

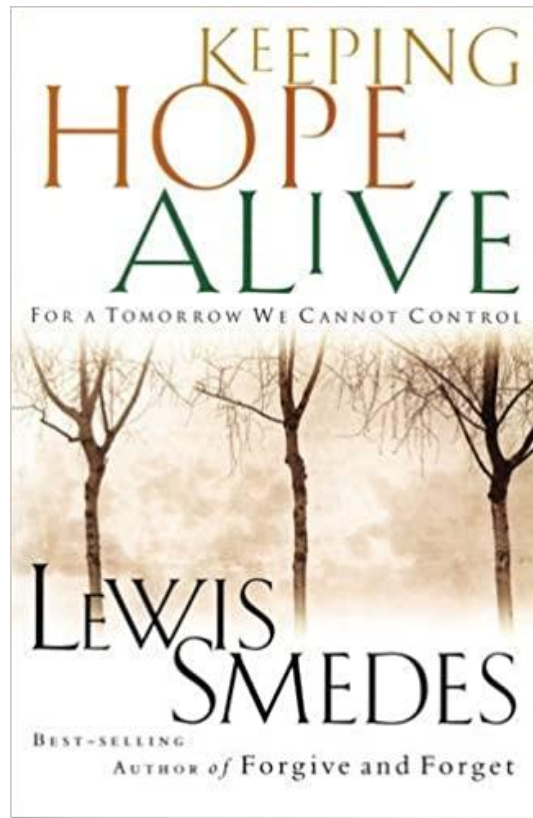
Keeping Hope Alive

Strategies Hopeful People Use

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we^[c] boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³ And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Keeping Hope Alive: For a Tomorrow We Can't Control



Available on Amazon Kindle. Also available on Scrbd



Hopeful People... Take Responsibility for their Hoping

Key Idea: Becoming a more hopeful person is up to us. Our temperament may predispose us to hope or despair, but that is not our fate. We can decide against fear and decide for hope.

This week and next we will explore some strategies that help us actively decide for hope.

Hopeful People... Adjust Old Hopes to New Realities

- ▶ Key Idea: “Life is a continued story of hope adjustment.” Things change, and some hopes die; but we do not have to give up hope altogether. With wisdom, courage, and faith we can invest our lives in new hopes.
- ▶ Can you think of a time in your life when one of your hopes died? How did you respond? How long did it take to find a new hope? What emotional work did that mean for you?

Hopeful People... Remember Good Times and Bad

- ▶ Key Idea: Hopeful people nurture memory. They remember bad things, even evil things, to nurture hope that the future will be better. They remember good things to nurture confidence in themselves, in others, and in God. To keep hope alive, we need to keep memory alive: memories of good things hoped for that were fulfilled; grateful memories of bad things we survived.
- ▶ Can you call to mind a bad thing you survived? Maybe the loss of a spouse, a challenge in your work-life, or a time when things were really hard for you. What did you learn about being resilient and hopeful in that time?

Hopeful People... Know What They Are Hoping For and Which Matter Most

- ▶ Key Idea: It's important to keep up with your hopes, rather than let them simply lie around in a pile on the floor of your heart. This is the first step to keeping hope alive: to know what we hope for and why. You have hopes for your personal life, for other people, and for the world. Some are preferences, and some are vital hopes. It's important to know what they are, why you want them, and what it will mean to you if they don't come true.

Hopeful People... Know What They Are Hoping For and Which Matter Most

- ▶ Reflection Exercise:
- ▶ Start by brainstorming the hopes you have on one side of a piece of paper. Pick up all those “hopes” lying on the floor of your heart and start taking inventory.
- ▶ After you’ve made your list, go back and start sorting through. Some hopes are preferences, and some hopes are vital. Make a note beside your hopes, which are which to you. Remember, there’s no judgment here, no “should’s”.

Hopeful People... Have a Fallback Hope

- ▶ When our vital hopes do not come true, hopeful people have a hope to fall back on. These hopes are our life supports. With fallback hopes, we're not hoping for something, as much as we're hoping in something or someone.
- ▶ Ask yourself, "If I lost all hope of keeping or getting the one thing I thought I needed to make my life worth living, would I discover that, after all, I had a good reason to keep hoping that I could still find some joy in living?"

Summing Up

- ▶ Hopeful people take responsibility for their hopes. We can decide to be more hopeful, and practice hopeful habits.
- ▶ Hopeful people are always adjusting their hopes to reality, and they live with the wisdom, courage, and faith to find to new hopes when old hopes die.
- ▶ Hopeful people are in touch with their hopes - they know what their hopes are, which ones matter most, and why.
- ▶ Hopeful people have a fallback hope - hope *in* something or someone that empowers them to keep hoping even when their most vital hopes die.

Hope is the Thing with Feathers, by Emily Dickinson

*“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -*

*And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -*

*I’ve heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.*