

HOLD ON TO HOPE

(Hebrews 6:4-20)

DAY ONE READING AND QUESTIONS:

⁴It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, ⁶if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

- 1. Should we worry that we have fallen away so much from God that we cannot return?*
- 2. Is the writer of Hebrews trying to scare us? Is it good to scare people into following God?*
- 3. What does it mean to crucify Christ afresh? Are there many ways to do this?*

DAY TWO READING AND QUESTIONS:

⁷Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. ⁸But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.

⁹Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case—things that accompany salvation. ¹⁰God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. ¹¹We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. ¹²We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

1. *What is the point of the land illustration? Who is the land that drinks in the rain?*
2. *Is it comforting to know God will not forget our works of love? Do we sometimes feel others forget them? Give examples from your own life.*
3. *What is diligence? Does showing diligence mean we are earning our salvation through good works? What does it mean? Why is it encouraged here?*

DAY THREE READING AND QUESTIONS:

¹³When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, ¹⁴saying, “I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.” ¹⁵And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.

¹⁶Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath

confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. ¹⁷Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.

1. *What is the purpose of swearing? Is it strange that God himself would swear?*
2. *How long did Abraham have to wait for God's promises to come true? How long must we wait for his promises to come true?*
3. *Why might we lose faith in the unchanging nature of God's purpose? How does God strengthen our patient faith?*

DAY FOUR READING AND QUESTIONS:

¹⁸God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. ¹⁹We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, ²⁰where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

1. *What are the “two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie”?*
2. *How is our hope like an anchor?*
3. *How does hope enter the inner sanctuary of God? In the Old Testament, who was allowed to enter that Most Holy Place? What does that say about our standing before God?*

DAY FIVE READING AND QUESTIONS:

Go back and read the entire passage.

1. *How do we know we can trust God? Why is it sometimes hard to trust?*
2. *If we lose our faith and hope in God, might we drift so far away from him that we cannot return? If so, what can keep us from this drifting?*
3. *List some aspects of our world that slowly work to erode our faith and hope in God. How can we overcome this loss?*

MEDITATION ON HEBREWS 6:4-20

Hope is a fragile thing.

Many of us have placed our hope in people we trust—husbands, wives, elected officials, financial advisors, church leaders, and friends—only to have those hopes crushed. Hope can disappear in a moment, through disappointment, betrayal, and disillusionment.

“Disillusionment.” An interesting word. Our illusions of hope vanish, leaving us with a deep cynicism, cursing ourselves for being taken in by those we trusted who made empty promises.

We can even lose our hope in God. No, we don’t want to admit it, not to our friends, our families, or even ourselves. We continue to go through the motions of church, prayer, and Bible reading, but deep down we don’t think anything will change.

We are in danger of losing faith. Abandoning hope. Falling away. What can we do?

There’s nothing left to do but to trust God.

That answer seems too churchy and religious. It might even seem impossible. If we are losing our faith, how can we trust more?

By changing our focus. By looking away from our pain and disappointment to set our sight on the God who promises. He is a God who keeps his word, but if we ever doubt that, he is also the God who swears to us. He takes an oath to convince us he is honest in his promises.

Faith must be fed. Hope must be nurtured. Love must be shown to others in quiet acts of service. We can so abandon hope that return to God is impossible. But God does all he can to keep hope alive. He is the God who blesses. He sends the rain on our parched lives. He enlightens us, feeds us, and shares his very life with us through his Holy Spirit. He sent his Son as our High Priest. When we begin to feel that hope is an illusion, we must look at Jesus. Others will fail us. He alone is our hope and he will not disappoint. Our trust in him is no illusion.

“Father, increase our trust in you through Jesus. Give us that sure hope that never disappoints. May we live hopeful lives this day.”