

# Solution for Life



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Dear Friends,

*Our dear friends, our desire is for you to have hope and peace. How do we experience this great hope and peace that is promised to us when we pray and what we've asked for doesn't come about as we had desired? How do we have peace when people we know and love seem to be going through, not one, but multiple crises without relief for weeks, months, even years? These are questions that can breed discouragement, and discouragement can hold the power to rob us of hope and peace. We want to address these questions. We trust you will be encouraged to continue on with Jesus, our Hope and Peace.*

*In Christ's Hope, Jessie*

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## Hope and Peace | by Daniel Westlund

In 1974 we were visiting Jessie's parents in Wilmington, Delaware. Jessie's dad was the pastor of the Alliance church in Wilmington. I was sitting next to a basket filled with books, one of which was a very old Bible. I picked the Bible up and discovered it belonged to Tracy Miller, Jessie's grandfather. On the inside cover was a formula for peace: Praise + Poise + Prayer = Perfect Peace. I wrote it down in my Bible, wondering how he had come up with such a clear message about peace. It was not until 1977 when I was asked by the Senior Pastor, Bill Allen, at First Alliance Church in Mansfield, Ohio to preach at our Sunday evening service that I discovered this formula for peace came from Philippians 4:4-7. In the last 44 years I have preached and taught this truth in multiple locations across the country. In 2002 we published the message in a booklet form, and it was made available through Solution For Life.

The truth, though profound, is simple. First, our focus must be on Christ, daily praising and thanking God for who HE is and what HE has done. Second, we must come to the full realization that God is in control, and

we can put our full confidence in Him. And third, we must learn to pray, casting all our cares on Him for He truly cares for us. He never leaves us nor forsakes us, (Hebrews 13:5), and nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:39).

However, the truth goes much deeper, and is found in the context of the whole letter to the followers of Christ at Philippi and to followers of Christ of all ages down to this day. We need to read and study the first three chapters of Philippians, which lays the groundwork for this truth. "Therefore, .... that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends." (Philippians 4:1)

Our standing in Christ begins with God's love (John 3:16) received by faith (Romans 10:17) that gives us hope (Colossians 1:27) and the peace that only God can give. On the night Jesus was betrayed He told His disciples, "Peace I leave with you: My peace I give you. I do not give as the world gives...I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 14:27; 16:33)

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# Solution for growth

## Hope Renewed | by Stephen Westlund

I am a very private person. I share little about myself, even with those closest to me, those I trust most. But today, I am going to share something with you very few people know about me. I am a Disney fanatic. No, not the modern day, money hungry, sprawling Disney Empire. This new version of Disney disgusts me. But I love the original energy and spirit and hope Walt Disney brought to everything he did. Walt once said, “A person should set his goals as early as he can and devote all his energy and talent to getting there. With enough effort, he may achieve it. Or he may find something that is even more rewarding. But in the end, no matter what the outcome, he will know he has been alive.”

Set your goals, pursue your goals with all your might and all your talent, and you might achieve them... or, you might not. Wait...what! You mean if I pursue my goals and my dreams with all my might, they might not come true? That doesn't sound very, well,

Disney. Does it? Walt understood that pursuing your goals is important, but knowing you are alive, enjoying the journey toward your goals is equally, and maybe more important.

The past 18 months or so has crushed a lot of dreams. Turn on the news, and you won't recognize the world we live in. But does this mean we have to stop living? Does this mean we have to give up hope?

I don't think so! Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (John 10:10) The thief is Satan. He is the enemy, and he wants to steal your joy and ultimately destroy your life. When you lose hope in Jesus, you give the enemy ground, sacred ground. Jesus is our King, our Defender, our Deliverer, our Hope. He came to give you life to the full, both now and forevermore. In and through Jesus, you can live this life pursuing your God-given goals, and when you do, no matter what the

outcome, you will know you have been alive.

What dream has God given you? What God-given goals are you pursuing? I encourage you today to recommit it to Jesus and go after it with all your might and all your strength and with all your hope in our Lord Jesus!

If you have lost hope, my prayer for you is this: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13) This prayer is directly from the word of God. I have observed in my life, when we pray the word of God, to God, we pray in His will. If you have lost hope, make this your daily prayer: “Lord, I've lost hope. God Almighty, You are the God of hope. I pray You will fill me with all joy and peace as I renew my trust in You. I pray that my life in Christ will overflow with hope by the power the Holy Spirit. Amen.” May God bless you, as you renew your hope in Him. ■

## Peace | by Kristen Alewine

Around 10 years ago my pastor asked me to speak for a few minutes in one of our services about the topic of peace. I recently found my notes from it and read through them. I was struck by a few things. One, the younger you are, the easier it is to be idealistic. Two, some of the things I mentioned struggling with I still struggle with. REALLY? And three, my view of God has been refined over time, as it should be and as I hope it continues to be. Even though I knew in my head that God is not like a vending machine - put in some good works and receive a happy care-free life - I can tell from my old words that there was a part of me that really wanted it to be true. If it was true, then as long as I made all the right choices, everything should be good. It's that elusive control my heart's always looking for.

What 38-year-old Kristen has found that 28-year-old Kristen hadn't quite grasped yet is while it is true that when we follow the commands God's given us our lives have a much better chance of going well, that does not guarantee that they will be hardship-free, tension-free, or be always filled with sprinkles and rainbows. I really hoped that the peace God talks about in Isaiah 26:3 - “You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in You, whose thoughts are fixed on You” - was referring to my circumstances and relationships. God definitely does give us times of peace in those areas and I'm grateful. But I stumbled across a quote today from Tony Evans that probably better defines what peace is and what it isn't:

“Peace doesn't mean that you will

not have problems. Peace means that your problems will not have you.”

Well, that doesn't feel as fun. That means the problems are real, and that sometimes they don't even go away. But if you think about it, which one is more intimate, more loving? To have God just swoop in and erase all the problems, the end? Or for Him to enter into them with you, to sit with you, cry with you, and little by little change your character through them? That takes patience, intentionality, and it takes a plan on God's part to craft the good that will come out of difficult and trying situations. Really, that's the version of peace I want, because it's a peace that comes not from a life free of pain, but from nearness to God, the only one who can give us perfect peace. ■

# Solution for caring

## Praying Priority | by Jessie Westlund

I have lived most of my adult life seeking to love and encourage people. As a nurse most of my caring took place in the physical realm, comforting and caring for patients and their families. As a wife I love to care for the home, be an encourager and helper wherever God leads. As a mother to young boys I loved discovering how God had created each one of them and delighted in helping them grow in the talents and gifts they'd been given, as well as praying our family promise in Psalm 91 over them. As a pastor's wife I loved to work and go alongside people and share truths Christ taught me, as well support people in need. Nothing has changed in me; my purpose is to seek first the kingdom of God and trust Him that all that is needed in peoples' lives will be added to them, body, soul, and spirit.

Now being in the autumn season of life, I have never seen so many needs as I see each day in 2021. People ask me, "What is going on, what is happening?" All over the world there is devastation on an individual and global level. Every day I hear from a number of people facing major crises

and sometimes it seems like there is no hope. I still want to help, but so many of the issues facing people are out of my control. Paul talks about the "evil days" in Ephesians 6:13. He teaches that the battles of life are won through



using the spiritual weapons in verses 14-18 for victory. The last weapon he mentions is prayer. God tells us to care for, love, and encourage people. The most important part of caring is praying. Ephesians 6:18: "praying at all times in the spirit with all prayer and supplications. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making

supplications for all the saints." As the needs of people come to my attention I have felt the strong impression I need to pray more for God's kingdom work to be worked out and for people to sense His presence and hope. I felt that God confirmed this for me while I was shopping for a card for my niece who is going through deep waters with her 14-year-old daughter who has bone cancer. I came across a card and I sensed a sacred confirmation to this truth to pray more. The card said, "Sometimes, we'd rather do something than pray. We'd rather roll up our sleeves and get in there and try to fix things. But when we pray, God does something. Hmm...Sounds like an infinitely better way to go."

I sensed God was speaking to me about what to do when I have no personal power to remove physical, emotional, or spiritual pain from others. Ephesians 3:20 says, "Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think."

Yes we live in dark days. God is greater and His message to me is to pray and trust Him, His love will carry us through. Sure I still love to roll up my sleeves and tangibly support people, but first I must pray continuously for the darkness to be lifted and for people to experience Jesus and His overwhelming peace and hope. He will deliver. Sometimes the battle may be longer than we wish, and in some cases He may change us but, as we trust God, "He is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think." As we live in these difficult times won't you join me as God leads us to pray more about the needs that you are aware of right where you are? ■

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Peace and Hope continued from page 1

We live in a very troubled time, filled with change. But we know with confidence that God "does not change like shifting shadows." (James 1:16) In the midst of the storm we can know the peace of Christ. This is the promise of God. Take some time today or this week to reflect on the hope we have in Christ that brings true peace. "The peace that guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

I end with this, taken from my message on Perfect Peace:

An illustration of the peace Christ brings is found in Mark 4:36-41. It involves a story about the disciples and Christ crossing a body of water in the midst of a storm. It appears all would perish. Christ was asleep when the disciples cried out "don't you care?" He arose and rebuked the wind and said, "Peace be still." The winds ceased, and the water immediately became calm. This is the kind of peace and calm we can experience when we faithfully apply God's Word to our life. ■

# Solution for the future

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## Watch and Pray | by Daniel Westlund

“Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘Peace and Safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.” (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3)

I remember well when Jessie told me it was time for each of our three sons to be born, the signs were very evident that Jessie was going to have a baby. The signs of her changing body were more and more every day. There was a day (or, in the case of our boys, evening) when suddenly she’d say, “It’s time.” The labor pains came on and the only way to escape the labor and pain was for a new life to come into this world. What a great illustration about the coming of Christ. We have been given multitudes of signs down to the rebirth of Israel as a nation, Jerusalem being once

again declared the capital of Israel, the unsettledness of the existence of Israel as a nation that seems to cause so much difficulty with many nations in the world. The signs in our world are more and more uncomfortable, as the Bible says they would be in Luke 21:7-10:

“‘Teacher,’ they asked, ‘when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?’

He replied: ‘Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming,

‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them. When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.’ Then he said to them: ‘Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines, and pestilences

in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.’”

Some say, “there have always been times like this throughout history.” No, never where the labor signs are covering the whole world at the same time. Nation against nation like never before. There has never been a worldwide pandemic. The news cannot even cover all the uprising in the world, the famines, earthquakes, and great signs from heaven.

We are in the last trimester. The labor pains are ready to begin. It would appear we need to be listening to the call for “Peace and Safety” from our world leaders. **We need to be alert and watch and pray, for the coming of Christ is drawing near. He is at the door.** Some say “Come quickly Lord Jesus,” for a new day is coming. Others need to see it’s time to get ready. ■

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## Bulletin Board

Solution for Life’s mission is to go alongside people to present Jesus, the solution for life. This is being accomplished in many different ways. A few of the avenues of ministry are the following.

- Bible studies with different groups
- Individual coaching and discipleship with people in their walk with Christ
- Providing tangibly for people in crisis
- A growing prayer ministry

- Assisting in the development of women’s ministries with churches
- Developing a publishing ministry to share the truth. One of the goals is in the event censoring grows in the country there will be an avenue to share the truth.
- Completion of the booklet *Your Story Matters*, a collection of people’s testimonies of how they have gotten through tough times and Covid-19 in the last 14 months.

### Message: from Dan and Jessie

We love to hear from you and it has been a blessing to hear how God is working in many of your lives. Your prayers and gifts have been a blessing as the ministry continues to grow. In addition, the expenses grow as the cost of postage and supplies goes up. In the next few months we will be sending out a small booklet, *Your Story Matters*, to those who have supported the ministry and if you would like a copy of the booklet please go online and request it at [www.solutionforlife.org](http://www.solutionforlife.org), or drop a note to us on [sfl@solutionforlife.org](mailto:sfl@solutionforlife.org).

May God give you peace and hope,  
Dan and Jessie