WEAPONIZING HOPE

EXPECTATION IS A CATALYST
FOR TRANSFORMATION

WEAPONIZING HOPE

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FOUNDATION STONE CHURCH

"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 (NKJV)

Introduction:

Hope Is Not Optional

I didn't set out to write this book because I had answers. I wrote it because I had a fight.

A real one.

Not a metaphor. Not a teaching point. A battle with cancer. A battle with fear. A battle with questions that came faster than answers and pain that came deeper than expected. But in the middle of all of it—there was something God began to whisper to me. And then He stopped whispering and started shouting.

"Hope is your weapon."

That changed everything.

I had known hope as a concept. I had preached about it. I had read Scriptures about it. But now, I needed it to live. And what I discovered—what I believe is true for you too—is that hope isn't sentimental. It's not soft. It's not optional. It's powerful. It's active. And it's the only thing the enemy can't counterfeit.

See, the devil can mimic success. He can offer counterfeit love. He can twist truth. But he cannot manufacture hope. Because hope is heaven-born. It's anchored in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and it carries with it the DNA of eternity.

And here's what I know now: every battle is really about your hope. Not just your health. Not just your relationships. The enemy comes for your hope because if he can steal that, he doesn't have to take anything else. A hopeless believer will lay down every other weapon on their own.

That's why this book is more than teaching. It's testimony. It's training. It's a war manual for weary saints and tired soldiers. It's for those who have

been through too much to settle for shallow slogans, and too far to go back now.

This book will call you up—not just emotionally, but spiritually. It will ask you to wake up, armor up, and rise up. Not in your strength, but in the living hope that dwells inside you through Christ Jesus.

We're not playing defense anymore. We're not hiding in church pews, waiting for things to get easier. We're stepping into the fight with our hope sharpened and our hearts on fire.

And the good news?

The battle's already been won. But the battlefield is where we learn how to live like it.

So, let's go.

Let's awaken hope. Let's wield it like a sword. Let's stare fear in the face and say, "You don't get the final word."

This isn't just a message.

This is a movement.

And it starts with hope.

Chapter 1

The Urgency of Engagement

It is time. It is time for us as believers to begin to aggressively engage in spiritual warfare. Not in the way we have always been taught to, but in our minds, with a newly refurbished weapon, **hope!**

When I wrote the first three words, I meant for them to sound like a trumpet blast in your spirit. *It is time.* Those words are a call to arms. A holy alarm clock going off in the spirit.

This is time—we are in a season.

Not just metaphorically. Not just emotionally. We are *in a real season*, one that is demanding more

of us than the last season. There's a spiritual transition happening, not just around us, but *in us*. The natural world may mark seasons with dates and weather, but spiritual seasons are marked by intensity, warfare, and invitation. And we are in one right now. One that I suspect will last for decades.

It is important we understand that if we sit back and allow things to happen around us *without* actively engaging in warfare against the enemy and learning specific tactics and strategies on how to engage in warfare properly we will become irrelevant and obsolete quickly.

We will lose ground. We as Christians and the body of Christ in general cannot afford to lose any more ground!

I'm not trying to scare you. I'm trying to *wake you up*. If we sit on our hands—if we remain silent, distracted, or untrained—the enemy isn't going to wait. He's not idle. He's not polite. And if we don't step onto the battlefield with clarity and preparation, we're going to get overrun. Not because we were weak—but because we never *showed up*.

This isn't just about our personal lives. Yes, spiritual warfare impacts your marriage, your

health, your finances. But it also impacts *your city*, *your church*, *your generation*. If we're unprepared, we're not just hurting ourselves—we're handing over spiritual territory we were meant to occupy and protect.

Not only do we need hope to infiltrate our lives, our circumstances, and our battles, the world around us needs it too.

I believe that with every fiber of my being. I can't afford to live with a faith that's only inward-facing. This world is starved of truth. Starved of peace. Starved of hope. And it's not going to come from the White House or Wall Street. It's going to come from *us*. From believers filled with the Holy Spirit, trained in warfare, and living with resurrection hope.

They need a new hope that they haven't had before. The hope that we have is in us. This part? It breaks me. The world isn't just looking for a better version of itself—it's looking for *something new*. And that "new thing" isn't a policy or a product—it's *a person*. His name is Jesus. And He lives *in me*. In *you*. And if the world is going to see Him, it's going to be through *us*.

It's the Jesus that's in us that can give hope to the world. This is where the Gospel comes alive for me—not as an abstract doctrine, but as a burning reality. Christ *in* me, that's the hope of glory. And that hope isn't just for my personal encouragement—it's meant to *flow through me* like a river, touching every dry place around me.

People don't need another sermon. They need to *see* something real. They need to watch us *live* the Gospel. They need to see us endure suffering without bitterness, serve without expecting applause, and speak with faith when fear is all around. We're not called to be perfect—we're called to *demonstrate hope* in how we live.

The enemy is out to rob, kill, steal, and destroy. You know this verse. But do you *believe* it? Because it's not poetic language—it's *battlefield intelligence*. The devil is ruthless. Strategic. Focused. He's not out to make you uncomfortable—he's out to *destroy you*. To rob you of joy. To steal your clarity. To kill your purpose. And if we're not fighting back, we're already losing.

In fact, that's the only thing he does. And he lies to you and tells you that it's about other things. This

is one of the enemy's best tactics—distraction. He'll convince you that your battle is against your boss, your spouse, your body, your bank account. And while you're shadowboxing those things, he's sneaking in through the back door. The real war is always *spiritual*. Don't fall for the smoke screen.

Spiritual warfare is not a ministry for the elite. It is the *mandate of every believer*. Yes, we're in a war. Yes, it's urgent. Yes, we need strategy. But above all that—we need *hope*. Hope is the engine that keeps faith moving. Hope is the heartbeat of every battle plan. The enemy has tried to bury it. Tried to exhaust it. Tried to choke it with fear and fatigue but I know it's still in you, and we're waking it up.

Today, I choose to engage, to get back in the fight. I choose to *awaken the hope within me*. If I can, so can you. Pick up your weapon and fight with a hope that cannot be shaken.

Chapter 2
Recognizing the Enemy's Schemes

The enemy is attacking the body of Christ.

That's not just something I say to sound spiritual or stir emotion. It's real. Tangible. The things and people we pray for isn't just a list —it's a battlefield map. Each name is a story. A soul under siege. Every request we receive is like a flare—shot into the night sky—signaling spiritual distress. These aren't isolated problems.

This is *coordinated warfare*.

We cannot sit back and be passive.

The enemy isn't polite. He's not waiting for an invitation. He's already at work—crafty, hidden, and strategic. And we can't afford to treat this like a distant issue. Passivity right now is *exposure*. If we're neutral, we're vulnerable. If we're unengaged, we're outmatched.

We must be aggressive, and we must take our spiritual warfare seriously.

This isn't hype or performative spirituality. I am talking about a complete shift in heart posture. We can't be casual believers in a time of cosmic confrontation. This is a call to battle-readiness. And this applies to every one of us. Not just intercessors or pastors. *Every believer*. We don't get to opt out.

I recently got a phone call from my son. I'm not going to share all the details—but he was being bullied and threatened by people who were supposed to have his back and support him.

This hit home. It's not a case study—it's *my son*. This isn't happening in some distant country or closed regime. This is *here*. This is happening in our schools, our universities, our culture. The battle has

found its way into the very spaces where our children learn.

This issue he is facing isn't just agree to disagree. It's not, healthy dialogue, in the name of discovery. It's intimidation. It's coercion. The spirit behind it is malicious. Designed to silence him and his beliefs. To shame him. To make him question whether he belongs. I felt the weight of it as a father—but I also recognized it as spiritual warfare.

He's holding on—not to a court appeal, not to cultural validation—but to the Lord. And that kind of hope? That's what the enemy can't shake.

Yes, there are people standing with him. But I've never felt more convinced: *the enemy is not playing games*. He's methodical. Ruthless. He's not only attacking from the outside—he's infiltrating systems and twisting them from within.

This isn't just persecution. It's *targeted resistance* against kingdom thinking. A culture that rewards conformity and punishes conviction. The academic space became a battlefield—and my son was standing in the front line.

It's a total threat.
He's not just attacking your body.
He's not just bringing disease and sickness and threatening you with that.

He's trying to steal your future. Your dreams. The thing that you expect. The things that you're sowing your life into. Things that you know the Lord has asked you to do.

That's what makes this war so dangerous. It's not just physical. It's prophetic. It's generational. The enemy wants to hijack your destiny—cut it off at the roots before it can bear fruit. He wants to steal what hasn't even fully manifested yet.

And we cannot allow that to happen in the lives of believers.

Hope says, we don't roll over. We don't retreat. We stand our ground—and we *refuse* to let the enemy write the final word over our children, our churches, our calling.

And then we move and we demonstrate that reality in our lives. And when we do it—it's a model and a reflection to the world out there of what life

really is supposed to be like—*being more than an overcomer.*

People are watching. Not to see if we're perfect—but to see if we're *persevering*. Every time we choose faith over fear, every time we speak truth in love, we become living proof that victory is possible. We don't just talk about overcoming. We *live it out*.

And we are more than overcomers.

That's not just a catchy phrase I throw around. That's truth. I *believe* it. I *live* it. Even when I don't feel like it—especially when I don't. No one, including me, is exempt from the weight of stress and uncertainty. I bleed, too. I break, too. There are nights when the silence is deafening. When the questions pile up. When it feels like too much.

We are *not alone*. That's what comforts me. That's what humbles me. This isn't just my fight—it's *ours*. And as hard as it is, I know this: *we were made for this*. Not because we're strong, but because Christ in us *is*.

That doesn't dictate my response, action, and attitude to how I'm going to live and walk my life.

Circumstances don't define my conduct. They don't get to write my headline. They don't determine how I show up in the world. That's a circumstance. And circumstances do not determine my joy, my hope, my faith.

Faith doesn't happen by accident. Joy isn't automatic. Hope doesn't maintain itself. I have to *choose*—over and over again—to stand in those realities. Especially when I don't feel them.

Because if you don't—and you aren't intentional—it will overwhelm you.

That's the truth. You stop fighting, you start sinking. This world doesn't make room for passivity. We have to be vigilant—or we'll be swept away.

But we do not have to be overwhelmed—because *greater is He who is in me than he that is in the world.*

That is my war cry. That is my anchor.

And those are things we have to tell ourselves *every day*. You don't wait for someone else to speak it over you. You *declare it yourself*. Every morning. Every setback. Every doctor's appointment. Every

attack. You speak the Word over your own heart, daily. This is where faith becomes fire-tested. Where Scripture goes from memory verse to battle weapon. Where Sunday school truth becomes *Monday morning survival*. And where *hope*, sharpened through trial, becomes your sword.

Chapter 3
Faith, Hope, and Love—the Triad of Victory

Hope, for me, is not just theology. It's survival. It's not a decorative virtue we hang on the wall of our Christian lives; it's a weapon I've had to wield in the darkest of nights. And I believe—now more than ever—we've got to learn how to fight with it.

Scripture tells us there are three things that remain: faith, hope, and love, and then of course we know the rest of the saying… the greatest of these is love.

Yes, love is the crown jewel. It's the heartbeat of God. But what I've noticed—and maybe you have too—is that when we read this verse from 1 Corinthians 13, we nod at "love" and almost forget the other two. *Faith* and *hope* are not decorative; they are foundational. They're not spiritual accessories—we need them like we need breath in our lungs.

We tend to forget these are the top three actions of the believer: faith, hope, and love.

That phrase "top three" might sound casual, but I think it's worth sitting with. These aren't just qualities—they're *kingdom essentials*. And yet, how often do we act like hope is optional? How often do we treat faith as something we muster only when circumstances get dire? It's time we change that. It's time we remember that heaven has placed a high value on all three – not just love.

I've learned that you can't put all the weight on love and neglect faith and hope. They don't compete—they *complement*. They uphold one another. Love needs the scaffolding of faith and hope to stand tall when trials come. And when you

weaponize hope, you're not abandoning love—you're protecting it.

Hope is not more important than faith or love, but it's often misunderstood and underdeveloped. Hope is not optimism. It's not wishful thinking. Hope is anchored. It's rooted in the resurrection power. It's aggressive, resilient, and forward-facing. And when we learn how to weaponize it, hope becomes a force that transforms how we live, how we think, and how we fight.

Consider this, "And now *abide*, faith, hope, and love…" we need these three factors to pull through.

That word *abide* matters. It means to remain, to dwell, to take up residence. These three are *abiding forces*. They don't fade with time or circumstance. When everything else is shaken, these three hold. When the world changes, when the diagnosis comes, when the doors close, when the pain feels unbearable—faith, hope, and love abide.

There's personal responsibility in this. I'm not just writing to you —I'm talking to myself. If I don't *cultivate* these things—if I don't water them, tend them, protect them—they won't flourish. You don't

stumble into a life of supernatural endurance. You *build* it. With time. With truth. With training. It's not enough to mentally rehearse these ideas. These are things that have to be actualized in your life.

You can memorize verses about hope and still live in despair. You can quote Scripture and still walk in defeat. Actualizing these truths means we put them into practice. We apply them. We test them in the fire. We don't just nod our heads—we shape our lives around them.

Sometimes, the pain and suffering that comes to you is designed to equip you and build faith, hope, and love in you.

This is where it gets interesting. Pain and suffering are not welcomed guests, but they are skilled teachers. I didn't ask for this battle with cancer. I didn't want the tears, the sleepless nights, the doctors' visits. But I can say, with trembling conviction, that these trials have pushed me deeper into the reality of faith, hope, and love.

Let's be honest, when things are good, we aren't as vigilant as we should be. When life is comfortable, we tend to coast. We loosen the armor. We skip

the training. But trials force us to wake up. They remind us we're in a war—and that we've been given weapons that *work*.

I'm not saying the enemy or the Lord causes your trials. I am saying the scripture is true when it says: "He works all things for good to those that love him and are called according to his purpose."

This is where trust becomes everything. I don't believe God is the author of evil, but I *do* believe He is the master of redemption. Nothing is wasted—not a tear, not a diagnosis, not a disappointment. He takes the enemy's best weapons and turns them into training tools for us.

While He may not be the author of them, He knows how to use them to make us better. I've seen it. I've lived it. In the fire, God is not absent. He's refining. He's adjusting things that comfort never could. He's changing how I see, how I pray, how I lead. The pain isn't the point—but it has a purpose.

Part of that is adjusting our mindset. True repentance is about the changing our mindset, the way we think, the way we prioritize things, the way we categorize things in our lives.

Real transformation doesn't start with changed behavior—it starts with changed thinking. Repentance isn't just sorrow—it's a shift. A shift in how I see myself, how I see God, how I see the battle. If my mind changes, everything else follows.

That is so important. And when the enemy comes in like a flood, we know the scripture tells us that the Lord raises up a standard against him.

Yes. This is warfare language. When the enemy rushes in—when fear overwhelms, when lies scream louder than truth—the Lord doesn't leave us exposed. He raises a *standard*, a defense, a line the enemy cannot cross. And that standard is often *within us*—faith, hope, and love rising up in the middle of chaos.

And while that standard is there and He's raising up that standard against him, we're behind that standard being defended by the Lord.

I picture this vividly. God standing as a shield, Jesus interceding, and the Holy Spirit surrounding. The Lord Himself becomes my defense. Not because I'm strong, but because I'm *His*. I'm behind the standard. I'm covered.

I have a feeling, and a mental picture in my mind that He's looking back, He's got the standard protecting us against the floods of the enemy. But His look says are you ready yet?

That mental picture haunts me—in a holy way. It's as if God is saying, *"I've got you covered. But I'm calling you forward too."* There comes a moment when we're not just protected—we're *summoned*. We're called to readiness, to maturity, to action.

What I believe He's waiting for in this imaginary picture in my head is for us to get our minds right. To transform our thinking, to transform our understanding, to come into different knowledge that we most likely wouldn't accept prior to the attack.

God doesn't waste battles. He uses it to upgrade our thinking. To deepen our faith. To awaken our hope. Recognize the moment. Recognize the opportunity hidden in the opposition. When we understand what the battle is producing in us, we stop asking, *"Why me?"* and start asking, *"What are You forming in me?"* That's where real transformation begins and hope begins to win!

Chapter 4
The Cost of Deferring Hope

"Hope deferred makes the heart sick." (Proverbs 13:12)

This verse has carried weight in my life, especially in recent years. I've read it before. I've taught on it. But it didn't fully come alive in my spirit until I had to *live* it—until hope became something I had to fight for, not just talk about.

Hope deferred makes the heart sick.

I want to slow that down and let it sink in. This

is more than poetic language. Solomon wasn't being abstract—he was diagnosing something *very*

real. When hope is delayed, postponed, shelved, or silenced, it does something inside of you. It affects your soul. Your inner person. It can *make you sick*.

Hope isn't just something that comes and goes based on life's circumstances. It's something we *steward*. We either activate it—or we defer it. And when we defer it, when we put it off for later, when we say, "I'll trust God *after* this season," or "I'll start hoping again when things settle down," we start a slow decline in our soul that eventually makes the heart sick. We have the option to defer it. In other words, draw it out. Wait for later, you know, do it another time.

And listen, I've done this. I've felt it. I've told myself, "I'll believe again when I'm stronger." I've put dreams on the shelf because they felt too painful to pursue. But what I didn't realize was this: I wasn't just putting hope on pause—I was letting my heart grow weary. I was giving sickness permission to settle in.

Hope is heaven's currency. It's what gives value and momentum to your steps. When you spend it—when you live from it—it multiplies. But when you stash it away like spiritual pocket change, it loses its

power to move you. In other words, you are abdicating your authority and power.

Every time I choose to postpone hope, I am surrendering territory I've been given to steward. I'm abdicating my God-given role—not just as a believer, but as a *warrior*. And you cannot live victoriously if you keep laying down your weapons.

Think about it, in any war, any battle, the moment a force abandons its post, the enemy doesn't hesitate. He moves in. He occupies what was neglected. The same is true in the spiritual realm.

Victory doesn't start on the battlefield—it starts in the barracks. In the discipline. In the repetition. In the resolve to *train* even when it's hard, boring, or painful.

I heard something recently that really stuck out. Somebody said to me, *trying hard is not the same as training.*

That phrase hit my spirit like a lightning bolt. I sat with it for days. Because I've "tried hard" so many times. I've gritted my teeth. I've muscled through. But trying doesn't build endurance—*training* does.

And that immediately went straight to my spirit because I believe many Christians have settled for trying hard. We've been conditioned to believe that if we just "give it our best shot," that's enough. But the spiritual life isn't about bursts of effort—it's about *habits of obedience*. Many believers are spiritually exhausted not because they lack sincerity, but because they've never trained.

There are many, I believe, many Christians who have settled for trying hard, and what we need to be doing is training. What we need to be doing is submitting ourselves to teaching, to instructions—not just trying hard. Trying hard is not enough. We have to be disciplined and we have to train, which means showing up when you don't feel like it. It means showing up when you feel weak, when you feel tired. It means showing up and engaging when there's other things you would rather be doing.

That's the grind. That's the gym of the soul. That's where faith becomes visible—in our *yes* when it would be easier to offer excuses.

When the enemy attacks your mind and you feel weak and discouraged, show up anyways. Show up and engage with the word of God. That's

faith. Faith is demonstrated when we do what we don't naturally feel like doing.

It's not flashy. It's not always loud. But it's one of the most powerful spiritual forces on earth. Because when you show up, even when everything in you says "stay down," heaven stands up with you.

We are walking by faith and not by sight. Faith is practical. It's very, very practical.

I think we often over-spiritualize it. We think walking by faith is mystical or mysterious. But really—it's profoundly *practical*. It's showing up. It's praying when you're tired. It's forgiving when you'd rather be bitter. It's speaking hope when all you feel is fear.

If you've ever wondered, "Well, what is it like to walk by faith and not by sight?" Let me tell you. It means doing what you don't feel like doing.

When do you need to demonstrate faith most? When you feel tired, when you feel sick, when you feel attacked, when you feel condemned, when you feel guilty, when you feel all these things—it's standing up and saying, *"Nevertheless, I trust God."*

I've had to say that with tears in my eyes. I've had to say it while looking at medical charts and praying for strength I didn't have. But *nevertheless* has become one of the most powerful declarations in my life.

I've got disease in my body.

Nevertheless, I will trust in my Lord.

Because this is not my inheritance. This is not my destiny. This is not what the Lord has promised me, and I will stand and fight for this reality because greater is He who is in me than he that is in the world.

And listen—when the enemy comes against your finances, your marriage, your children, and the relationships that you're in—it's our responsibility to stand and say, *"Nevertheless."*

It's the David mindset! When you read through the book of Psalms, you see that despite what David was going through at the time, despite his trials, the attacks of his enemies, he sincerely lamented, *but then* he would say, *"But God"* or *"Nevertheless"* or *"Yet God."* Or something along those lines, and we know exactly what he meant!

We have to get to that place.

Now, I want to tell you, we rarely can get to that place in our lives unless we have gone through the *training*.

Yeah. If you've lived a Christian life where you thought it was all right and enough just to try hard—you're wrong. Trying hard is not enough.

We have to train.

We've got to put in the hours. You've got to develop discipline. You've got to do the things you think you can't do.

This is what we do here at Foundation Stone. This is part of our culture. It's not a branding strategy or a ministry slogan—it's a deeply held *conviction*. We don't build spectators here. We don't just stir emotions or hype people up for a moment of inspiration. We train disciples. We raise up warriors.

This is why we have the heritage that we have. Because we have always believed that, and we will always preach that.

It's in our DNA. Faith is not just taught—it's caught. It's transferred through living examples.

Through men and women who don't flinch when life hits, who stay rooted when storms come, who *hope* even when the odds are stacked.

And we will always provide resources to ensure God's people are equipped, encouraged, and have companions to stand beside them.

That word—*companions*—means everything to me right now. Because even the strongest warrior can't fight alone forever. We need one another. I need *you*. You need *me*. We are not a collection of individuals—we're a *family on mission*.

Right, but I've got friends—that's right. And I've got companions. And I've got soldiers who will hold me up, help me, encourage me, prophesy to me, and edify me.

God *never* intended for our faithfulness to reach a finish line here. We're not retiring into spiritual nostalgia. We're rising into a *greater glory*. We're going to go on to bigger and better, the glory of the latter house will be greater than the former house. That's not just a poetic phrase. That's a *promise*. It's from Haggai 2:9, and it's alive for us today. We're walking into a new season. But hear me clearly: we

won't walk into it without *hope*. There's a destiny and a purpose out there for us. That's why I get so passionate when I talk about hope. Because the journey ahead is too important to limp toward it in discouragement. *We need holy expectation.* Without hope, we stall out. With it, we move.

I've heard it said a lot—it's kind of a cliché thing—people say, *"Hope isn't a strategy."* I get what they're saying. And I understand what they mean. But they're not really understanding *hope*.

They're misunderstanding its nature. Hope isn't a passive emotion—it's a *spiritual weapon*. It's not a fallback plan or a positive attitude. It's the raw fuel of forward movement.

There is a clear difference between hope and Pollyanna, or OPT, or extreme optimism. Hope is not pretending that nothing's wrong. It's not ignoring facts or denying difficulty. Hope *acknowledges reality*—but refuses to be limited by it. Many people think, *Well, hope is just having an optimistic outlook.* That is not true. You *cannot* have victory if you don't have hope because hope is where it begins. That's what I've learned. In my fight for healing. In my nights of weeping. In my moments of weakness.

Victory doesn't begin with strength—it begins with *hope*. With the belief that *something better is possible*—and that God is faithful to perform what He promised.

Hope is the foundation of success; no one plans for something they don't think will happen. Hope pulls the future into focus. It builds the blueprint. It forms the scaffolding of every strategy. You don't fight for what you don't believe in. If you find yourself needing to be constantly motivated, or wondering *why life has become so hard for so long,* my question is: Where is your hope?

If you constantly feel beat down, rejected and dejected, I will encourage you to practice hope the way the scriptures teaches us to. Maybe you've confused hope with optimism, but it's not the same thing. Hope is the threshold, without hope you cannot be transformed. This is not just spiritual theory—it's the pattern of Scripture. Abraham hoped *against hope*. David *hoped in the Lord*. Paul said hope is the anchor of our soul. You *cannot* walk into your calling without it. That's why we're constantly encouraged to renew our hope and to think on certain

things because the enemy actively tries to steal your hope.

Do not let the enemy steal your hope.

When we have hope, we have *plans*.

When we have hope, we can *strategize*.

When we have hope, we look forward to better circumstances.

When we have hope, we believe in God's timing and deliverance.

And this hope is perfected through the power of the Holy Spirit. As soon as we open our gates to Him, He becomes part of us, He fills us and renews us. He equips us to become agents of transformation. But it's *not possible* without hope. Hope deferred makes the heart sick. And a sick heart is vulnerable to depression, disappointment, and disenchantment.

Stir up your hope. You can't engage in spiritual warfare without hope, you can't trust God's process and timing without hope. Stir up your hope!

"And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance. And perseverance, character. And character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in your hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (Romans 5:3-5)

Hope does *not* disappoint. Why does hope never disappoint you? Because our hope is on Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for you. He *Kicked death in the butt*. Walked out of the grave through an earthquake and thundering—that pushed away stones that couldn't be rolled by human hands. He stood up from His deathbed, commanded the earth to move, and He walked out of that grave! That is the foundation of our hope. Our hope is greater than death.

Chapter 5
The Path of Hope—From Trial to Testimony

Now, that's an unusual thing to say because I don't particularly care for or like glorying in my tribulations.

Let me be real with you. I don't wake up excited about trials. I don't put hardship on my prayer list and ask for more. Like most people, I'd prefer ease over adversity. I'd rather be healthy, prosperous, and walking through doors that swing wide without resistance. But that's not always how the journey of faith goes.

But we can do that—we *can* glory in our tribulations—because we know the end.

And we know the end is better than the beginning.

That's the key. That's the hope anchor. I know how this ends. I know the One who holds the finish line. And even if I don't understand all the curves and valleys in between, I trust that His Word is true—that He who began a good work in me *will* complete it. That's how I endure. That's how I find strength when I'm weak because I've seen too much to turn back now.

Small. Yes, the beginning may be small.

It may be painful. You may feel overlooked, underdeveloped, or like everything's moving slower than it should. But don't despise small beginnings because the Lord rejoices to see the work begin (Zechariah 4:10).

And when you hold that reality—when you really *know* the end is better than the beginning—then whatever comes at you, you know, is only the formation of the Lord. Making you bigger, better, stronger, and faster.

It's all part of the formation process. The pressure. The

testing. The breaking. It's not punishment—it's preparation. He's stretching your spiritual capacity. He's enlarging your soul. He's refining what's eternal in you. And when I think about this kind of transformation, my mind goes straight to something that inspired me as a boy…

Remember the '70s show with Lee Majors? *The Six Million Dollar Man.* I love that show. I still watch YouTube reruns of it.

There's something about it that still resonates with me. I think it's because it speaks to this deep part of me that believes—even after being broken—I can be rebuilt. I remember how much I loved it as a kid, I wanted to be the Bionic Man.

Not just stronger, but *rebuilt*—enhanced. Transformed. That line from the opening credits is etched in my brain. Remember it?

You know, at the beginning, in the opening credits, Oscar— the guy who rebuilds him and has

all the money for all the tech—is like, *"We can rebuild him. He was an ace pilot, crash, left for dead… but we can rebuild him."*

And I think the Holy Spirit is telling us the same thing: *"I can rebuild you."* That's the voice I hear deep in my spirit when I want to give up. When pain sits heavy. When prayers go unanswered. The Spirit whispers, "I'm not done with you. You're not a pile of broken parts. You're being rebuilt."

Do not let your pain, grief, sorrow, disappointment, disease—whatever it is, steal your hope.

Don't give it that power. Don't give your pain the pen to write your story. Because the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives in *you*. And that Spirit isn't dormant. He's not discouraged. He's alive and active and *rebuilding*.

Because the Holy Spirit—the God who walked out of the grave—is greater. *Greater is He who is in you than he that is in the world.*

He can…

He does…

And He *will* rebuild you.

Hope—or without hope—tribulations are just that. *Tribulations.*

And they'll crush you. They'll feel pointless. They'll start to define your identity if you don't have hope.

But this is the awesome part—*hope* has the incredible power to transform tribulations into something victorious. Only the Spirit of God can do that. He can take the very thing that tried to destroy you and turn it into the tool that *refines* you.

In fact, Paul describes for us here in his letter to the Romans the exact process. When we have hope, *tribulations produce perseverance.*

And perseverance is what we need to keep going day after day, year in and year out.

I've been praying for relief for two years on my part. It's not easy. Some days I don't have the words. But I keep showing up. Because I know I'm not alone.

I mean—*listen!* It is perseverance, right?

Perseverance doesn't sound glamorous. It doesn't get a lot of applause. But it's what heaven

celebrates. The ones who *stay*. The ones who *keep standing*. Our badge of honor is earned through perseverance. And we don't do it because of any other reason than—we have a *hope*.

That's it. That's the fuel. That's the reason we don't quit.

We have a hope.

And this hope has to *drive us*. *Encourage us*. We have to *allow it*—through the Holy Spirit—to transform and change us. We may not have the perfect words for prayer, but we have hope. With hope, no matter the trial or how long the tribulation, we hold the winning card. We fight from victory.

Perseverance anchored on hope produces character, and character produces stability. Listen, the world needs people with *stability*. Not flaky. Not up one day, down the next. But people who've been *anchored* by hope—who've walked through storms and didn't fold. This character and stability forged in fire, inspires hope in others.

Chapter 6

Always Ready to Give an Answer

I love the words in *1 Peter 3:15*. It says:

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."

Every time I read that verse, I feel something stir in me. Something bold. Something convicting. Because this isn't a suggestion—it's a command. And it's not just for pastors or evangelists. It's for *every believer*. This is Peter telling the Church: *Sanc-*

tify Him. Be ready. Carry your hope like a visible banner—one that demands a question from those watching your life.

The verse isn't saying, "Be ready to debate theology," although that can be part of it. It says to be ready to give a defense—an explanation, a testimony, a witness—for the *hope* that is in you. That means your life should cause people to *ask*.

To the people around you… *see hope on your face*.

That line hits me hard. Because if hope really is alive in me—if I claim it, if I preach it—then surely it should show up *on my face*. In my eyes. In my tone. In my posture. People shouldn't have to guess what I believe. My countenance should tell them before my words ever do.

You read this Scripture—or at least I read this Scripture—and feel convicted by the Holy Spirit.

Every single time.

Because Peter's telling us something plain and unavoidable: the world should notice that we're different. Not just because we quote Scripture. Not

just because we go to church. But because we radiate *hope* in a way that *confounds expectations*.

Peter's telling us that the people out there should be recognizing you are different.

And what makes you different *is your hope*. The hope that you carry.

That's the difference-maker. Hope.

Not how gifted you are.

Not how many Bible verses you've memorized.

Not even how much theology you've studied.

It's the *hope* that sets you apart. And I don't mean hope as a vague feeling. I mean a real, anchored, living hope. A hope that's been tested in fire and still shines. Hope is supposed to be *observable*—by our actions, and by our *countenance*.

That's such a vital distinction. You can't fake it. You can't put on a smile and call it faith. This isn't about pretending life doesn't hurt. This is about exuding something *supernatural*—even in the middle of suffering.

I'm not talking about denying reality.

No. Absolutely not. Let me say it again—*hope is not denial*.

You can acknowledge and recognize that you are in a battle and *still* have hope.

And that's important. That's the power of our testimony. We don't sugarcoat the battle. We just don't *let the battle define us*. We stare pain in the face and still say, "God is faithful."

And when we do that—I promise you—that's *supernatural*. It's unusual. Or to use the words of the New Testament writer, it's *peculiar*.

We are a peculiar people. Set apart. Not because we have no troubles, but because our troubles don't steal our joy. Because our pain doesn't erase our praise.

What makes it peculiar is the fact that I can be going through whatever it is I am going through, and *still* walk around with a countenance that exudes *hope*.

That's not natural. That's not flesh. That's not personality type.

That's *Holy Spirit power*. It's supernatural, it's attractive, and we *need* the people out there to see it and embrace it. We don't need to be known for our complaints. We don't need to be recognized for how discouraged we are. The world is already full of hopelessness. What it's looking for—*what it's desperate for*—is people who've been through the fire and still have *hope in their eyes*.

Hope is observable. I want to ask you, *is your hope observable?* When you walk into a room, does the atmosphere shift? When people encounter you in the hospital waiting room, or the grocery store, or at work—can they *see* that there's something different?

Does your hope walk ahead of your words?

If it doesn't, we've got work to do. And that's okay.

Because the good news is we *can* grow in this. We can rehearse hope. We can train in it. We can choose, day by day, to lean into the Spirit and cultivate a countenance that radiates the resurrection power of Christ.

So, I'm inviting you, just like I invite myself: Let's get to work.

Let's train our hearts to hope.

Let's make our lives *an answer* to the world's unspoken question: *"How are you still standing?"*

And we'll respond—not with pride, not with performance—but with *Jesus*. *Christ in me… the hope of glory.*

Chapter 7

Four Ways to Weaponize Hope

There comes a point in your journey—especially if you've walked through fire—where you realize that *hope isn't just an anchor*. It's a weapon.

It's not just a source of comfort; it's a tool for combat. And if we're going to survive and thrive in this spiritual battle we're in, we can't just admire hope from a distance—we must wield it.

I will share four ways I've learned to *weaponize hope*. I'm not speaking theory. These gems were formed from the fire of my battle, my own diagnosis, my own testing ground.

1. Focus on the Resurrection

Focus on the resurrection. This is the big picture.

This is where it all begins. You've got to lift your eyes above the pain, above the present, and look toward the greatest victory in history: the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That single act—His rising from the dead—is what gives *life* to our hope.

You know, Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:3 that we are *born again to a living hope* through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

That phrase—*living hope*—means something to me. It's not stale. It's not conceptual. It's alive. It moves inside me. It breathes courage into me when the prognosis doesn't change, when the nights are long, when the answers aren't clear.

You know, as Christians, we think our ultimate goal is to have those words said to us at the final day:

"Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into my rest."

And yes, that's what we long to hear. We think, "I'll get to paradise. Heaven. No more pain."

And then we wonder… *what am I going to do there forever?*

You know, this concerns some people.

"I can't do a forever-long worship service."

"I'm going to need to get a drink… I'm going to need to go to the bathroom…"

Some of us picture heaven and it makes us nervous, right?

We imagine cherubs—the fat baby on the cloud—floating around with harps. Endless clouds and choirs. A pain-free life, yes. A worry-free life, sure. But… is that it?

That may sound good, but that's not the ultimate goal. The apostles and the early saints never talked about heaven like it was the end of the story.

Their hope was never heaven.

Let that sink in. Their hope was the *resurrection*. Not just Christ's—but *ours*. A physical, full restora-

tion. A *return* to what God intended from the beginning—not disembodied spirits floating in the sky, but reigning with Christ in a *new earth*.

There's something after heaven called the resurrection. And they put their hope in a resurrection. And they talked about a resurrection. And coming back to this earth in a New Jerusalem, in a new city, and *having dominion* over that city the way God hoped would happen according to His original intent in the Garden of Eden.

Our call has *always* been—from the foundation of the earth to now, all the way to the New Jerusalem—to have *dominion*. To take *authority*.

Take authority over every disease. Every sickness. Every impure thought. Every unclean thing. Every mental attack.

This authority is our right, our inheritance as co-heirs, and our destiny.

So the first thing we need to do in weaponizing hope is to *focus on the resurrection* and know—*I will come back*.

This isn't the end. Whatever the battle is—cancer, depression, betrayal, loss—it's not the end of my story.

And maybe I'm letting my imagination run wild here, but… Remember *Ghostbusters*? The first one?

When they had that little slime monster in the hotel? And Bill Murray and his team—doors fly open—they walk out with their proton packs, all slimed and proud, and they say: *"We came, we saw…"* (and, well, you know the rest).

And that's our inheritance. That's what Jesus did when He walked out of the grave.

He came. He saw. He conquered.

And the same Spirit that raised Christ Jesus from the dead—that *same Spirit* lives and moves in *you*.

That Spirit gives me the ability, in my DNA as a born-again believer, to *go through hell and come out of it*. Not broken. Not bitter. But *resurrected*.

On the other side. *Past the stone.* I came… I saw… I conquered.

I can picture Jesus walking out of the tomb with that Bill Murray grin, saying, "Death? I beat it. Now let's go."

And He now *lives forever*. Reigning and ruling at the right hand of the Father, *making intercession* for us—for *you*—so that we can have the power, and the strength, and the capacity to move on.

That's hope. That's the first weapon. You focus on the resurrection.

2. Rehearse God's Faithfulness

Rehearse God's faithfulness. I don't mean "remember." I mean *rehearse*.

There's a big difference between recalling and rehearsing. I had a whole teaching lined up on it, but let me just say this: *rehearsing* involves *action*. Movement. Repetition. Intention.

Just think about the act of rehearsal.

Why do we rehearse?

To get something so deeply ingrained in us that, when the moment comes, it's *automatic*. It's *instinct*. It's *formed in us*.

Let's take it into the world of performance. Think of an actor preparing for a stage play. The actor doesn't sit quietly and just *think* about what they'll say on stage. They don't just imagine the spotlight or the costume or the lines.

They *rehearse*. They put on the costume. They hit their cues. They *walk it out*.

And how often do they do that? *Every day.* Multiple times a day. Rehearsing, rehearsing, and rehearsing. Why? Because when the real moment comes—they don't want to *think*. They want to *know*. They want to flow.

And the same is true for us.

We *have* to rehearse our hope. Every day. You *stand*. You *declare*. You *confess*. You *pray*. You *read your Word*.

You rehearse every day—because it needs to be *automatic*. Because when the enemy comes rushing like a flood, and the emotions rise, and the fear

whispers—you don't have time to figure it out. You need truth to rise up from within you like a song you've rehearsed a thousand times.

Because if you haven't rehearsed—you'll fall.

You're going to embarrass yourself.

You're going to freeze.

You're going to believe the lie instead of the truth.

We can't just *recall* what God's done.

We have to *rehearse* it.

We have to *walk it out*.

3. Sincerely Lament—and Then Praise

This might sound strange to you, but I mean it—

sincerely lament, and then praise.

It's something I've said from day one of my own battle. I'm not in denial about what's going on.

My hope, the encouragement I offer, the transformation I'm experiencing—it's not fake. It's not fluffy. It's forged in reality.

I've mentioned this before—even my own doctors have said, *"Hey… can we send patients to you?"*

They say, *"We haven't seen anybody deal with this like you are."*

And I just smile and think, *You don't know the power of the One who lives in me.*

Because I know it's serious. And I'll tell you—Angie and I, we *lament*. We don't sugarcoat it. We don't pretend. And I'm not in denial about it. And that's okay. In fact, there's an entire book in the Bible called *Lamentations*. It's not a lack of faith—and it is not a lack of hope—to lament. To recognize the condition that you are *truly* in. But here's what I've seen in Scripture over and over again: Almost every biblical lament eventually turns the corner. It begins with pain and ends with praise.

A lamentation—a cry of desperation, of loss—suddenly becomes: *"But I will still praise the Lord."* It doesn't matter what's going on around me. The la-

ment is here—real, raw—but the *praise* is what restores me. I wrote down a statement once, and I think it's incredibly profound:

"Lament drains the poison from your life. But praise refills your tanks."

When we lament, we *release*.

When we praise, we *refuel*.

But if you just lament and never praise? The poison stays. It turns inward. It festers. And it becomes toxic to your spirit. That's why we *must* lament—and then *praise*. Look at Habakkuk chapter three. One of my favorite examples:

"Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor the fruit be on the vines...

Though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food…

Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls…"

"Yet—I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation."

Habakkuk wasn't in denial. The fig tree's dead. The vines are bare. The harvest is gone. The sheep have vanished. Life *stinks*.

But… *Yet I will rejoice.* Don't be afraid to lament. But don't let your lament *be the end*. Turn it into praise. And know—that's your goal.

4. Practice Prophetic Imagination

Practice prophetic imagination. The way I do it? I'm a *storyboard guy*. Okay, I'm a mind-map, concept-map kind of guy. I've got whiteboards in my home office—and on those boards, I've written down the things I want to do that haven't happened yet. Dreams. Assignments. Ideas. Places to go. People to serve. Books to write. Messages to speak.

And I *see* it all.

I imagine myself in those moments. I *picture* myself walking in those callings. It's not fantasy—it's faith-filled imagination.

Angie and I—since we got diagnosed—we pulled out old folders of prophetic words. Words

spoken over our lives. And we still—*to this day*—sit together and read them out loud.

We *war* with those words.

We *war* with imagination.

We *see* what God sees—and we *say* what God says.

I imagine myself at my grandchildren's high school graduations. I imagine myself at their weddings.

That's warring with prophetic imagination. We *call those things that are not as though they are.* That's Romans 4. And it can be *attributed to you as righteousness*. When we do those things, we become *righteous* in the eyes of the Lord. Because we're exercising *faith.* We're declaring: "I may not see it yet—but I *believe* it is coming."

We call the things that are not as though they are. That is the *ultimate expression of hope*.

Epilogue: Let Hope Rise

We've come a long way.

From the battlefield of the mind to the frontlines of faith, from learning to engage the enemy with hope instead of despair, to discovering the difference between trying hard and actually training, this journey has not been a passive read—it's been a spiritual call to arms.

But now, as we come to the close of these pages, I want to leave you not with a benediction, but with a battle cry.

Weaponize your hope.

That's not just a cute phrase. It's the mandate for this moment. And if Chapter 7 said anything loud and clear, it's this: *hope is not a feeling to be protected—it's a weapon to be deployed.*

We don't need more Christians who *admire* hope like a painting on a wall. We need warriors who *wield* it like a sword. Who lift it high in the face of the enemy. Who walk into every hospital room, courtroom, classroom, and living room knowing that resurrection power is in them, and that power speaks.

Yes—this book has talked about warfare. About the urgency. About the battle. But the most important thing you've read is that the battle begins *inside*. The real war is in your thinking, in your memory, in your ability to *focus on the resurrection*, *rehearse God's faithfulness*, *lament honestly*, and *dream prophetically*. Those four disciplines from Chapter 7 are not just suggestions. They are survival skills. And not just survival—but advancement.

You see, we're not just called to endure this life. We're called to overcome. To take ground. To speak with boldness and live with joy in a world that's choking on fear and cynicism.

This is your season. Not someday. Not after you feel ready. Right now. Don't let your hope be deferred another moment. Pick it up. Dust it off. Sharpen it through prayer and practice. Let it rise.

And when the storms come—and they will—you won't just brace for impact. You'll stand in defiance. You'll raise your head. You'll declare like David, *"Yet will I praise the Lord."*

Because the weapon in your hand was forged in fire. And your enemy? He knows it. He's afraid of it. Because a believer who walks in living hope is unstoppable.

You are not who you used to be.

You've been refined. Trained. Weaponized.

You are a walking testimony of what it looks like to live with resurrection power pulsing through your veins.

So go. Step into the next season not with hesitation, but with *holy expectation*.

And may the Jesus who conquered the grave rise again and again in your words, your prayers,

your worship, and your warfare. Let hope rise. And let it win.

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