

Nurses Christian Fellowship National Nurses Month Celebration May 2022

Hope in the Darkness

Week One: Hope in the Word

*By Christy Secor DNP, RN, CDWF
NCF Professional Ministries Director*

Hope is a light shining in our darkness. Hope is a sustaining force in our well-being. We need hope. But as I've often found in my own life, it can be all too easy to set my hope in places where I will surely be disappointed.

I put my hope in people when people (including myself) will always disappoint. I hope for certain outcomes at work or with a family gathering or trip. I salivate in anticipation as I hope for the best tasting fries as I circle around to the drive-through window in town. And then there are the times I place my hope in a prayer asking, no, begging God to work in a specific way only to be left feeling unheard.

The months of the pandemic have served as a primer for me ... not only for the expectations I set but also recognizing the source of my hope and developing deeper intimacy in God who is with me through the disappointments and joys I experience. God's Word has come alive in new ways as I've recognized it is not just the stories of others, but it *my* story.



Background

Often when we think of the lamp described in Scripture, we imagine a bright, burning torch, or translating this to our terms, an LED producing a stronger and wider pattern of light. But this is not the type of lamp being described in Psalm 119:105. The lamp the psalmist described would have produced enough light for the individual's immediate surroundings. It would provide just enough light for the next step.

Hearing the Word

With our new understanding of the lamp depicted by the psalmist, read and meditate on this familiar Scripture:

*Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.*

Psalm 119:105 (ESV)

Responding to the Word

The Word of God is a source of strength and encouragement. It gives direction and guidance on how to live, how to worship God, how to deal with conflict, how to love, and how to forgive. It provides examples of *lament*--a spiritual practice that has brought healing and deeper trust in my own life. It's the story of God pursuing each of us and his choice to redeem us through the greatest sacrifice--the death of his own son. It celebrates our identity found in Jesus Christ alone--not in our test scores or the acronyms that follow our names. It reminds us that the least shall be first. The Word of God provides a place of refuge, shelter, and strength for us. It is my story. It is your story.

- How do we look at the Word of God? Some could choose to see it as a historical text, an expected part of a church service, or as a foundation for all that we are and do. Do we make God's Word a priority as much as we do that first cup of coffee in the morning?
- What are our expectations when we read the Word of God? It's a normal part of human nature to want to know the path that's ahead. Does recognizing that we have light for the next step make us comfortable or uncomfortable? Can we trust God with what we cannot see or understand?
- How does our need for control impact the way we read God's Word? What places of our heart and life do we need to invite God and his Word to enter?

Application

Earlier, I shared how there have been times when I have prayed earnestly, only to feel lost and alone when my prayer was not answered in the way I had hoped. I've come to realize I was putting more faith in the answer I wanted than I was in trusting God in the challenge or pain I was experiencing. As we consider the power of the Word of God, these verses where God spoke to Job have also been shared gently with me:

*"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell me, if you have understanding.
Who determined its measurements—surely you know!
Or who stretched the line upon it?
On what were its bases sunk,
or who laid its cornerstone..."*

Job 38:4-6 (ESV)

My pain in a situation does not equate to a lack of God's presence in the pain I am experiencing. His Word reminds us that "he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4, ESV). His Word promises hope.

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- What are ways we can begin to incorporate Scripture into the busyness of our daily schedules? Consider options that will work for you, like a mobile Bible study app or memory tool. Ask other believers for creative possibilities if you need ideas. (NCF meetings always incorporate Scripture – consider attending Sunday Evening Prayer, Tabletop Discussions, or other national or local groups, see ncf-jcn.org for information.)
- Use a biblical search engine and read through verses in the book of Psalms containing the word “hope.” Which verses stand out to you? Consider sending that verse in a quick text to a friend or colleague who is discouraged and needs hope.
- Reflect on an area of your life where you need hope. Spend time selecting a Scripture that is meaningful to you and that you can meditate on.



Dr. Christy Secor is the Professional Ministries Director for Nurses Christian Fellowship USA as well as a Certified Daring Way™ Facilitator. She promotes living with courage, presence, wholeheartedness, and growing in deeper intimacy in our relationship with God. Christy supports more than 40-plus professional nurse groups, develops webinars, resources, and provides prayer support encouraging deeper connection with God, our colleagues, and the individuals and communities we serve.

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