

UNDERSTANDING HOPE

How to find hope!

THE **HOPE** LINE



TheHopeLine.com

In this eBook we examine hope, why we need it, and how to find it. *Hopefully*, by the end, you will have a better understanding of what hope looks like and how your life can be transformed by it.

Have you ever found yourself overwhelmed by thoughts like:

I've got no reason to keep living.

Things are never going to get better.

Why should I even try to get help for my problems?

Nothing works.

This is pointless.

Why bother?

Nothing and nobody can help me.

No one cares about me.

My future is empty.

Why do I even try?

THIS IS WHERE HOPE COMES IN...

Hope gives you a reason to try. It is the wind in our sails after being stuck on a still sea. Hope is what motivates you to keep going, even when circumstances seem overwhelming, and to seek help when things get really hard. Without hope... well, we're depressed. *With* hope you can do more than just exist. It allows you to embrace life and believe good things will come again.





This Guide will share
with you...



how to find

HOPE

in the midst of

HOPELESSNESS

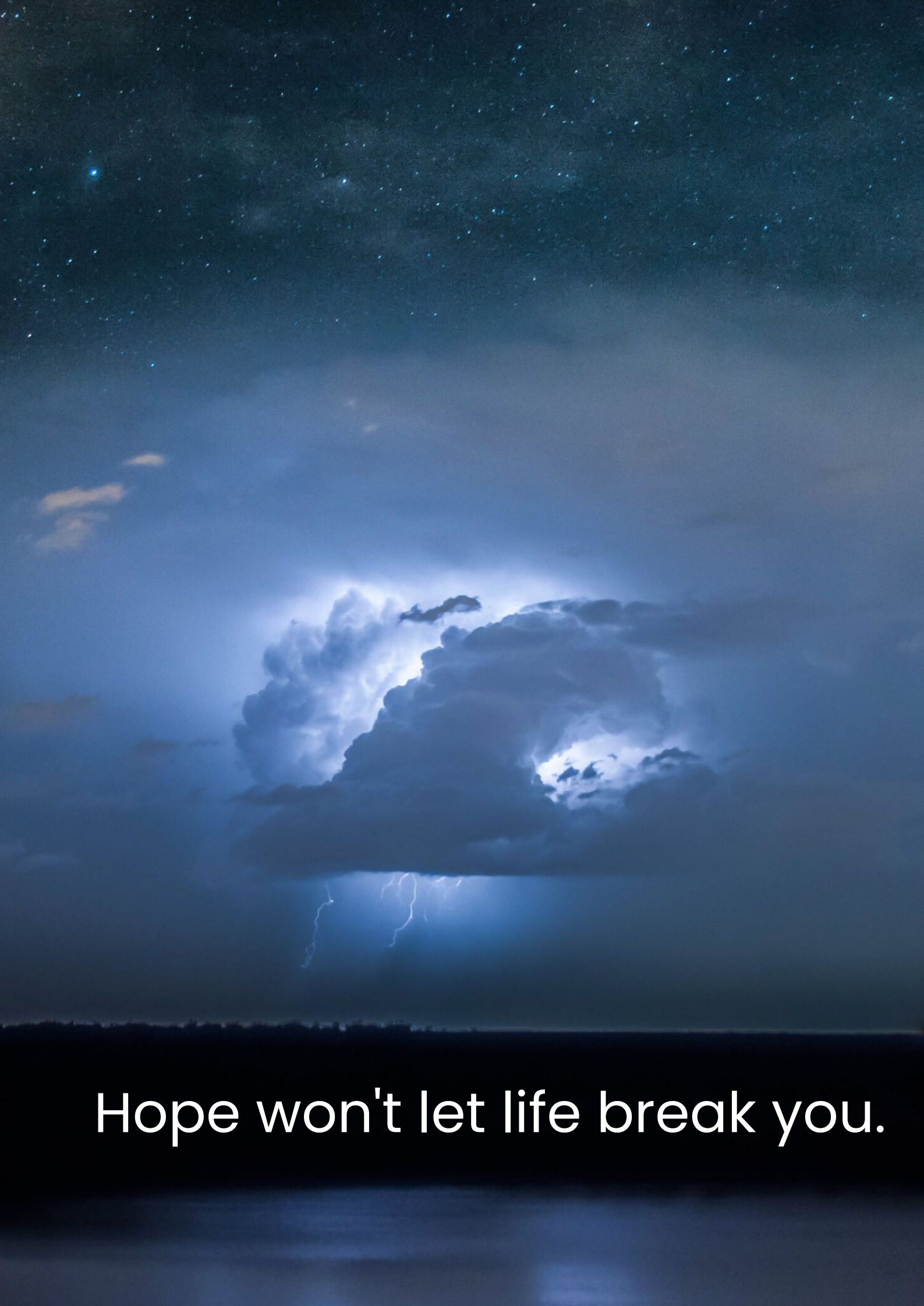
&

LIGHT

in the midst of

DARKNESS





Hope won't let life break you.

In the book and movie *Unbroken*, author Laura Hildebrand writes about World War II veteran Louie Zamperini.

Zamperini's plane crashes in the Pacific Ocean, and he miraculously survives and makes it onto a raft with two other airmen. However, they are immediately surrounded by sharks and faced with starvation, storms, dehydration, etc. Hildebrand writes:

"Though all three men faced the same hardship, their differing perceptions of it appeared to be shaping their fates. Louie and Phil's hope displaced their fear and inspired them to work toward their survival, and each success renewed their physical and emotional vigor. Mac's resignation seemed to paralyze him and the less he participated in their efforts to survive, the more he slipped. Though he did the least, as the days passed, it was he who faded the most. Louie and Phil's optimism, and Mac's hopelessness, were becoming self-fulfilling."

Mac did not survive. Louie and Phil did. Hope is a powerful thing. Clinging to hope can get you to the next right thing.

Hope will save you.



SO WHERE DOES HOPE COME FROM?

Knowing you are loved.

**Being secure in your
identity.**

**Believing you have a
purpose.**

**Trusting that you are not
alone in this world.**

**Believing the future is
bright.**

YOU ARE LOVED

Have you ever been let down by people who were supposed to love you?

Unfortunately, in this world people will never love us perfectly. Even those who truly love us will let us down at some point. We are all human and make mistakes in our relationships. You can't expect your friends, your family, and yourself to be any different. If you put your only hope in the actions of other people, we will always be disappointed.

That doesn't change the fact that it's extremely painful when someone lets us down. So where can you find hope when it happens? Start by looking within. If they couldn't give you the love you needed today, can you? Pick a favorite activity and take yourself on a date. Remember that self-love is always at your fingertips.

Then there's God's love. He is with you, literally, always and forever. His love will not fail. It can't fail. You can cling to it when you're unsure of other people.

God loves *you* specifically. He knows you personally by name, and you're always in His thoughts. You don't have to wonder if anyone cares.

What about God?
Does He love you?





THE WORLD DOES NOT DEFINE YOU

Have you ever felt worthless?

Maybe you have even hated yourself at times. We regularly hear from folks who struggle with self-esteem and hopelessness, who have tied their identity to the lies and labels other people or society place on them. If we don't look like the airbrushed and edited actors, models, and influencers we follow, we feel bad about ourselves and think we are less valuable than those "beautiful" people. In that case, we've tied our self-worth to our looks. In other words, we identify as "not attractive enough." Other areas where we might end up feeling less than: academics, athletics, job status, wealth status, popularity, etc. If you identify too deeply with your performance in any of these areas, the smallest setback will leave you wrecked and feeling worthless.

It's hard to feel worthy of love and respect when you're looking to something unpredictable as your main source of identity. Imagine one of those areas of your life just went "poof" and disappeared. What then? Would you be left wondering who you truly are? Do you have core values that transcend these things? Are you confident in your identity without school, TikTok, your girlfriend, or whatever else might be important to you?

As you consider your understanding of who you are, ask yourself:

Does a bad grade change how smart you are?

Does having the "right" amount of money in your pocket change how deserving or successful you are?

Does having the latest pair of sneakers or a flat tummy make you a better person?

If you answered "yes" to any of those questions, you may be basing your identity on something fleeting, which sells you and everyone who knows you short of the joy of getting to know **you** on a deeper level.

What if you could just identify as you, regardless of whatever goes on around you? What if you felt safe and secure in who you are?

What would it look like if your identity were no longer tied to:

- *What you do • What you look like*
- *What you have or don't have*
- *Who approves of or likes you • Past mistakes*

What if you don't have to prove anything to be worth something? What if your existence is valid and uniquely important? What if you don't have to fight for a place in the world, because you already have one?

If you could see yourself without the lenses of society, the way God sees you, as a piece of Him, precious and lovable, then you may find that you have a more positive and stable identity than before. There is such joy and peace in knowing that God loves you and wants you to personally experience the joy of living a life filled with a **HOPE** that can't be shaken by a bad day or worse... a bad selfie.

Practice knowing who you are by saying aloud, "I am already ____:"

- Accepted • Cherished • Beautiful
- Capable • Complete • Understood
- Worthwhile • Powerful • Strong
- Rescued • Secure



REASON TO HOPE

You have *security* in knowing that nothing can change who you are or how God sees you.



YOU HAVE A PURPOSE

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY YOU WERE EVEN BORN?

Popular culture often tells us that there's no meaning left in the world. Everything is pointless, even you, your needs, or your happiness. This could not be more of a lie! Your existence is not pointless. In fact, what if you were created with a major purpose in mind?

The Bible says that one part of your purpose is to honor God by joining Him in doing the "good work." Once we accept who Jesus is and what He's given us, we can't help but want to emulate His acts of compassion and creativity. But what specifically is this "good work" and how do we follow Christ's example?

- 1) *By loving God with all your heart*
- 2) *By loving others as much as you wish to be loved*

So there is your purpose: The Golden Rule. **"Do unto others as you would have them do to you."** The world didn't make that up, it comes straight from God. He just asks us to LOVE.

You were born to love.

Are you afraid you'll mess up?

You might... we all do!

But once you've accepted the hope in living out the purpose God made you for, you can also take comfort in knowing that God loves you no matter what and has infinite patience as you **go through the process** of learning more about your identity in Him.

Own up to your mistake, accept its consequences, then get back to the business of loving others.

REASON TO HOPE

You have a job to do...
Honor God by loving others.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Do you ever feel like nobody cares about or understands you?

Sometimes, even if we have good friends, a nice family, and a lot going for us, that pesky feeling that we're all alone in the world creeps in. You can even feel lonely in a crowded room full of people who love you. When loneliness happens, we feel trapped, with nobody around to even notice we're in trouble.

Instead of isolating at times like this, try being really open about this feeling with a trusted friend. Naming a thought and acknowledging it takes away a bit of its power over your brain. If you don't feel like anyone you know will understand, try reaching out to us at [**TheHopeLine**](#). We're always available to chat, and we know what it is to feel alone.

This world is imperfect and broken, so sadness, death, pain, and suffering will always be around. Even Jesus felt that pain, endured that struggle, and faced utter loneliness. He gets where you're coming from, even when nobody else does.

That's why God promises never to leave our side, to provide **strength** when we are weary, and give us **a peace** that we can't even begin to understand. When all else fails, you can rest assured that God sees you, God hears you, and God is with you.

A man with dark hair and glasses is shown in profile, looking towards the left. The background is a soft-focus bokeh of warm and cool lights, suggesting an evening city scene. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

REASON TO HOPE

***You are seen, you
are heard, and you
are understood.***

A close-up portrait of a young man with dark hair, wearing round black-rimmed glasses and a black beret. He is smiling and looking slightly to the right. The background is blurred, showing some greenery and a railing. The text "YOUR FUTURE IS AMAZING" is overlaid in a pink-bordered box at the top.

**YOUR FUTURE
IS AMAZING**

REASON TO HOPE

***Your future is secure, and
you have something to
look forward to.***

Do you feel like you have nothing to look forward to?

When you're struggling with hopelessness, sometimes the future seems like a hoax. Or maybe you feel like one wrong move will *ruin* your entire future.

From a mental health perspective, one way to hold onto hope when the future feels uncertain or insecure is to take action by planning things for you to look forward to and taking one small step toward those things.

This could be something small like, "Every day after school, I get a latte on my way home. I drink it slowly, listen to music, and reward myself for making it through today." If you enjoy something that much, imagine yourself getting to do that a million more times as your future unfurls!

It could be something big like, "This time next year, I'll be out of school, living somewhere new, with the freedom to make my own decisions!" Your action toward that could be looking up rent prices in your area to determine how much you need to save up.

The idea is to plant something bright into your vision of the future to keep you going.

From a spiritual perspective, by putting your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, your life is **made new**. You get a fresh start, no matter what happened yesterday or how hopeless you feel today. With that fresh start, you can rest assured that, somehow, **your future is secure**. God's mercy, peace, grace, blessings, and love will all be available to you every step of the way.

You can pass your anxiety about the future over to God. Just pray, "Here, hold my stress." **Let Him hold onto it**, because it's only holding you back. Seriously! Know that no matter how big your worries are, He can handle it. He wants to give you freedom from your struggles. There is *HOPE* in that.

Ways to Find a Bit of Hope Right Now

We've talked through some of the many places hope can come from, but what are some things you can actually *do*, right now, to pump a little bit of light into the darkness? Try the things on this short list to jumpstart more hopeful feelings and give you the energy to press on.

1) Take pleasure in the little things.

Even when the big things in life seem to be going wrong, there are still cookies, fruit trees, flowers, babies, puppies, kittens, blankets, bloopers, movies, books, coffee, croissants, music, music *videos*, long walks, long naps, video games, plaid, exercise (if that's your thing), etc. It's okay to find some relief in your favorite things in the midst of your pain.

2) Intentionally look up good news.

It's not often that our headlines or the boosted news content is positive, but there is some good news every single day if you know where to look for it. Just type "good news" into Google or your TikTok search bar, and soak up the good things until you crack a smile.

3) Seek genuine encouragement.

Believe it or not, it's okay to look at your friend, sibling, or parent and say, "Hey, I'm feeling kinda low today, like nothing works out for me, or like I'm invisible. Can you just tell me nice things about me and about the world?" Just think, if your friend said the same to you, wouldn't you jump at the chance to encourage them? Give the people in your corner a chance to show you're not alone.

4) Consider professional advice.

Persistent feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness is a core symptom of many mental health diagnoses. If you've been struggling with these feelings for more than a couple of weeks, talk to your doctor, a counselor at school, or [chat with us](#) at TheHopeLine. We can get you connected with resources that are all about helping you feel healthier.

6) Pray.

You can pray right now. It doesn't need to be anything scripted. You can speak aloud, in your head, or write it down like a letter. Just pray from your heart.

Talk to Him about what you've read in this eBook, ask Him if He can rescue you from feeling hopeless, and tell Him about your anxieties. Ask Him to show you how He sees you, your worth, your purpose, and your future. Ask Him to move the obstacles in your mind that keep you from seeing yourself that way.

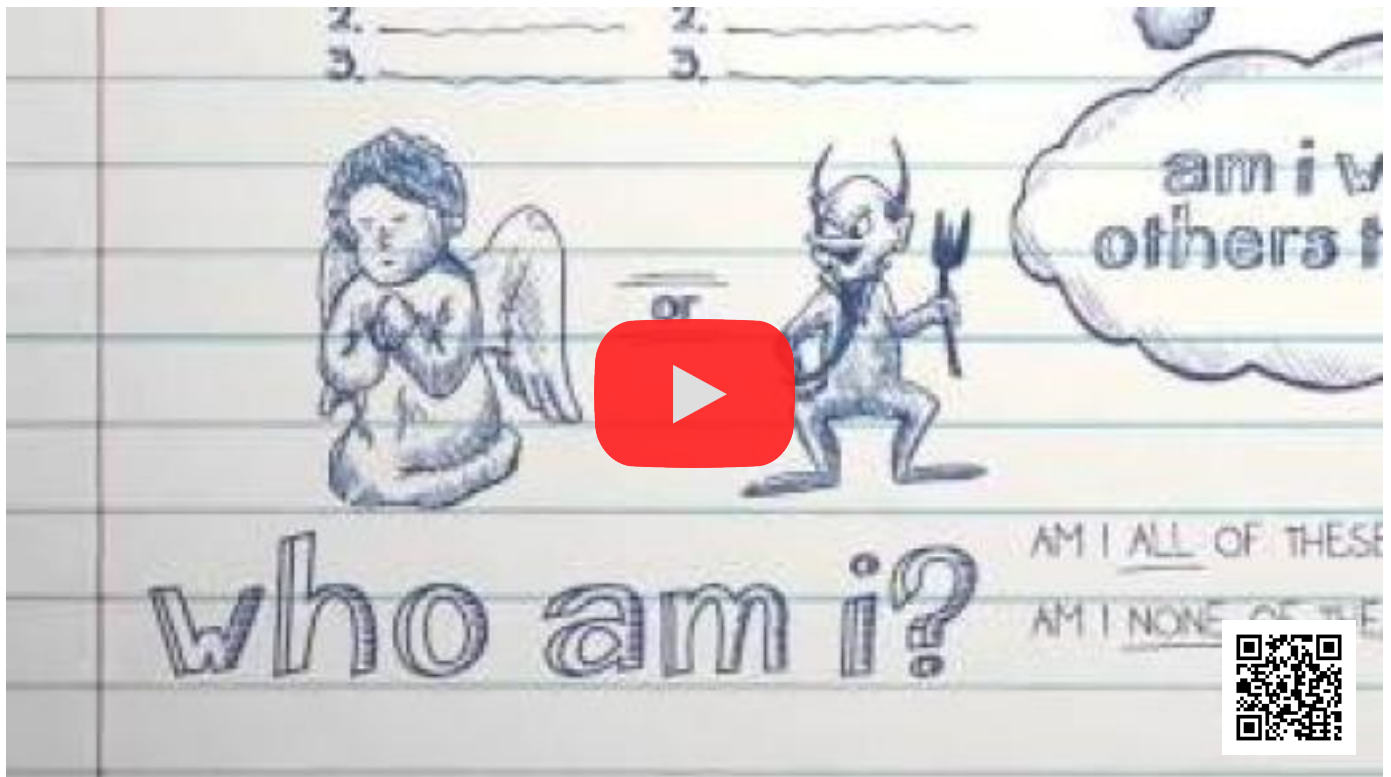
7) Wait.

You don't necessarily have to do anything. Sometimes we just have to sit with hard feelings. Writer Anne Lamott talks about a low point in her life, recalling, "I just had to lie in the mud with my arms wrapped around myself, eyes closed, grieving, until I didn't have too anymore."

With time, everything changes. If anything, you can find hope in the certainty of change. Nothing lasts forever, even hopelessness. Be patient, and you may feel more hopeful tomorrow, or the next day.



Where do you find your identity?



These videos may help you have a better understanding of how God sees you through His grace and mercy.



A SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE ON FINDING HOPE

No matter what you're dealing with, know that **there is a solution**, so have hope.

>> THE SOLUTION

Throughout this eBook, we've talked about how God love you, how God sees you, God's purpose for you, how He never leaves your side, and how much He cares about your future.

You don't have to carry it all on your own anymore, because when He looks at you, He sees a divine creation... not a failure, not a mistake, not a killjoy, not a needy loser with nothing to live for... He sees you for everything that is **inherently marvelous** within you.

The Bible says that Jesus lived and died so that everyone can have *"real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of..."* That means God actually **wants** you to discover your true identity and *find hope in it!*

If you're deep in your hopelessness right now and having trouble with any of the ideas in this eBook, please **reach out to TheHopeLine** today. We're here for you when your cup is empty because Christ calls *"all who are weary and burdened"* to come and find rest, and that includes you.

If you want to know more about how having a relationship with God can give you the ultimate hope, chat online with a HopeCoach at **TheHopeLine.com**.

More On Hope...

UNDERSTANDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD & The Basics of Christianity

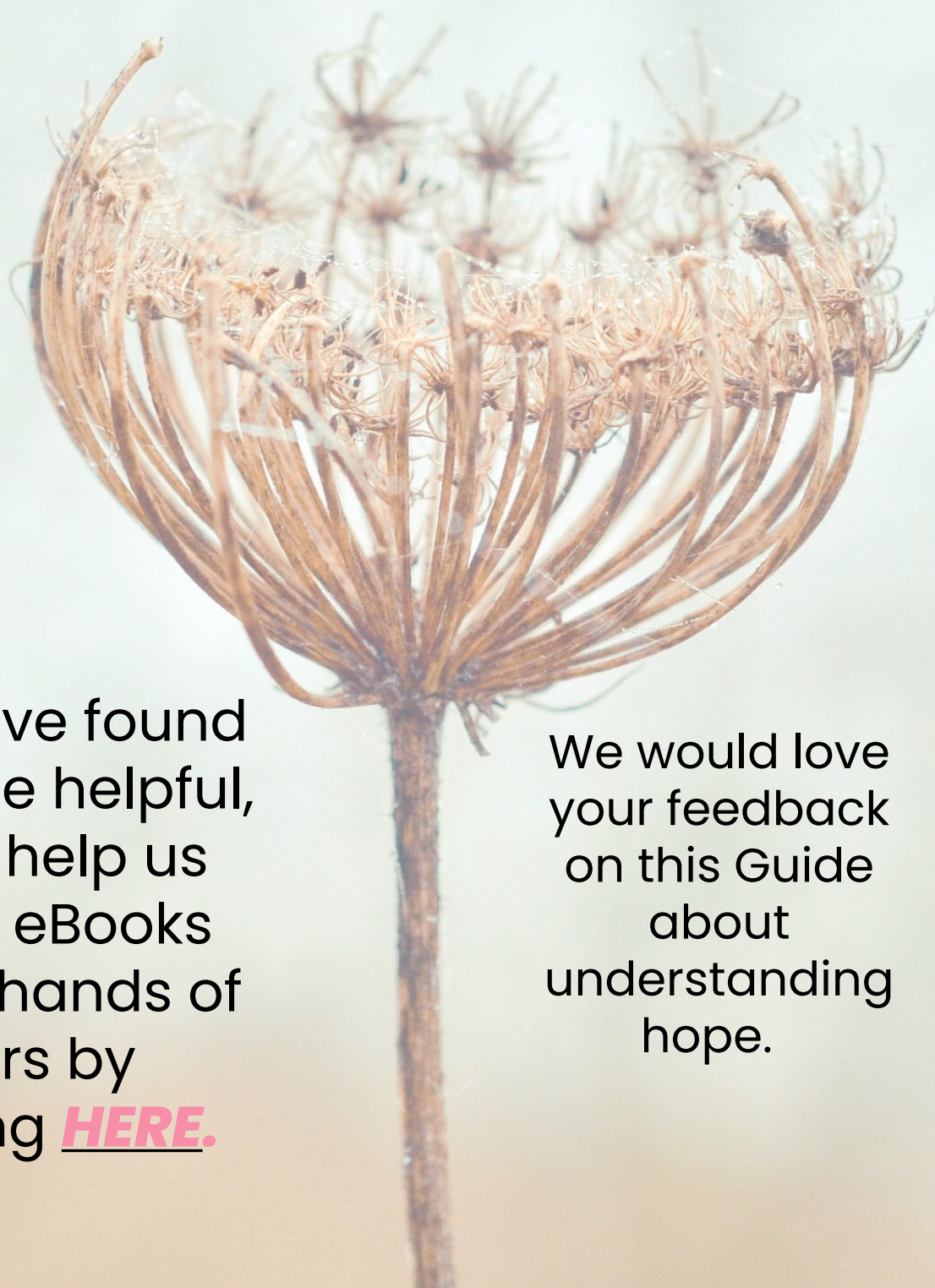


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Peace with God

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