

Hope in the Dark:

Believing God is Good When Life Is Not

(Craig Groeschel)

Summary

last update 7 Oct 2019

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1-Hide and Seek.....	1
<i>Where Are You God?</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Why Don't You Care?.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Why Aren't You Doing Something?.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>It Seems Unfair.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Crisis of Belief.....</i>	<i>1</i>
2-Lost and Found	2
<i>Listen.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Write.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Wait.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>By Faith.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Faith Tested.....</i>	<i>2</i>
3-Hope and Glory	3
<i>Remember.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Accept.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Trust.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Hope.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Believe.....</i>	<i>3</i>
4-When You Question and Believe	3

Hope in the Dark

Craig Groeschel

This book is for anyone who is hurting, doesn't understand why, and struggling to believe God cares.

Honest questions, sincere doubts, and deep hurts can draw you closer to God. Sometimes pain seem to yell while hope only whispers. Putting God into an easy-to-explain box is unwise and dangerous.

If you wrestle with God, seek Him, and cling to Him, He will meet you in your pain.

1-Hide and Seek

Where Are You God?

- God honors seekers who sincerely look for the truth ([Mark 9:21-24](#), [Psa 6:2-7](#), [Mat 27:46](#)).
- If you understood everything completely, you wouldn't need faith. Without faith, you can't please God ([Heb 11:6](#)).

Why Don't You Care?

- We like superheroes because they defeat villains in the way we wish God would ([Hab 1:2-4](#)).
- Sooner or later, we all experience the cruel blows of life. In those times, we may wonder if God cares about us.

Why Aren't You Doing Something?

- Your life doesn't usually play out in the way you would write your own story.
- The reality is that you are NOT God and you do NOT know what is best. There is much more happening than you can see or understand from your limited human perspective.
- God understands your pain and invites your questions ([Psa 56:8](#)). Your role is to ask those questions then listen to His answers.

It Seems Unfair

- By our standards, life is not fair. It wasn't fair that sinless Jesus became the sacrifice for filthy, vile sinners like us. When you ask why bad things happen to good people, stop to realize that the worst thing happened only once. Amazingly, Jesus volunteered for it.
- By our standards, God is unfair. If He was fair, we'd all be doomed.
- What if developing genuine intimacy with God requires you to bear something that feels unbearable? What if it takes real pain to experience deep and abiding hope?

Crisis of Belief

- Crisis is a requisite part of the Christian faith. To become stronger in faith and more in love with Jesus, we must endure crisis.
- God won't let you be **tempted** beyond what you can handle ([1Cor 10:13](#)); however, He will give you more **challenge** than you can handle so you can learn to depend on Him.
- When someone is in the valley, it's not the best time to launch into a theological discourse. Instead, listen to them. Let God reveal Himself through your quiet, loving presence.
- God's agenda is not your immediate happiness. He is more focused on your spiritual growth. That requires you to trust Him through trials.
- If you have questions, ask God, then be prepared when He answers ([Mat 7:7-8](#)).

2-Lost and Found

Listen

- Sometimes the reason you don't get answers to your questions is that you don't pause to pay attention to God (**Hab 2:1**). When was the last time you sat still and listened for God's voice (**Psa 46:10**)?
- Just because things aren't going your way doesn't mean God isn't working in your life. Sometimes, for your own good, God does not remove the thorn (**2Cor 12:7-10**).

Write

- When you hear from God, record what you heard (**Hab 2:2**).
- Watch for confirmation. (ex. Hear same thing in a sermon. Someone unexpectedly mentions the same thing.)
- Be certain that the message you're getting lines up with God's Word. If it doesn't, then the message was not from God.

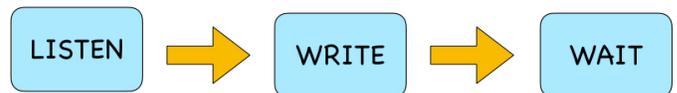
TIP: Try a 5-year journal. Each page will let you compare what God was showing you on that day the previous year(s). Example:

January 1

Year 1:
Year 2:
Year 3:
Year 4:
Year 5:

Wait

You've asked and listened. You've taken notes. What does God want you to do next? It's something you won't enjoy. Wait (**Hab 2:3**).



- When God promises something, it will be in His timing.
- While you're waiting, actively serve Him in everything you do (**Col 3:17**).

By Faith

- As you wait, continue to live by faith (**Heb 11**).
- Faith is deliberate confidence in the character of God whose ways you may not understand at the time. -Oswald Chambers

Faith Tested

- You may not see God's promise to you fulfilled in your lifetime.
- Cling to three words from **Habakkuk 2:20**, "But the Lord..." (is in charge, is good, is true...)
- Your response to trials will demonstrate your faith (**1Pet 1:7**).

3-Hope and Glory

Remember

When you're in the valley, think back to all the things God has done in your life. Tell Him that you remember what He has done.

Accept

To get through the valley:

- Even if you don't like what God is doing, accept that He knows best.
- Even if you don't understand it, accept what He is going to do.

Trust

In the middle of pain, if you can choose to trust God despite evidence to the contrary, then you will break through to a new level of intimacy with Him ([Hab 3:17-18](#)).

Hope

- Habakkuk's name means to wrestle and to embrace.
- Sometimes, when we kick and scream and fight God, what He's trying to do is hold us and guide us through the storm.
- Like Habakkuk, we can have hope when there's reason to despair ([Hab 3:19](#)).

Believe

- The reason Jesus pressed through the pain was the 'joy set before Him' ([Heb 12:2-3](#)).
- Only the hope of the Lord can get us through life. If you want to believe, God will meet you in the midst of your efforts to believe ([Rom 5:3-5](#)).

4-When You Question and Believe

- Only because He loved us first are we able to love Him, or anyone else ([1John 4:19](#)).
- Don't stop wanting to believe. Allow that spark of hope to grow by trusting that God is right there beside you.
- Like Habakkuk, you can progress from doubting, to waiting, to embracing the goodness of God.
- You can have hope in the dark.

