



# BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



## Christian “In Practice”

10.2024 | V. 19, NO. 3

**H**ave you ever watched one of those old vintage movies where someone visits the doctor’s office? Outside the office on the door is a shingle which has the doctor’s name. Directly underneath the name in bold letters are the words, “In Practice.” These words mean the doctor is exercising to maintain their skill.

This reminds me how God is still working on us and in us in the Christian walk. We are “in practice” so we grow from day to day in our walk with Him. We have by no means arrived. We are all works in progress.

The prophet Jeremiah wrote to the people of Judah after they had been in exile for 70 years. Some had been born during the exile and never knew what it felt like to live in their homeland of Israel. Some thought God had forgotten them. But God sent them a reminder through the prophet Jeremiah in order to give them a plan of hope for Judah’s future: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV)

Being a Christian doesn’t mean we will always be liked by everyone. It doesn’t mean we will always love our jobs. It doesn’t mean things will always go the way we want them. In fact, Matthew 5:45b reminds us God sends rain on the just as well as the unjust.

So what’s the big deal about being a Christian? Here it is: Like Israel, God has a plan for us!

Here are four truths which will give you hope in God’s plan for your future, regardless of your present situation:

1. *You are fearfully and wonderfully made.* (Psalm 139:14) God designed you to be special to Him. Your DNA is different than anyone

else’s. You were in His mind before the foundations of the world. You were so special that the Creator engraved you with a unique design.

2. *You are tailor-made for fellowship with God.* You were not made to just exist. You were made to thrive — and not just financially or materialistically. God designed you to find fulfillment through spiritual fellowship with Him.

3. *You are made to have hope.* Things may not appear to be going your way today; but take heart in knowing your story isn’t limited to just today. God’s plan for you is so much bigger! It is eternal. It took the death of His Son to establish for you the gift of eternal life. So even in your darkest moments, know He is orchestrating your life narrative to produce an end result of everlasting joy.

4. *You were never made to make the journey alone.* In every one of us, God created an empty space that only He can fill. When He fills that space, we experience the comfort of His presence like the psalmist who said, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.” (Psalm 23:4)

I know these realities may sound too good to be true. More than rhetoric, here’s what they mean for me “in practice.” As I live the Christian life, I can rest in the plans of God. Even though His ways and plans seem different than my own, His plan and His timing for my life are perfect. No matter the detours that sometimes challenge my journey, no matter how great the disappointments may seem, He is still in control. My part is to follow the psalmist who said, “Trust in the Lord and do good.” (Psalm 37:3)

- Dr. L.W. Edwards



# Hold Fast to Your Hope

**G**eorge Washington learned the risks and dangers of war early in his military career. Death or serious injury were his constant companions on the battlefield. Furthermore, the specter of defeat often threatened him and his soldiers with disgrace and imprisonment by the enemy.

## Risky Business

During one military loss in the French and Indian War in 1755, Washington volunteered as an aid to British Major General Edward Braddock. Four enemy bullets ripped holes through Washington's coat. More bullets killed two of his horses beneath him. Washington escaped the battle without harm, while Braddock was fatally wounded.

Washington experienced his share of defeats as his military career continued. Shortly after being promoted to the rank of colonel in 1754, he, along with 400 men, was forced to surrender Fort Mifflin in Pennsylvania to the French and Indians.

Other significant defeats came as Washington commanded American armed forces in the Revolutionary War with Great Britain. One came in 1776 at New York City. Another came in 1777 when Washington lost a critical battle at Brandywine Creek, Pennsylvania. This loss forced him and his troops to surrender control of Philadelphia, [the U.S. capital city](#) at that time.

## Defeat's What If List

Washington [lost more battles than he won](#) in the Revolutionary War. He commanded an army which fell short in supplies, discipline and leadership experience and even lacked the confidence of the Continental Congress which had commissioned him. Some congressional leaders considered replacing him. If these losses were not grounds enough for discouragement, the dropping morale and desertions of his soldiers should have been enough to convince him to quit.

Suppose after these losses Washington created a what-if list:

- "What if we lose another battle?"
- "What if I am injured?"
- "What if we lose more soldiers to desertion?"
- "What if my plan doesn't work?"
- "What if our military runs out of resources?"
- "What if I fail again and lose the respect of my men?"
- "What if Britain wins the war?"

## Roots of Persistence

History does not tell us if any of these thoughts crossed Washington's mind, but it does remember

him as someone who kept going until ultimate victory was won. His persistence was rooted in hope. Hope drove him to press through the potential risks and actual dangers, discouragements and losses he faced, rather than cowering beneath the paralyzing fear of what ifs.

In a world filled with danger, defeats and discouragement, the voices of what ifs will try to paralyze us. But Christians have an advantage. Our hope for victory in the present is not grounded in political leaders, election outcomes, environmental forces, economic projections or world affairs. It is anchored in Jesus' death and resurrection in the past. The same power that overcame the ultimate loss (death) empowers us to live in victory each day.

Furthermore, the back of our Bibles assures us of ultimate victory in the future: "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:3-4)

## Hopeful Living in a Despairing World

If these verses are true, then Christians should be the most hopeful people on the planet.

We are not oblivious to the brokenness in our world or even in our own lives. We experience sorrow and discouragement. We have to purchase medication and nutritional supplements to stay healthy. We suffer pain and losses, disappointments and heartbreak. But we see our present reality through a lens of future glory. Heaven — and Jesus — awaits. This world isn't as good as it gets. Conversely, the worst we experience on earth is as bad as life will become. Hope in our ultimate victory changes our outlook.

And hope drives us to plow ahead toward an ultimate prize undimmed by present distresses, past defeats or future alarms. The news headlines may not improve on this side of eternity. Though all the wrong within our world attempts to douse us with despair, let us hold fast to our hope — because ultimate victory is coming.

- *Cam Edwards*

