

## YouVersion READ plan

**Title:** Life In the Spirit – Groaning and Hoping

**Date:** April 9, 2023

### DAY 1: The Provision of Hope

**Scripture:** [Romans 8:22-25](#); [Romans 15:13](#); [Ephesians 1:13-14](#); [Hebrews 6:17-20](#)

#### Reflection:

Life in the Spirit is marked by hope. Not the cross-your-fingers, tentative optimism that we often hang onto with more uncertainty than excitement. This hope, Biblical hope, is a confident expectation. It's built on trust in God's faithfulness, and God provides it to us as both a gift to enjoy and a resource to lean into.

Like so many of God's gifts, the nature of hope is simultaneously already and not yet. We groan in anticipation of things to come even as we have begun to receive their fulfillment. The New Living Translation says it like this,

*“And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us”* ([Romans 8:23 NLT](#)).

Jesus' defeat of death on the cross opened the door for the power of the Spirit to fill our lives with hope. The Holy Spirit is a promise kept and brings with Him a confident expectation that our lives are secure in Him. The first fruits of the Holy Spirit are gracious evidence that Jesus has done all that was prophesied, all that was required, to make the way for us to become children of God and enter into eternal life. There was no other way. We have hope only because He provided it. God's faithfulness assures us that all He has promised WILL be accomplished. We can count on it.

#### Ask Yourself:

- What types of circumstances tempt you to lean toward uncertain optimism rather than confident expectation?
- How do you think Biblical hope can serve as a resource for living a Spirit-filled life?

**Pause to Pray:** *Father God, I thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to guide and encourage me and to grant me the hope that sustains me. Help me to trust you more in \_\_\_\_\_. Teach me how to rely fully on your faithfulness toward my good and your glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

#### Take a Next Step:

Connect with a trusted believer friend this week and spend some time sharing with each other the things you are currently hoping for and any areas in which you may be feeling uncertain or hopeless. End your conversation together by praying for one another.

### DAY 2: The Perspective of Hope

**Scripture:** [Romans 8:22-25](#); [John 16:20-22](#); [John 16:13](#)

**Reflection:**

When we live fully convinced of God's care for us, our confident hope and expectation for His good plans give us a valuable perspective on suffering. A woman in childbirth labor experiences pain in the process, but she endures and presses through because she knows that on the other side of that moment, there is great joy and blessing. This serves as an apt illustration of our current human condition. The presence of sin in this world introduced the reality of pain and suffering into our earthly lives, but the promise of our ultimate deliverance reminds us that this is temporary. Yes, we will groan through the trials we face, and sometimes unexpected tragedies will tempt us to think that God has abandoned us, but these struggles are not a cause for discouragement. There is great joy and blessing on the other side of them.

Before going to the cross, Jesus explained to his disciples the everlasting joy that would follow the sorrow of his leaving. He assured them that the Holy Spirit would be there to guide them through the hard and into the inheritance. It is this hope of the Holy Spirit that continues to help *us* face challenges with a long view perspective.

**Ask Yourself:**

- When has the promise of a coming joy helped you navigate a difficult season?
- How can the guidance of the Holy Spirit give you hope even when you can't see the other side of a problem?

**Pause to Pray:** *Holy Spirit, even in the midst of \_\_\_\_\_, I know that you have good plans for me, plans to give me a future and a hope. Help me keep my eyes fixed on you and my heart open to receive your guidance as we navigate this season together and look forward to the joy that is surely coming. In Jesus' name, Amen. ([Jeremiah 29:11](#))*

**DAY 3: The Posture of Hope**

**Scripture:** [Romans 8:22-25](#); [Romans 5:1-5](#); [Romans 12:12](#)

**Reflection:**

All hope involves a measure of waiting - and waiting can be hard. If we aren't careful, it can wear us down. We can grow weary and even discouraged if the wait is long or the circumstances are particularly painful. Our attitude can start to reflect impatient tolerance or despondent trudging, shoulders drooping with the weight of the burden.

But Paul described *eager* waiting with patience. He talked about rejoicing in that hopeful place when we know what is coming but haven't received it yet. When we grab a hold of true Biblical hope, we live in a posture of anticipation, like children standing on tiptoe, trying to see the good thing they are convinced is just beyond their current view.

Sometimes it's a simple thing to redirect our thoughts from momentary frustrations to bigger victories and look ahead, but other times we need the help of the Spirit to raise our heads and take the load we are carrying. The Contemporary English Translation of Romans 12:12a says, "*Let your hope make you*

*glad...*" This doesn't mean we ignore or deny our current circumstances; instead, hope gives us the strength to stand tall and ready while we wait in the confidence of our coming restoration.

**Ask Yourself:**

- How has waiting impacted your attitude and spiritual posture in the past?
- How can the Holy Spirit help you find authentic joy in future seasons of anticipation?

**Pause to Pray:** *Father God, even though waiting for \_\_\_\_\_ feels hard, I choose to place my hope in you. I thank you, God, for your goodness and praise you today for \_\_\_\_\_. Grant me peace and joy as I quiet myself and wait for your will to unfold in your time. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

**DAY 4: The Promise of Hope**

**Scripture:** [Romans 8:22-25](#); [2 Corinthians 4:16-18](#); [2 Corinthians 5:1-5](#); [Acts 2:21-39](#)

**Reflection:**

We have been talking about the power of hope to give us perspective about our current circumstances and help us maintain a posture of joy in the midst of them. Let's dig a bit deeper into an overarching promise of hope – our pain and its process have a greater purpose.

At its core, hope is about the unseen and the eternal. Hope doesn't just help us get through this life; it anticipates and facilitates the necessary work of repentance, redemption and renewal within us. It is the confident expectation for new life in Jesus Christ that causes and enables us to seek forgiveness of our sins and right relationship with God. Hope for perfect reconciliation holds our hearts open to be lead by the Holy Spirit and be prepared for eternal glory. Hope assures us that our ultimate future is secured and satisfied by God.

Hope refers back to the plans and foreknowledge of God, promising with authority that we will be delivered from death and showing us the paths of life that lead to that salvation. And hope makes the same promise to everyone, all generations, who call upon the name of the Lord. Hope's promise is broad and deep, connected to God's unflinching intention to redeem and restore *all* creation.

**Ask Yourself:**

When going through a difficult season, how likely are you to ask God to show you its greater purpose in your life? How do you think hope can facilitate repentance and/or renewal as you follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit?

**Pause to Pray:** *Holy Spirit, I thank you for reminding me of the extraordinary promises of God. Today I will call to mind your faithfulness, especially in the midst of \_\_\_\_\_. With you alongside me, I will not be shaken. Help me to rejoice in the knowledge that I am completely secure in your care and that you will never leave me or forsake me. Thank you for making "known to me the path of life; in your presence, there is fullness of joy..." Amen. ([Psalm 16:8-11](#))*

**DAY 5: The Person of Hope**

**Scripture:** [Hebrews 5:7-10](#); [John 7:37-39](#); [Luke 11:9-13](#); [Galatians 5:25](#)

**Reflection:**

Although we may understand the incredible hope found in our reconciliation with God through Jesus' death and resurrection – sometimes it feels really difficult to *live* hopeful in the everyday. And when it gets hard, we are tempted to turn to other people or things to find or feel that peace and assurance. We can quickly become confused and distracted when we try to fill the gap with anything other than a deepening relationship with the giver of true hope.

During His time on earth, Jesus modeled the importance of seeking help and guidance from the Father. Through prayer and obedience, He received all he needed to fulfill His calling. When he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, He became our source of true hope. Knowing that he would be returning to the Father in heaven, he compelled His followers to seek the Holy Spirit as *their* personal source of guidance and hope. He assured them that the Father would give the Holy Spirit to any who would ask. He opened the door for believers to communicate freely with the Spirit and receive all that they would need.

The same applies to us today. As we learn to live by the Spirit, if we spend time with Him and align our thoughts and priorities with Him, we will find all the hope we could ever need.

**Ask Yourself:**

- Where, or to whom, are you tempted to turn for assurance or comfort when everyday life gets discouraging or confusing?
- Why do you think that alternate source is appealing?
- How helpful do you think it really is?

**Pause to Pray:** Try using [Psalm 62:5-8](#) as a starting point for prayer today.

**Take a Next Step:** If you have never thought about the Holy Spirit as a person that you can interact with, spend a little time in prayer inviting Him to show you His character and then journal about the personality traits that come to mind. For example, has He demonstrated love, faithfulness, or humor?

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