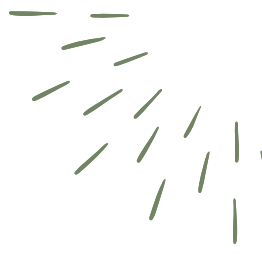
In today's passage we are going to sift through some of the more common verses to remember again what we have because of Jesus' death and resurrection. Let's begin by reading Ephesians 2:1-10. Write down any verses you've heard before.

How does Paul describe our life before Christ? (Ephesians 2:1-3)

"God just doesn't throw a life preserver to a drowning person. He goes to the bottom of the sea, and pulls a corpse from the bottom of the sea, takes him up on the bank, breathes into him the breath of life and makes him alive."
R. C. Sproul

What did it take, according to Paul in Ephesians 2:4-5, for us to be saved?

If you are looking at a frozen pond and want to step out on the ice and have a deep sense of faith that the thin, brittle ice will keep you up, you will be wrong. You can have all the faith in the world but if the ice is thin, you will fall. In contrast, if you step out onto the pond and the ice is three feet thick, you can have the smallest of faith and the ice will hold you up. It is never about how much faith we have, it is WHO we have faith IN. Knowing that it was never of us should give us a deep assurance and peace in our hearts.



Day 4: A New Life

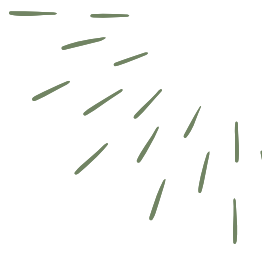
Salvation is never about us. How are we described in these verses?

There was never anything good in any of us - nor would there be any good in us. How do these passages speak about our sinful nature?

I don't share these verses to make you feel bad about yourself. Instead, I hope they encourage you to run to Jesus. We will never be good and right on our own. There is no boasting at the foot of the cross. The ground is level and we all come to God equally.

End today's study with this prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, rich in mercy, let me not forget how sin had corrupted every part of me. Let me be reminded of where I have come from. For when I remember the truth of my sinful heart I can turn to you and rejoice with greater joy in the free gift of your beautiful, kind salvation! Amen.



Day 5: A New Mercy

Read again Ephesians 2:4-7. Paul speaks about our new life in Christ, but let's focus on God, the author of our faith today. How does Paul describe God? What words stand out to you?

The word "mercy" here means to have kindness to something that is rejected, miserable, and afflicted. Yesterday we saw how we are all of these things because of our sin. Today let's read about God's amazing mercy.

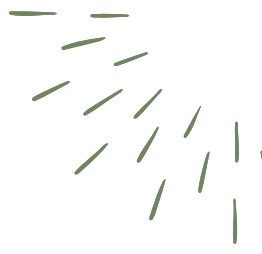
God does not get tired of us. What do these passages tell us about God's mercy? Write your reflections below.

Hebrews 4:16

Psalms 86:5

Matthew 5:7

Titus 3:5



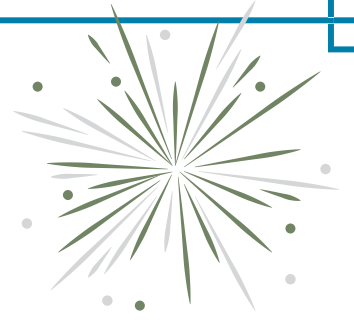
Day 5: A New Mercy

In Psalm 33:22 it says, “Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee” (KJV). The word for “mercy” can also be translated as “kindness.” The Hebrew word is: *cheded*, which means His “covenant-keeping love.” It is a love and kindness based on His covenant, or His promises, to us – not based on anything we deserve. The very love that drives Him to keep His promises is the love in which He shows His kindness to us.

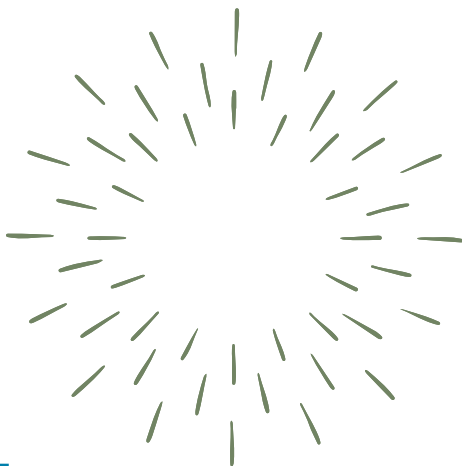
The kindness of God is far reaching and long lasting. What does Isaiah 54:8 say?

The comfort this truth offers is immeasurable. Do we believe God loves us? Yes. But do we believe He is kind and merciful? Kindness implies action. Out of love, God moves toward us with kindness. When we study Scripture, we see God’s kindness is always connected to His actions. God came to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God set up the great rescue plan to save the entire world from sin. Jesus came as a man to die on the cross for our sin. This is God’s great mercy to us.

Next week we will dive into what this new life brings to our everyday life!

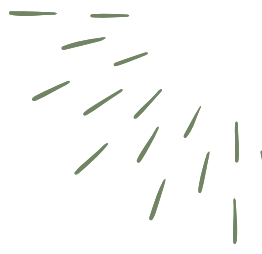


Week 2:
A New Sanctified Way



LET'S READ THE BIBLE

NEW YEAR
new mercies



Day 1: Put Off, Put On

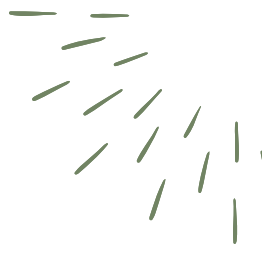
My little girl loves to change clothes. Everyday she goes through a couple of different outfits. It was ok when she was little, but as she gets older the amount of laundry doubles when she is constantly changing! In today's passage Paul is encouraging us to change out of our old clothes and put on something new..

Read Colossians 3:8-11 and make a list of things we should "take off" now that we have new life in Christ.

Last week we learned that our old self no longer has the power over us. We don't have to live this way anymore. We have a new life in Christ because of God's new kind of mercy. This passage is a warning to us not to fall back into the trap of acting like our new life doesn't matter.

Write out the rest of Colossians 3:1:

"If then you were raised with Christ,



Day 1: Put Off, Put On

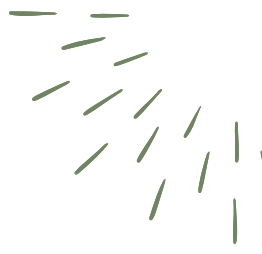
My little girl loves to change clothes. Everyday she goes through a couple of different outfits. It was ok when she was little, but as she gets older the amount of laundry doubles when she is constantly changing! In today's passage Paul is encouraging us to change out of our old clothes and put on something new..

Read Colossians 3:8-11 and make a list of things we should "take off" now that we have new life in Christ.

If we are indeed a Christian, it is time we put on something new. What a better time than the new year to focus on how to grow spiritually? Take a look at Colossians 3:12-15. Make another list and write down the things we are to "put on" as Christians.

Circle which of those things are hard to do. Put a star beside the ones that you would like to work on this coming year.

Paul ends this section with a few commands. What does Paul call us to do? Read Colossians 3:16-17.



Day 1: Put Off, Put On

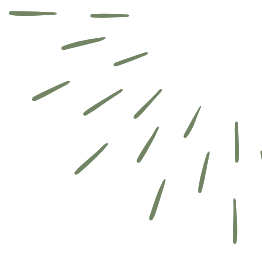
My little girl loves to change clothes. Everyday she goes through a couple of different outfits. It was ok when she was little, but as she gets older the amount of laundry doubles when she is constantly changing! In today's passage Paul is encouraging us to change out of our old clothes and put on something new..

Read Colossians 3:8-11 and make a list of things we should "take off" now that we have new life in Christ.

If we are indeed a Christian, it is time we put on something new. What a better time than the new year to focus on how to grow spiritually? Take a look at Colossians 3:12-15. Make another list and write down the things we are to "put on" as Christians.

Circle which of those things are hard to do. Put a star beside the ones that you would like to work on this coming year.

Paul ends this section with a few commands. What does Paul call us to do? Read Colossians 3:16-17. How do we put off and put on? The answer is here: Let God's word dwell in us richly! We let God's word so permeate our lives that kindness, love, and peace will naturally flow. End today's study with a prayer asking God to grow you in one of the areas you put a star next to above.



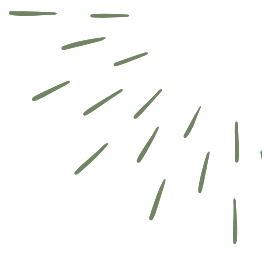
Day 1: Put Off, Put On

One of the hardest things we must face as we go into the new year is how to deal with people. How are we to respond when those we love (or those we don't love) treat us poorly? I'll admit it is hard to trust others when we've been hurt. But what if this year we rest in God's love for us, see each person as God sees them, and learn to trust God enough to love others?

One of the marks of Christians, according to Jesus in John 13:35, is what?

Loving others is hard, but Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:7 the way we move forward in our new life in Christ is to "...be renewed in the spirit of your mind..." How do we do this? How do you think you will be able to better love others in this coming year?

Let's take a look at Ephesians 4:25-32. Write down the negative actions and the positive actions that correlate with one another. I've done the first one for you.



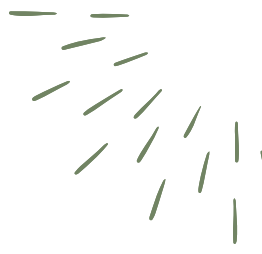
Day 2: Love & Forgiveness

Let's take a look at Ephesians 4:25-32. Write down the negative actions and the positive actions that correlate with one another. I've done the first one for you.

(verse 25) Don't lie - Speak truth
(verse 28)
(verse 29)
(verse 30)
(verses 31-32)

In that last section Paul tells us the way to love others is to remember how much God loves us! Read these verses to remind yourself of how much God loves you. Write down what you want to remember. Romans 5:8, I John 4:9-11, Psalm 5:11-12

In Ephesians 4:32 we read that the way to love others is to "forgive." Why do you think is forgiveness such an important part of love?

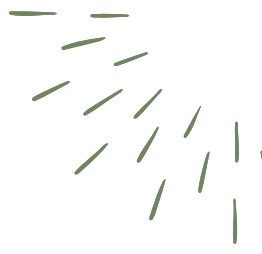


Day 2: Love & Forgiveness

Who in your life do you need to forgive? Maybe going into the new year you can forgive that person for what they did. Forgiving sets you free. Forgiving is the way towards love. Forgiving allows you to walk closer to God. Although we might never get an apology nor does the person not have to face God's justice (all will face the throne of God at the end of their life), we can still love that person with the help of God's Spirit.

Spend some time with God in prayer asking Him to move your heart closer to forgiveness. The feelings will take time, but you can take the first step today.

End today's time by writing out Ephesians 4:32.



Day 3: Redeemed & Faithful

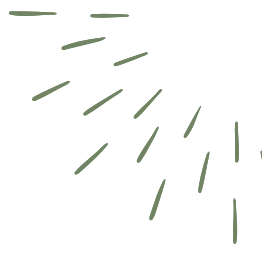
Let's read Hebrews 10:14. In this verse we see that Christ's death on the cross makes the way possible to live a life "sanctified." That word means to be holy and dedicated to God. The very reason we can even have the hope of becoming like Christ is because of Christ's death.

Our redemption (or salvation), through the power of Christ's blood, brings with it a chance to be different. On day one of this week we were reminded that we still have sin in our hearts, but that doesn't mean our life has to be characterized by sin.

What does Hebrews 10:19 tell us about God's throne? What can we do now that Christ has opened up the way?

No longer do we need to fear access to God - we have it! What should our response be according to Hebrews 10:22? What do you think it means to "draw near"?

Write out Hebrews 10:23.



Day 3: Redeemed & Faithful

What is the “hope” the author of Hebrews is talking about? Read all of Hebrews 10 to help you see it.

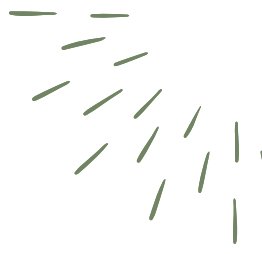
According to Hebrews 10:24-25 what other things should we be doing because of this hope?

According to 1 Thessalonians 5:21 it says we should “hold fast” to what?

What am I looking forward to? What am I anchoring myself in? I often turn to other things – people, food, circumstances – to help me feel safe. I don’t need to tell you those things are never going to make me feel safe.

When Paul commanded the people to “hold fast” he meant to remember. They were worried about the future, whether the people who had died would really go to heaven and this new doctrine which Paul preached promised good things, but life was still hard. Paul says to them: “Hold fast.” Keep remembering. Stay the course. Hold on to the future with Christ.

Keep remembering what is better. God is better. The future is better. God’s promises are true and good and better. Remembering His goodness and kindness first thing each morning gives us a firm standing to hold fast to what is good. End today’s study with a prayer asking God to remind you of His promises!



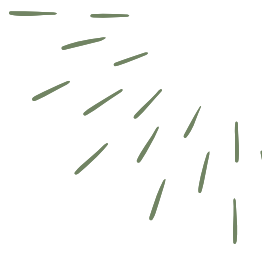
Day 4: Trust & Obey

Today we are going to be in the book of Psalms. Our new life in Christ brings with it delight, justice, and righteousness. All of these things are ours when we live hand in hand with Christ. One of my favorite old hymns is "Trust and Obey". As a little girl I always thought the obeying part of living out this Christian life was the hardest. But as I've grown up (a little) I've learned the trusting part is actually much harder. Those who learn how to rest and trust in Jesus will obey with a joyful heart. Our new hearts have a new way forward when it comes to trusting and obeying God. Let's take a look at a Psalm today and discover the joy of serving and trusting.

Read Psalm 37. After reading through the entire psalm, go back through and look at Psalm 37:1-9 and write down all of the commands David tells us to do.

Which one of those is hard for you today? Is it trusting? Being still? Circle that one. Now, look at the promise in Psalm 37:10, 20. What will happen to the wicked?

Read Psalm 37:18, 37. In contrast to the wicked, what is true about those who are "blameless"? What do you think "blameless" means?



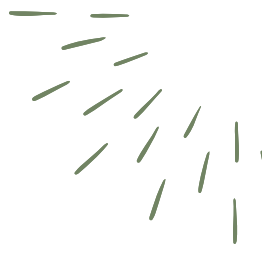
Day 4: Trust & Obey

The "blameless" here are not the ones who are sin-free. That term is for those who are seeking to follow God and trust in Him.

David makes a bold claim in Psalm 37:37. Write it down.

How does this promise give you hope as you walk into the new year? Although this is a principle (not a direct promise), we can have hope that God will not forsake us when we trust, commit, and delight in Him. Yes, the new year might bring heartache and pain, but in the end God will restore and deliver every single person who puts their trust in Him.

End today's study by reading Psalm 37:39-40. Ask the Lord to give you faith to trust Him and strength to obey Him.



Day 5: Renewing Our Minds

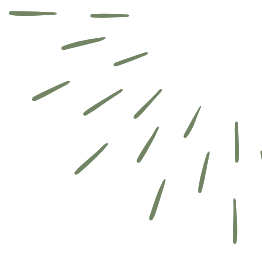
After we are saved, we are not only given a new life but a new mind as well. Let's take a look at Romans 12:1-2. These verses might be familiar to you, but read them with fresh eyes. Know that God is working in your heart even now to renew your mind.

What kinds of things do you struggle with when it comes to your thought life?

My mind is often really distracted. I would love to say I can concentrate and read God's word and prayer without my mind wandering. This type of focus is not what Paul is talking about in Romans 12:1-2.

Paul has been teaching the church at Rome (for eleven chapters) the deep and rich doctrine of God and salvation. Now in chapter twelve he switches to practical advice. What does Paul ask the Christians (and us) to give to God?

For the Israelite people most sacrifices would have been dead. But Paul says we are to be "living" sacrifices. Why do you think he uses this phrase?



Day 5: Renewing Our Minds

In this verse we see that God is asking for our actual bodies. No, we are not to kill ourselves (remember - living). It means that what we do with these physical bodies matters to God. What we put in them and where we take our bodies should be a reflection of our relationship with God.

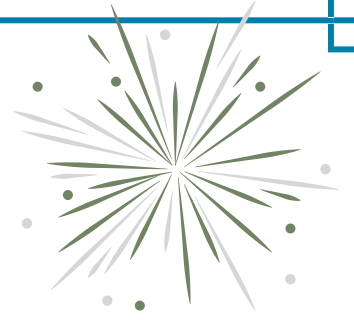
Next, we see that Paul calls this our "reasonable sacrifice." According to 1 John 3:16 & Galatians 2:20 why can we give up our lives for God?

Finally, we see that Paul calls us to "renew" our minds. What does this mean? Look up that word in the dictionary and write down what you think it means to renew your mind.

God wants us to offer up our minds to Him, but according to Romans 12:2, what will God do to our minds?

How do we do this? Bible reading and prayer! How do both of these things help to change and renew your mind to be like God's?

Our minds are automatically bent to do what the world would have us do. If we want to be truly transformed, our minds need a renewal. We need God to step in and renew our minds.

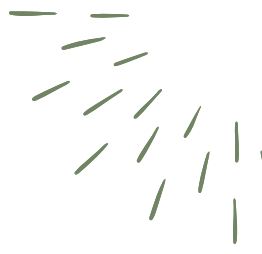


Week 3:
**A New Way Through
Suffering**



LET'S READ THE BIBLE

NEW YEAR
new mercies



Day 1: The Peace We Need

Our new life in Christ and as we grow to be more like Christ will bring with it a new way of looking at suffering. Let's start by looking at how we can seek peace as a way to walk through suffering.

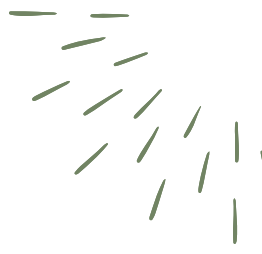
Read Psalm 34. It isn't a long psalm.

In Psalm 34:11-12 the author, King David, invites us to come and learn from his life. Let's break this psalm up and see two things we can learn from David's life.

According to Psalm 34:13-14 what two things should we avoid? What is the one thing we should "seek" or "pursue"?

Peace is something to go after and seek. Peace doesn't necessarily mean free of hardship or strife. Nor does it mean just quiet. Peace in the Bible is not the absence of pain or anxiety, but the presence of the Prince of Peace. Jesus doesn't always take away those things that bring us anxiety, but He does allow us to experience peace in our hearts.

When we face hardship, what promises do we have in Psalm 34:15-19? Use your favorite Bible translation and write out Psalm 34:18-19.



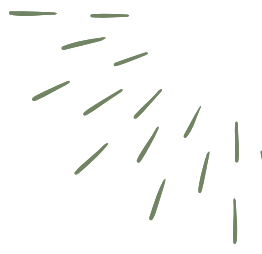
Day 1: The Peace We Need

Remember God is nearer to the brokenhearted. A few weeks ago, while battling a hard depression, I told God: you are near to me. That's right. I told Him a truth my heart needed to hear. And I said: I will believe what my heart has forgotten.

How does trusting God relate to peace even when life feels very broken?

Seeking peace is not just about feeling peaceful, but to be able to trust God when our hearts are broken. What are you facing even today that feels out of control and very hurtful? Take that up to God in prayer. Read Philippians 4:7 and wrap yourself with God's peace today through the act of prayer.

Each day this week try to work on memorizing this verse: Psalm 34:18. By the end of the week try to say it without looking!



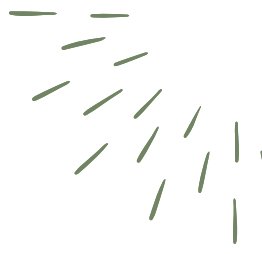
Day 2: *The Glory to Come*

Our suffering does not feel temporary. In fact, maybe today you have been suffering through something for years and years. Maybe someone you love has lived with chronic pain or cancer. The grief from losing those we love lingers much longer than the funeral. In fact, this year marks 12 years since my grandmother died. I teared up last week thinking about her. Grief does not take a vacation. What grief do you hold in your heart today?

When Paul wanted to encourage the church at Corinth in their time of suffering he wrote some verses to help them keep things in perspective.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. How does Paul compare the things that are seen to those that are unseen?

How do we remember eternity when we're stuck in the ordinary and consumed with the daily tasks and to-do lists? How do we live, though in the middle of our present, with a view of something we've never seen? What does that mean, though, for us to trust the eternal perspective? Write down how Paul describes our afflictions in 2 Corinthians 4:16?



Day 2: *The Glory to Come*

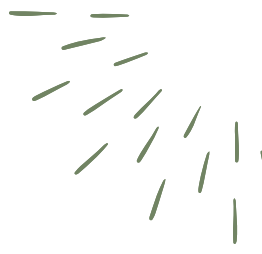
Although the idea of suffering being “light” doesn’t seem true, when we put those things up against all we will have in eternity with Jesus, we can see the difference. Eternal and forever is much longer than 70–80 years of life. Moses spoke about this in Psalm 90. What does he say God will do with all those years of suffering? (Psalm 90:14–15)

So let’s turn our eyes to those things that are eternal. Read these verses and write down what will last forever.

I Timothy 1:17, Isaiah 45:13, Psalm 119:89, I Peter 1:25

A view of eternity gives us endurance. We can withstand the trials when we turn our thoughts and allow our hearts to dwell on what is waiting for us beyond the grave. The hope of heaven and the presence of our Savior allows us to endure.

The power of Christ is so much more, and if we are to remember these in light of eternity, how much better we will be! We will have courage, a deeper faith, and endurance living in eternity. Which of the practical steps can you take today?



Day 3: *The Emptiness Filled*

Today we are going to see how God fills us – even in our suffering. One of my favorite Old Testament stories is that of Ruth. This small little book between Judges and 1 Samuel tells a timeless story of loss, love, and redemption.

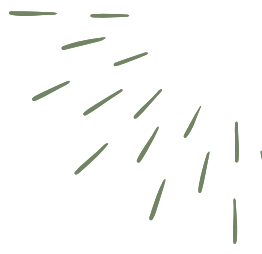
In the beginning of this book we read that Naomi left the Promised Land but only finds emptiness. Read Ruth 1:1–5. What did Naomi lose when she arrived in Moab?

Her family left during a famine and their physical bellies were empty. After returning to Bethlehem, God restored Naomi’s life and filled it again, this time with a physical son. Read Ruth 4:13–17. In just these few verses today we see a glimpse of God’s redemption.

How do the women describe Naomi in Ruth 4:15?

According to Ruth 4:16, who still loved Naomi, even though her heart was broken?

Write down the name of at least one person who loves you right now. If you can't think of anyone – read Psalm 5:11–12



Day 3: The Emptiness Filled

Ruth filled Naomi's empty arms with a baby. It was more than just the baby, it was the hope of a future. Naomi still grieved the loss of her sons - we know this because Naomi was human. You and I have a loss we face as well. Write down something you lost last year. For me, I experienced much loss. , But God promises to fill us!

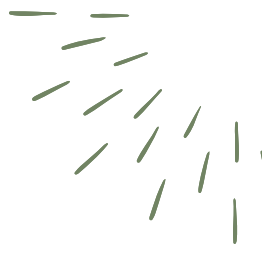
Thousands of years later, Naomi's many-times-over-great grandson would sit on a mountain not far from Bethlehem. What did Jesus say in Matthew 5:6 about thirst?

The way to be filled is to be hungry and thirsty. Are you thirsty for God, and His Word? If so, God promises to satisfy. Naomi, who left empty, did not remain empty. God is still in the business of filling empty hearts. He does this by filling us with His Word.

Write down what will satisfy our hearts: Psalm 107:9, Isaiah 58:11

How does God word "satisfy" or "fill" you?

Our empty hearts might think that finding love in other people will fill us. But only in God's love, through a relationship with Jesus, can we find true love. While we were God's enemies, Jesus demonstrated that love on the cross when he died for us. . What does Ephesians 5:2 and Romans 5:8 tell us about God's love? Stop searching for love and find it today with Jesus.



Day 4: *The Lord who Listens*

Maybe this is you too, but when I'm in the middle of pain and heartache sometimes I just need someone to listen to me. Have you ever just wanted to cry and pour out your heart to someone who really gets you? What would you say to them today?

Today we are going to read that the Lord God of Heaven and Earth listens to our prayers! Start by reading Psalm 116.

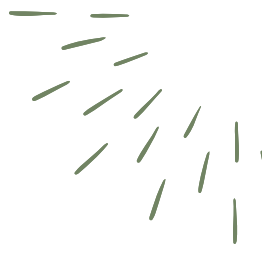
How does the author describe his pain? (Psalm 116:3, 8, 10)

In contrast, how did God respond to his trouble?

Psalm 116:1-2

Psalm 116:6-7

Psalm 116:8-9



Day 4: *The Lord who Listens*

We live in a world filled with disillusionment. Between cancer and sickness, disappointment and grief, it can be amazingly hard to believe in the real goodness of God, let alone whether God is good to us personally. Looking at our lives we might be disenchanted with the idea of God's goodness. How can we live believing goodness and mercy will surely follow us all of the days of our lives?

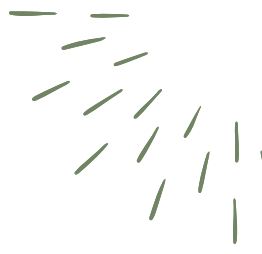
Read again Psalm 116:1-2.

God is:

Because He hears your prayers. Don't believe for a second God isn't listening. He is. You can pray, call, and even cry out to God and He will hear you.

This is where God's goodness becomes more than a big idea but a practical truth to light our way. Our past can reveal more than hurt, but also His hand. Our present might seem unkind, but God's kindness to you can be seen. The God who steps into our pain in a tangible way can lead us to believe His kindness and goodness are real and tangible. God is already good, we needn't wonder any longer.

Spend the rest of our study time writing out a prayer to God. Go forth in confidence because you know He will hear you!



Day 5: Strength in Suffering

Start out today by reading Isaiah 40. It is a long chapter, but worth your time.

Up until this point the prophet Isaiah has been pronouncing evil on the world during his time. Both the people of God and the enemies of God were under the wrath of God. Evil, destruction, and punishment were coming.

Those who say the God of the Old Testament is only a God of wrath miss chapters like this. In the middle of the heartache we see these comforting verses. What promises and comforts do we see here in Isaiah 40?

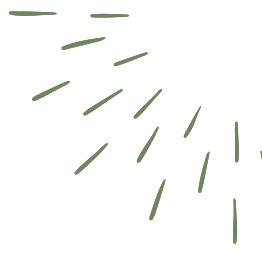
Isaiah 40:1

Isaiah 40:8

Isaiah 40:11

Isaiah 40:26

According to John 1:19-23 John the Baptist would fulfill the verses in Isaiah 40:3-5. Who was John the Baptist preparing the way for? (John 1:29-34)



Day 5: Strength in Suffering

Jesus would be the one who would come and break the bonds of slavery to sin. Jesus did not come just to give us eternal life. Our Savior came so that we could know how to live our lives with strength and joy.

Read Isaiah 40:28-31. What promises do you read about?

Although God sometimes asks us to wait in our suffering, we do not wait in vain. In fact, our suffering is producing in us a deeper sense of trust in God. The suffering grows our faith.

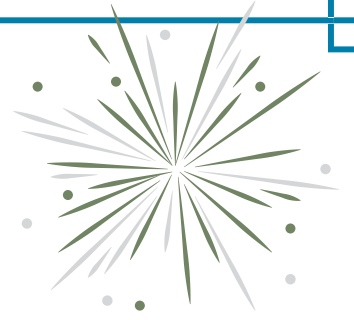
Elisabeth Elliot, a young widow who lost her husband to Indians in Ecuador said:

"The deepest things I have learned in my own life have come from the deepest suffering. And out of the deepest waters and the hottest fires have come the deepest things I know about God." (Suffering is Never for Nothing)

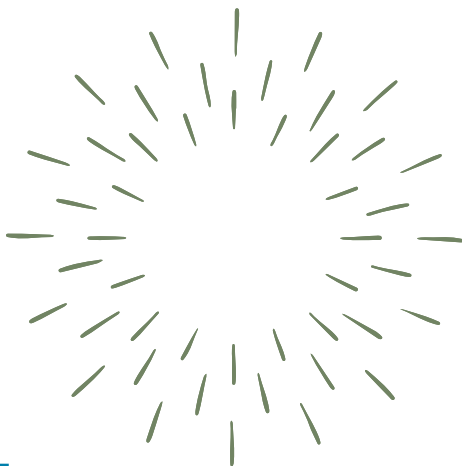
How has suffering brought you closer to God?

God doesn't waste our suffering. In Jesus we find the strength to endure and thrive during our times of suffering, in surrendering to Him.

Spend the last few minutes of your study time writing out a prayer to God. Ask Him to help you embrace your current season and trust Him with your future.

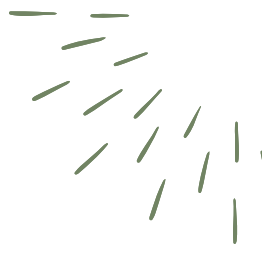


Week 4:
A New Hope



LET'S READ THE BIBLE

NEW YEAR
new mercies



Day 1: A Prayer for Hope

Today I want to take some time to talk about hope. When we think about the new year we all have a sense of hope, don't we? We hope things will turn around this year. But let's take a deeper dive into the idea of hope today. I want to end with a prayer of hope. Save some time to pray that prayer and add some words of your own.

What do these verses say about hope?

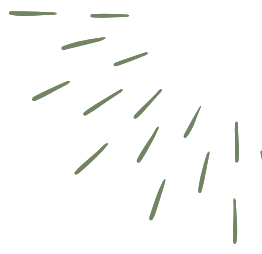
Psalm 62:5-6

Psalm 147:11

Jeremiah 17:7

Romans 15:13

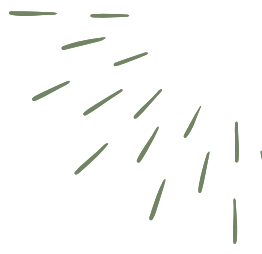
Using what you learned about hope from these verses, write your own definition of hope.



Day 1: A Prayer for Hope

Oh Father, let me seek the hope that doesn't put me to shame. Let me hope for the things I know to be true. Let me hope in your steadfast love. For this love is unending. I can hope in the promises of your Word because they have never failed me yet! All my hope is in You, Oh Father. And so today I want to praise You. I want to praise You so that I can have hope today. I might feel hopeless. My life might look like hope has left. But God, You are here to tell me that all my hope is in Jesus! All of my hope is in the fact that my past is gone. All of my sins are forgiven because of the work of Jesus on the cross. All of my hope is in the Father. For it was Your love, Father, which called me out of the prison of darkness and sin. You set me free and I praise You that all of my hope is in You! All of my hope is in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit comforts me in my pain, brings to mind Your Word and I praise You for the work of the Spirit in my life. All of my hope is in You! Amen.

Write your own prayer to God for hope in your life.



Day 2: How to Keep Hope Alive

I love learning and listening to God's word when it comes to practical living. Today I want to encourage you to go to the Bible to help find some practical ways to keep hope alive. Hope is a choice we make. So let's choose hope today.

Let's keep hope alive! Here are three action steps you can take today!

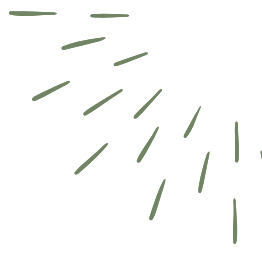
1. Read a verse on hope. At the end of this study are 10 verses on hope. Pick one and write it below.

2. Pray for someone who is suffering. Read Philippians 4:6-7. What does Paul say we can do for our friends who are hurting?

Write the name of someone you can pray for today. Looking outside ourselves allows hope to grow in our own hearts. Send a text message or email or write a note and stick it in the mail to remind that person to have hope.

3. Keep going. God isn't finished with your life yet. It is easy to think our suffering means the end has happened. Hope says we have not reached the end.

End today asking God to help you do one of these things.



Day 3: A Biblical Hope

We moved in January 2020 to Central America to begin working as missionaries. Two and half months in and the country shut down. Whew. Not what we planned. No matter what plans were disrupted in 2022, you can have hope.

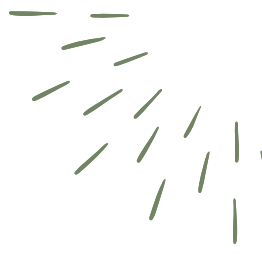
Hope means: to look forward to with desire and reasonable confidence. The Bible, on the other hand, has a different definition. You've heard of faith, but faith is hoping with confidence. Not a reasonable confidence, but a full-blown 100% confidence.

We have a... Shame-Free Hope

Because of God's love, we have a hope that will never put us to shame. The Holy Spirit has been given to secure this hope in our hearts. When we hope in God it will not be embarrassing. God will never let us down. According to Romans 5:1-8, why do we have a shame-free hope?

We Have a... Praise-Filled Hope

When we are downcast, hoping in God can cause us to praise God, even in the midst of suffering. In the moment it might be tough (or even impossible) to praise God. If we hold on to the hope of God, we will one day sing again. In Psalm 42 we read how we can praise God, even when life seems hopeless. How does the Psalmist do this?

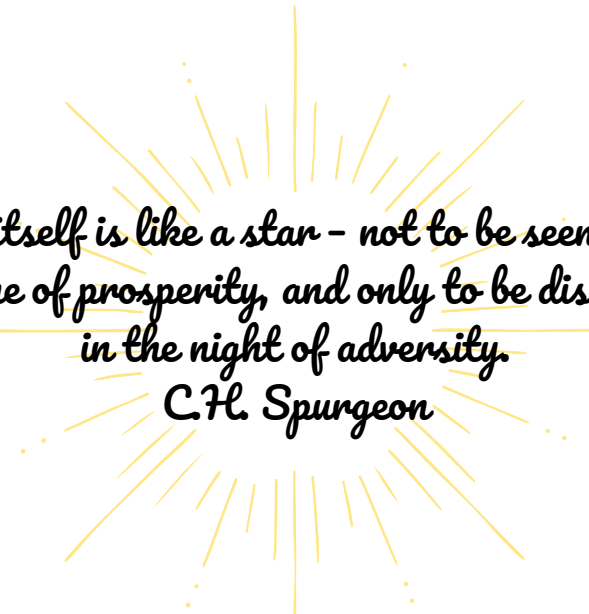


Day 3: A Biblical Hope

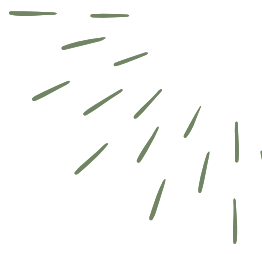
We Have a... Living Hope

Our hope is rooted in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because of His death and resurrection we have a hope that is alive. Our hope is not in something invisible or a hope that wishes something will come true. At the beginning of this study we looked at Peter 1:3. Read it again and write down why we have a “living” hope.

If you are struggling with me to see the hope in the coming year, may we look to God instead of our circumstances. May we look to God instead of the news. May we look to God instead of our disappointments.



*Hope itself is like a star - not to be seen in the
sunshine of prosperity, and only to be discovered
in the night of adversity.
C.H. Spurgeon*



Day 4: Hope When Life is Weary

Don't wait until "life gets better." Have hope today. During those early motherhood days, the morning alarm clock would go off just in time for me to get up, take a shower, and sip a half a cup of coffee while packing lunches and signing planners. By the time I could breathe in the mornings, the baby needed to be fed again and I had only sat down for a few minutes to pray. It was in those moments I would remember: God's promises are not for when I am refreshed and renewed; they are for when I am worn and weary.

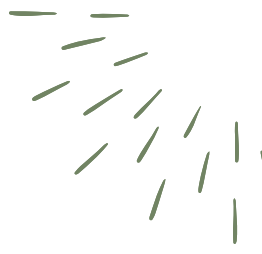
God promises hope even now. How does He do this? Because our hope is rooted and grounded in Him. God doesn't change. I no longer get woken up by babies at night but I do have interruptions in my days. What does Matthew 11:28-29 promise those who are weary?

What do these verses tell us about working even when we are weary?

Galatians 6:9

John 16:33

1 Peter 5:7



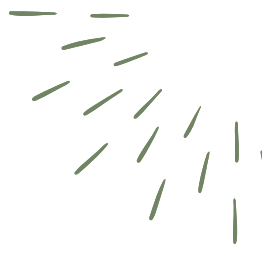
Day 4: Hope When Life is Weary

How do we keep going when life is hard and hope is hard to find? I'm going to give you five things that have helped me to see the sun when the sky is dark in my soul. Pick one to do today.

1. We keep our minds and hearts pointed toward eternity. I love that the Christians in the New Testament were always looking for Christ's return. Has the fact that 2,000 years have passed dulled our minds? Christ is returning and eternity is coming. Keeping our minds on this truth is key.
2. We read God's word no matter how we feel. That's right. Open up the word of God and don't just read it out of duty. Ask the Lord to open your eyes. Just pray this: "Lord, open my eyes to truth."
3. We pray. Oh, this is a hard one. When I'm down the LAST thing I want to do is pray, but it is the thing I need to do the most. What is prayer? Just talking to God. So I tell God everything about my life. I list the worries and fears. Sometimes I write them down, but mostly I just pray in my mind.
4. We get to work. Do the next mundane thing you need to do. It seems crazy, but sometimes I will feel God close while I'm folding laundry or washing dishes. The ordinary days are the best days for me to hear God's Word.
5. We remember God is nearer to the brokenhearted. A few weeks ago, while battling a hard depression, I told God: you are near me. That's right. I told him a truth my heart needed to hear. And I said: I will believe what my heart has forgotten.

And that's what seeing the sun when the sky is dark is all about: believing what our hearts forget. And remembering God is still kind in the dark, and no darkness is dark for Him. And He is closer to us during the suffering than any other time.

Which one will you do today?

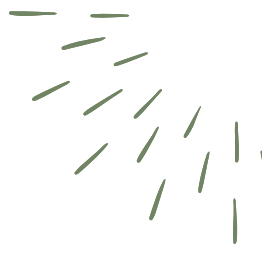


Day 5: Faithfulness, Mercy, and Hope

Let's end our study with looking at Lamentations 3:22-24 again. Read through the entire chapter. Write out your favorite verse.

As we move into this new year my deep desire for my heart (and yours) is to find God's faithfulness, mercy, and hope will not disappointment us. This morning I woke up and immediately sighed with relief. The new mercies were here. I know technically the sun doesn't actually send new mercies. God's forgiveness is available ANY time of the day. There is something new and beautiful about a new day, isn't there? As the sun peeked into my room this morning I was reminded again of God's faithfulness. If there is a "theme" to my life and story it is definitely God's faithfulness. His faithfulness to forgive, to love, and to heal has woven a golden thread throughout my entire life. Not just in the big moments but the small moments.

Write down a small moment when you see God's faithfulness.



Day 5: Faithfulness, Mercy, and Hope

In the sin I try to get rid of, but keeps coming back: He is faithful to forgive.

In the heartache that seems to rear up: He is faithful to comfort.

In the darkness which threatens my hope: He is faithful to provide light.

Write down what God's faithfulness means according to these verses.

Deuteronomy 7:9

Psalms 36:5

Psalms 91:4

I Corinthians 1:9

Friend, I don't know what kind of hurt, loneliness, or despair plagues your heart – but know this: God is faithful to provide new mercies. Each day we can wake up rejoicing knowing we get a new 24 hours and God does not harbor resentment for our past.

God is not angry with you.

1. Have you confessed your sin?
2. Are you striving to live like God?
3. Do you desire a relationship with Him?

God is not mad or resentful or harboring displeasure for you. God will never ever forget His kindness.

10 verses on hope



Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God;
For I shall yet praise Him,
The help of my countenance and my God.
Psalm 42:11

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

And not only that, but we also glory in
tribulations, knowing that tribulation
produces perseverance; and
perseverance, character; and
character, hope.
Romans 5:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ, who according to His
abundant mercy has begotten us again to
a living hope through the resurrection of
Jesus Christ from the dead.
I Peter 1:3

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

But those who wait on the Lord
Shall renew their strength;
They shall mount up with wings like
eagles, They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint.
Isaiah 40:31

You are my hiding place and my shield;
I hope in Your word.
Psalm 119:114

Therefore I will look to the Lord; I will wait
for the God of my salvation; My God will
hear me.
Micah 7:7

Now hope does not disappoint,
because the love of God has been
poured out in our hearts by the Holy
Spirit who was given to us.
Romans 5:5

The hope of the righteous will
be gladness
Proverbs 10:28

