

# UNITED IN FAITH, JOY AND LOVE

A 7-Day Devotional from  
Your Friends at Hope Ministries





Dear Friend,

I'm so glad that you have requested this special devotional from Hope Ministries. It is my prayer that each day's devotional will speak to you in a special way as you seek to follow Christ and reach out in His name and love to others.

The stories you will read in the following pages are from the front lines of our ministry to those throughout Central Iowa who are experiencing homelessness, hunger and—in many cases—the pain of addiction and other setbacks.

The testimonies shared here are linked with passages from the Bible, because it is the foundation of all that we do at Hope Ministries to provide immediate physical care and long-term recovery for those who come through our doors.

Whether the message is a word from Christ in the Gospels, from the prophets of old, or from the writings of the apostles, God's Word is our daily guide and comfort, giving us direction in how to show the love of Christ to those around us.

Thank you again for requesting this guide, and may God richly bless you as you read.

Your partner in ministry,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leon Negen'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Leon Negen  
President/CEO

HOPE MINISTRIES

BETHEL MISSION

“When you give a dinner or a banquet . . . invite the poor, the crippled, the lame,  
the blind, and you will be blessed.”  
Luke 14:12–14 ESV

## Caring for Those in Need

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Jesus commanded the people of His day to offer the hospitality of their table and their care to others around them who were suffering, alone or had a hard time providing “daily bread” for themselves and their families—for whatever reason.

Jesus also promised blessing to those who share their resources and lives with people who are hurting. That wonderful sense of joy you experience when you reach out a helping hand to someone is not just a warm feeling. It’s the Spirit of God saying, “Well done!”

Our Savior welcomed all into His loving arms. His example is still our calling today.

We are committed to this calling with all of our hearts at Hope Ministries! That’s why our doors are always open to those who are hurting like Anthony, who came to us hungry and homeless. He had spent six months living in a shelter he built from cinder blocks, sleeping on a pallet. The day Anthony arrived, it was *26 degrees below zero*. He enjoyed a hot meal and experienced his first night of warm shelter in many months. Soon after, he also entered our long-term life recovery program. Thanks to many friends who partner with us, more lives like Anthony’s are being changed every day at Hope Ministries through the power of God!

Partnering together for those who are in need allows us to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our community—and allows God to use you to bring healing and hope to people who may otherwise not have access to a warm meal or safe shelter.

So, as you thank God today for His goodness in supplying this day’s bread, ask Him to show you someone who needs your love and care.

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**Unite with us in prayer** for many others like Anthony who are homeless and hungry as they come to Hope Ministries for a hot meal each day. Pray the meal and care they receive will open their hearts to God’s love and a new beginning in life—as it did for Anthony!

**Did you know?** Hope Ministries has been meeting the needs of Central Iowans since 1915! In our 2021 fiscal year alone, we served 129,425 meals and provided 54,858 nights of shelter through support from caring friends and donors.

Be a part of changing lives at [hopeiowa.org/ChangeLives](https://hopeiowa.org/ChangeLives)

“Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—  
when you see the naked, to clothe them,  
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?”  
Isaiah 58:7 NIV

## Offering a Helping Hand

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God Himself has issued this call to His people to open their hands and hearts to those who are in need. God’s Word can mean hope and the opportunity for a new life to hurting people as we bring them into our care.

God’s message through the prophet Isaiah was specific—because it’s hard to hear even the Good News of Christ when your stomach is empty, or you’re cold and scared after a night on the streets.

Perhaps you are experiencing a hard challenge in your own life right now. The process may be painful, but God can also use these moments to deepen your trust in Him and show you His Grace. One thing is for sure: problems don’t negate God’s love and purpose for you.

That’s the message of hope we offer to every person who comes through our doors at Hope Ministries. And that was the message Vikki desperately needed to hear. Pain and abuse in her childhood led Vikki to experiment with drugs, and for years, she struggled with addiction. She often found herself sleeping on the streets or in her car.

But Vikki found help and hope here: nutritious meals, safe shelter and long-term life recovery.

“I don’t know where I’d be if not here. I feel like God saved me,” she says today.

When we help lighten the heavy burdens others are carrying, our own loads often get lighter, and we experience the joy and peace that come from helping others! If you are carrying a heavy load today, why not reach out to a friend who can help you carry it? Pray also that God will put a hurting friend or family member on your heart, and then share with them how God has sustained and carried you.

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**Please pray with us** for the many people in our region whose lives have spun out of control and who will be homeless and hungry tonight. Pray that that they will turn to Hope Ministries for meals and safe refuge, and that our care will help heal their hurts and open their hearts to a fresh start in life.

**Did you know?** Hope Ministries shelters hundreds who are hurting *each night*. And we serve three meals a day to those who are hungry—all thanks to the support of caring, generous friends and partners.

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“How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!  
People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.  
They feast on the abundance of your house;  
you give them drink from your river of delights.”  
Psalm 36:7–8 NIV

## Gratitude and Caring Hearts

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The psalmist's heart overflowed with gratitude to God for His gifts and mercies that are new every morning. The Bible calls us to praise God for meeting our basic daily needs and giving us opportunities to share our abundance with those in our community who are in need.

David, the author of the Psalms, was a wealthy king. But as a man who loved God, David knew where his blessings were sourced. And he called us to join him in his praise.

Sometimes we take the good things of life for granted. But Scripture reminds us that the bounty on our tables, and even the water that refreshes and sustains us, are gifts from our loving Father who knows what we need and delights in providing it.

At Hope Ministries, we welcome individuals and families every day for whom even the most basic necessities of life are a constant struggle. That was the case for single mother Petra and her four children. She turned to drugs to try and relieve the pain of watching them go without—but her downward spiral almost cost Petra the custody of her children. Desperate for help, but with nowhere else to turn, Petra came to Hope Ministries. “The staff welcomed us with smiles!” While staying with us, Petra started learning how to trust God and the loving people around her. She dove into the Bible and developed a stronger relationship with her kids. “I know God put me here for a reason.”

Petra says to our Hope Ministries donors, “Thank you for your caring hearts!”

God loves a grateful heart! In what ways has He been especially good to you and your loved ones in recent days? To encourage yourself and them, tell them what you are thankful for today. And don't forget to tell God—why not spend some time praising Him for the blessings in your life?

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**Unite with us in prayer** for the many families like Petra's who are in despair and teetering on the brink of homelessness. Pray that Hope Ministries will have the resources needed to provide meals and shelter to all who have turned to us to escape life on the streets—with no one ever turned away.

**Did you know?** In our community there is an especially vulnerable population of mothers and children right on the edge of homelessness. Hope Ministries is one of a few organizations in Central Iowa providing safe refuge and long-term life recovery for women and children.

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“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 NIV

## Overflowing with Hope

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God’s desire is that our lives overflow with the joy and peace that only He can give us. These qualities are rooted in the *hope* we have in Christ, both for today and forever.

What a wonderful message of assurance! God’s definition of hope is a steadfast confidence built on His unchanging character and never-failing Word. We can hope or wish for this or that, but sometimes those wishes don’t pan out. But when God says you can hope in Him, that’s a promise you can stake your life and eternity on!

For people who have been battered by life and have lost heart, hope can be a fragile commodity. That’s the way Jeff felt. Years of drug and alcohol abuse had taken a huge toll on Jeff. At age 40, he found himself homeless, living in a storage unit in Florida. “With every bender, I was that much closer to death.”

But just when all hope seemed gone, Jeff came to our Hope Ministries men’s shelter. “I didn’t know where to turn, but God brought me here,” Jeff says. “He gave me a purpose. My future is limitless!”

We praise God for working in Jeff’s life. We know He cares about Jeff even more than we do! That’s the real joy of serving at a place like Hope Ministries. We have the incredible joy and privilege of seeing God reshape and transform precious lives every day!

And the best part is that we know this hope in Christ will last! The Bible says so in Romans 5:5. Our hope in Christ will never disappoint us! Bask in the joy and assurance of that promise for your life today.

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**Pray with us** that the *care* and hope we offer at Hope Ministries will always be available to anyone who reaches out for help.

**Did you know?** Along with recovery from addiction, financial setbacks and other hardships, Hope Ministries also provides life recovery programs and counseling to help people overcome joblessness and regain their independence. Last year, over 300 people were helped through these life-changing programs.

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“But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Luke 10:33–37 NIV

## Being a Good Samaritan

In one of His most loved parables, Jesus told of the “Good Samaritan” who did not turn away from someone in dire straits, but took the extra steps necessary to provide healing and recovery.

What makes the Samaritan’s response of compassion even more remarkable is that two others had already turned away from the wounded man and passed by on the other side. Yes, some will turn away from the needs they see.

But your very response in requesting this booklet reveals you to be a person who cares for the wounded of this world.

At Hope Ministries, we thank God for friends like you. The fact is, we couldn’t accomplish our calling of rebuilding broken lives through God’s power without those who come alongside us by their prayers and gifts.

It’s a blessing to have partners like you—because it’s costly to care! But because of these friends, we are able to offer life-saving help to people like Tiffany. Five years ago, Tiffany was in a hospital bed after having attempted to end her life. Decades of addiction and hurt had stolen her desire to live. But then she was introduced to Hope Ministries through a friend.

“The love everyone here showed me was exactly what I needed,” she remembers. “It helped me believe maybe I could change, maybe I could have the relationship with God that they had.” That care and love has given Tiffany a new life, and today, she is thriving. Tiffany has also excelled in her new role as an aftercare case manager right here at Hope Ministries, giving the kind of care and attention she received when she first walked through our doors!

Yes, sometimes it costs to care—but the rewards are worth it! And in many ways, we are on the same road as that compassionate Samaritan. There are wounded people all around us. All we have to do is really look at them—and respond! Ask God to lead you to someone today who needs your care and restoring touch.

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**Unite with us in prayer today** for desperate young mothers like Tiffany, and others who are lost and broken, that they will find the help they need to heal and rebuild their lives.

**Did you know?** Hope Ministries offers compassionate life recovery programs to help hundreds in need each year overcome addiction and other challenges as they regain their independence.

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“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”  
John 5:24 NIV

## The Greatest Promise

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This is truly the greatest promise of all—the assurance of eternal life in Jesus Christ! It is faith in Christ that truly transforms lives, bringing lost and hurting people from darkness to the light of His forgiveness and new life.

The joy of salvation is unlike any other happiness. Being in right relation to Christ can cause our hearts to sing on even the cloudiest days and form in us the desire that others know the peace and comfort of being forgiven and adopted into God’s family.

Our greatest desire at Hope Ministries is to bring those we serve who are suffering to the Savior who can heal, forgive and restore even the most shattered hearts. That’s where Colette found herself when a severe bout of depression ended her career as a medical assistant and phlebotomist.

After a stay in a mental health center, Colette came to our Hope Center for Women and Children. She faced the difficult issues from her past and found a relationship with Christ. “I never had the faith that I do now!” she says.

We count it a great honor to introduce our guests to the One who died for them and offers them the indescribable gift of eternal life. At Hope Ministries, those we serve often need immediate assistance. But we also know what the sustaining and transforming power of Christ can do in a life for today, and forever!

There is no greater gift we can give to those who are lost and broken than the truth that they are loved by God, who has plans for them in this life and for eternity! This message of ultimate hope can turn a person from darkness and hopelessness to the light of God’s presence. Our prayer is that you also will have this assurance in your life and family today.

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**Join with us today as we pray** for those who have yet to hear that they have a Savior in Jesus Christ. Pray that Hope Ministries will continue to shine as a beacon of hope to all trapped in darkness.

**Did you know?** Hope Ministries offers Bible studies, chapel, group devotions and Bible-based counseling and training courses to enrich the lives of those who seek Christ.

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“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:  
The old has gone, the new is here!”  
2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV

## A Brand-New Start

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Someone has rightly said that this wonderful declaration by the Apostle Paul is one of the clearest descriptions of what it means to be born anew in Christ.

Paul had experienced this radical transformation in his own life, which began anew on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). So, he knew firsthand how the Lord could change a heart and life so completely that it was like being created for the first time.

Many people long and even pray for the opportunity to make a new start in life. And at Hope Ministries, we specialize in making these dreams and prayers come true through the power of God and the steadfast work of our caring staff and volunteers. We've been doing this since 1915, and the exciting process of seeing a life made new never grows old.

Jericka is one of our guests who is glad that the hope of Christ never dims. After years of battling addiction, doctors told her she had the internal organs of a 65-year-old, even though she was not yet 30!

Jericka knew she couldn't continue down the path she was on, so she looked for help—and found it here. “Before I came to Hope Ministries, I was lost, broken, stuck in addiction, a failure,” she says. “But now, I have only things I really need in life—and that's God and the people He's put in my life here to help me through this season.”

Finding faith in Christ has given Jericka a solid foundation to build on for the future. We rejoice with her, a testimony only possible because of friends who support the work of Hope Ministries.

It's thrilling to hear about someone who has made a new start. But it doesn't have to be just another person's story. God offers everyone a new start each day through the power and grace promised to us every moment in Christ. Let us give thanks to God for this great gift!

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**Please pray with us today** for those with broken lives who have not yet discovered that Christ can sweep aside all the broken pieces and make them brand new in Him. And pray for Hope Ministries as we hold out this hope to all who come through our doors.

**Did you know?** The needs among women and children experiencing homelessness across Central Iowa are growing. In the 2020-21 school year, Des Moines Public Schools alone counted 897 students experiencing homelessness.

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