

SAFE HARBOR CHRISTIAN COUNSELING LLC

PARTNERS IN HOPE. SOLUTIONS FOR LIFE.

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Erik L. Sundquist, Executive Director

“Losing hope is easy, when your only friend is gone, and every time you look around it all just seems to change...”

“Losing Hope” by songwriter Jack Johnson

“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure...”

Hebrews 6:19, The Bible, NIV

Finding Hope

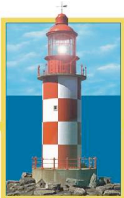
by MATTHEW S. MARGARON

Hope is an interesting concept. Hope gives us life, dreams, and a future to look forward to. And yet, we don't seem to fully grasp how much we need it, until it is gone, lost, or utterly destroyed. More often than not, our hope is stolen from us by circumstances that seem beyond our control. There are times we can claim responsibility through bad choices, but there are also instances when our hope is lost because we never saw the storm coming. Storms show up out of nowhere to wreak havoc and take everything we knew to be true. Some of our storms are represented by the cycle of domestic violence, a hurricane that steals lives and homes, or the loss of a dream, a job, or a friend. The overwhelming weight of depression, the chaos of anxiety, and the tension of marital conflict also are waves that can annihilate our hope. Famous psychologist and social developmental theorist, Erik H. Erickson explains that, *“Hope is both the earliest and the most indispensable virtue inherent in the state of being alive. If life is to be sustained hope must remain, even where confidence is wounded, trust impaired.”*

The importance of the presence of hope in our lives is undeniable. When we live devoid of hope, we live without direction, without stability, without peace. We pursue all sorts of endeavors in order to instill or restore hope. We seek out adventure, a better job, or relationships that make us feel loved, yet we remain with the acute feelings of loss, despair and instability.

The question that remains, then, is how do we regain hope when all is lost and forsaken in our lives? How is hope restored? The answer to these questions lies not in any specific set of steps defining how to regain our hope or better our lives. Truthfully, defining the restoration of hope would be minimizing the very nature of what has caused us such despair in the first place. If it was so easy to regain hope, many of us would not be searching so hard for it. The better question, then, is not how, but who can help us restore hope.

The first **WHO** is the one that the Bible describes in Hebrews 6:19 as a *“firm and secure anchor of our soul.”* When the storm comes and the sea rages, God is able to be what we cannot. He can be strong, stable, loving, and secure. He can be the anchor that holds us still.



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Placing our hope in a God, who is our anchor, does not mean that the storms will not come. It just means that He has the power to provide peace in the midst of them. God explains this to us by telling us in Isaiah 43:2 that *“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.”* The Holy God of the Bible is a loving, fierce, just, gracious, and unpredictable God that is full of surprises. He can restore hope in ways that we can't begin to predict or predetermine. God can give us hope through the loving embrace of a friend, the quiet prayers of a relative far away, or a sunset that lights up the sky in a million colors. The part we play in recognizing God in the midst of our storm is simple: slow down, look, and listen. He may be using a song we have heard a hundred times before, a book that has sat on our bedside table for months, or a picture on the wall we walk past everyday. I am often amazed at how God longs for us to recognize the hope and joy that only He can bring into our lives. In Isaiah 61:1-4, the prophet Isaiah eloquently states the truth that Jesus came to fulfill God's wish *“...to comfort those who mourn...to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”* Our God longs for us to live hope-filled lives.

The second **WHO** is actually you and I. Elie Wiesel, famous author and holocaust survivor, states: *“I have learned two lessons in my life: first, there are no sufficient literary, psychological, or historical answers to human tragedy, only moral ones. Second, just as despair can come to one another only from other human beings, hope, too, can be given to one only by other human beings.”* According to Elie Wiesel, each one of us has a great deal of power and responsibility in helping others regain hope.

There are times in our lives when we need tangible evidence from others of how hope can restore and change lives. There are times when we need more than just prayer to get us through the storms of life. We need someone to walk with us through the valley and to help us slowly climb back up the mountain. I am reminded of Sam and Frodo in that climactic scene at the end of Academy Award winning movie, *The Return of the King*. The hero Frodo has been on a journey to destroy the ring that has slowly taken away all life from him. As he climbs up to finally destroy the thing that has weighed him down for so long, he collapses. He can no longer go on. He is just too tired. Through teary eyes and strength greater than his own, Frodo's best friend Sam exclaims: *“Then let us be rid of it... once and for all! Come on, Mr. Frodo. I can't carry it for you... but I can carry you!”*

The mission of Safe Harbor Christian Counseling reads: *Partners in Hope. Solutions for Life.* We need each other. If you have lost hope, it can be restored. If your hope has been destroyed, it can be renewed. If your hope has been broken down, it can be rebuilt. At times we want so desperately to be rid of the weight that keeps us from having an everlasting hope, but we have no energy left for the fight, and no idea which direction to even turn. Even when all hope seems gone, there is a way up the mountain.



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[More Resources and quotes on Hope:](#)

Jeremiah 29:11 *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

"But if you pray in hope, all those concrete requests are merely ways of expressing your unlimited trust in Him who fulfills all His promises, who holds out for you nothing but good, and who wants nothing more than to share his goodness with you."

Henri Nouwen

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