



HOPE. ALWAYS.

OUR ANCHOR IN LIFE'S STORMS

KRIS FRANK

Praise for *Hope Always*

“Leaning on the insights of the saints, teachings of the Church, wisdom from the Bible, and stories from years of ministry, *Hope Always* provides our youth and young adults with a resource that has the potential to inspire them not to give up on God in their walk toward eternity.”

Fr. Joshua Johnson, priest of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, author, podcast host of *Ask Fr. Josh*

“Kris does a masterful job of not only explaining what hope is, but also helping us to understand how to cling to, long for, and live in it. With all that we face in the world today, and with despair lingering in many hearts, this book is essential reading for anyone who longs to see the light and grow in the virtue of hope.”

Katie Prejean McGrady,
international speaker and author

“We need hope now more than ever. It’s easy to be discouraged and anxious. Whether because of a repeat sin

or wrestling with doubt, sometimes we feel like giving up. Kris Frank has written a book filled with hope! You are not alone. There are amazing saints who have struggled just like you! This book is a great encouragement to any who could use a reminder that all is not lost. I love these words and know that many will be blessed by this book!”

Chris Padgett, speaker, musician, author,
YouTuber at *Happy Place Homestead*,
www.chrispadgett.com

“The virtue of hope can be overwhelming and hard to understand. That’s true for everyone, but especially for our modern-day youth and young adults who have been fed lies of relativism and hopelessness from every angle. Kris has experience working with a population that doesn’t always have hope so obviously present to them. He also has a passion to help people—as evidenced by his national speaking reputation and youth ministry. His experience and his faith have inspired him to write this delightful book, filled with Scripture, spirituality, theology, and real-life application, which make the theological virtue of hope more accessible, understandable, and practical. *Hope Always* is a wonderful read and an invitation you can’t refuse!”

Fr. Leo E. Patalinghug, IVDei, TV and radio host, author,
speaker, founder of www.PlatingGrace.com
and www.TheTableFoundation.org

“No matter where we come from, no one gets through life unscathed. Kris Frank has given us a personal and compelling book that engages life head-on with wisdom to face all its trials, doubts, and disappointments. As Kris says, “Christian hope never disappoints”—through testimony, stories, and Scripture, this book unpacks why and how Jesus Christ is our true anchor and hope. A must-read and an inspiring book that will accompany countless people as they navigate this life!”

Sarah Swafford, speaker and author of *Emotional Virtue: A Guide to Drama-Free Relationships*

“This little book is a big deal. Kris Frank pulls from 2,000 years of Catholic tradition as well as from his personal experiences as a youth minister, evangelizer, husband, and father in order to introduce (or reintroduce) his readers to the theological virtue of hope. His reflections on doubt and anxiety are particularly excellent and most timely. It’s the right book for today’s world.”

Fr. Damian Ference, priest of the Diocese of Cleveland,
author of *The Strangeness of Truth*

“Life’s great sufferings put other sufferings in perspective,’ so writes Kris Frank in this wonderful book. Guided by the saints and Sacred Scripture and dramatically enhanced by powerful personal stories, Frank guides us on our own rediscovery of hope. Offering

counsel amid discouragement, suffering, and despair, this book is sure to become a life raft for many to weather the storms of life with peace and joy!”

Andrew Swafford, STD, associate professor
of Theology, Benedictine College; author and host
of *Romans: The Gospel of Salvation*

HOPE ALWAYS

OUR ANCHOR IN LIFE'S STORMS

By Kris Frank



Library of Congress Control Number: 2020930116

CIP data is available.

ISBN 10: 0-8198-3463-7

ISBN 13: 978-0-8198-3463-8

Many manufacturers and sellers distinguish their products through the use of trademarks. Any trademarked designations that appear in this book are used in good faith but are not authorized by, associated with, or sponsored by the trademark owners.

Every effort has been made to trace copyright holders and to obtain their permission for the use of copyright material. The publisher apologizes for any errors or omissions in the list below and would be grateful if notified of any corrections that should be incorporated in future reprints or editions of this book.

Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New American Bible, Revised Edition*, © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C., and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All rights reserved. No part of the *New American Bible* may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Excerpts from the English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for use in the United States of America, copyright © 1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc. — Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Used with permission.

Excerpts from papal and magisterium texts copyright © Libreria Editrice Vaticana. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

Cover design by Ryan McQuade

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

“P” and PAULINE are registered trademarks of the Daughters of St. Paul.

Copyright © 2020, Kris Frank

Published by Pauline Books & Media, 50 Saint Pauls Avenue, Boston, MA 02130-3491. www.pauline.org.

Printed in the U.S.A.

Pauline Books & Media is the publishing house of the Daughters of St. Paul, an international congregation of women religious serving the Church with the communications media.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

24 23 22 21 20

*For my wife, Grace.
You truly are amazing.*

Contents

Foreword

- *xiii* -

CHAPTER ONE

Hope

- 1 -

CHAPTER TWO

Hope for the Sinner

- 13 -

CHAPTER THREE

Hope for the Discouraged

- 25 -

CHAPTER FOUR

Hope for the Doubters

- 37 -

CHAPTER FIVE

Hope for the Anxious

- 49 -

CHAPTER SIX

Hope for the Weary

- 59 -

CHAPTER SEVEN

Hope for the Addict

- 71 -

CHAPTER EIGHT

Hope for the Suffering

- 83 -

CHAPTER NINE

Hope for the Grieving

- 95 -

CHAPTER TEN

Hope for Others

- 107 -

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Hope for Our Families

- 119 -

CHAPTER TWELVE

Hope for the Church

- 131 -

CONCLUSION

Hope for the Future

- 145 -

Afterword

- 151 -

Acknowledgments

- 153 -

Notes

- 155 -

Foreword

THE HUMAN PERSON can survive only about three weeks without food. (Though working on a college campus makes me wonder if some of my students could survive more than three hours.)

Water is even more important for human survival. We can only live for a few days without water.

And then there's oxygen. Without oxygen we can only survive for a few minutes.

But, believe it or not, there's something even more essential to human life than food, water, or oxygen—hope. We can't live a moment without hope. Not one moment.

The human heart demands and longs for hope. We need hope to be fully alive and to live a life full of purpose, promise, peace, and joy. Sadly, however, many people live without this balm for the soul, which is so unfortunate because it doesn't have to be that way.

It doesn't help that many people confuse the virtue of hope with a desire or want. We often hear people say

things like, “I hope the weather is nice on our vacation.” Or, “I hope I get that job.” While we use the word “hope” in these instances, we don’t really hope for or in these things. We might want the weather to be nice on our vacation and we might even pray for that intention but is our hope really in a vacation? Or we might desire that job, but should we really *hope* in it?

Saint Paul tells us that “hope does not disappoint” (Rom 5:5). But how does that work? So often peoples’ hopes are disappointed. However, when we experience disappointment, it’s because we didn’t have a clear understanding of hope. We didn’t know where, or in whom, to place our hope. We need only look at today’s world to see the consequences of many lives lived without real, authentic hope. Anxiety, frustration, addiction, confusion, angst—all this and more can come from a lack of real hope.

For this reason, Kris Frank’s book on the topic of hope is so timely and important. In it, he does an excellent job illuminating our profound need for hope. He points out that true hope is found in Jesus Christ and in him alone. Hope anchored in God’s love gives purpose and meaning to our lives. We all long for this kind of hope, the hope that brings light and reminds us that God is who he says he is; the hope that confirms that our present struggle is not the end. This is the only kind of true hope that will not disappoint. Today’s world so profoundly needs to know the source of our hope. So, I encourage you to begin reading this book right away. There’s not a minute to lose.

FATHER DAVE PIVONKA, TOR
President, Franciscan University



CHAPTER ONE

Hope

“Hold fast to the hope that lies before us. This we have as an anchor of the soul.”

—HEBREWS 6:18–19

ON JULY 4, 1952, Florence Chadwick set out to do something many deemed impossible. The 34-year-old planned to be the first woman to swim the Catalina Channel—a 21-mile stretch of water between Catalina Island and the California coast. That day the weather was abysmal. The water was bitterly cold, and a dense fog inhibited visibility. Nevertheless, Florence swam for hours. Support boats carrying her mother and trainer followed closely behind. Rifles were fired repeatedly to scare away sharks that

stalked below. From warm and cozy homes around the country, many people watched with interest as the event played out on television. After swimming nearly sixteen hours, however, Florence was completely depleted and discouraged. She gave up and asked to be taken out of the water. Back in the boat, Florence realized she had been only 1/2 mile away from the shore. Afterward, Florence confessed to a reporter, “Look, I’m not excusing myself, but if I could have seen land, I know I could have made it.”¹

Most of us haven’t swum the Catalina Channel (or any channel for that matter), but we all can relate to Florence’s excuse for not getting to the finish line. Sometimes we go through life wondering, “How much longer can I strive for something I cannot see?” If only we could see the shoreline, it would be so much easier. Just staying afloat can seem impossible in the face of each day’s never-ending, difficult moments. We fail and fall short; sometimes life becomes too difficult, and we want to call it quits. I often feel this way, and my guess is that I’m not alone. Actually, I *know* I’m not alone.

Over the years I’ve encountered countless people— young and old alike—who find it difficult to make it through life. Like Florence Chadwick, they feel like the shorelines of a happy, joyful life are perpetually just out of reach. We may not desire to swim long distances surrounded by sharks to earn some record, but God created each one of us for greatness. And like Florence, however, when life becomes arduous, we can easily become discouraged. Thankfully, even when we’re surrounded by the

dense fog of the unknown, there's a proven way to navigate the chilly, choppy waters of life. God provides us with something that anchors us when everything else threatens to blow us off course. In case it's not obvious, I'm talking about the virtue of hope.

In the supernatural sense, hope is not the positive emotion that might have helped Florence push through the last half mile to shore. Hope is not a feel-good optimism that helps people get through tough times. Rather, hope is a theological virtue, a gift from God given to us in Baptism. When properly understood and lived, the virtue of hope can save our lives. It can anchor us both when life is calm and effortless and also when it feels difficult and impossible. Living in Christian hope is not always easy, especially when the disruptions and distresses of life pile up, but it's possible. And it's worth it. In fact, it's exactly what helps us to not only survive but to thrive. Before we begin to explore how to live hope amid life's ups and downs, let's explore a bit more exactly what hope is and what it isn't.

Hope Defined

In everyday conversation, we often equate hope with a wish for the future. We say things like, "My birthday is coming up. I hope I get the new Apple watch" or "I hope the line at Chick-fil-A isn't too long." Growing up in Northwest Ohio, for example, I *hoped* that Cleveland's Browns would play well enough to eke out a few wins. (You may take this as a knock on Cleveland sports. Don't.

Those are my teams. I'll root for them through thick and thin. Rain or shine. Win or lose. . . . But to be honest, they mostly lose.) Now, let's be clear, it isn't necessarily wrong to hope in these ways. We all hope for a perfect birthday gift or that our favorite team pulls off a big upset—but when we hope for these things, we aren't exercising the virtue of hope.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) tells us, “Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit” (1817). I don't use the word “beautiful” to describe many definitions, but it seems appropriate here. Hope grants us the assurance that our deepest longings can and will be satiated by the God who put those desires within our hearts. The virtue gives us the supernatural strength to rely on Christ's grace when our own strength fails. Hope is what prompted Saint Catherine of Siena to proclaim, “All the way to heaven, is heaven.”² Hope points our faith to eternal life and brings heaven, in some sense, into the present moment.

Hope is given to us in Baptism, but we are not mere passive recipients of this gift. Aided by grace, hope is a movement of the will. Of course, hope can provoke an emotional response, but fundamentally we have to choose to conform with the grace that has been given to us by God. Life is too difficult to passively stumble into hope. It's a virtue we must fight for with God's grace. When we live the virtue of hope, it leads us to happiness. Hope is the

foundation of the joy that Christians are called to live in all circumstances. It's a life-changing gift that leads us to encounter God. When we live the virtue of hope in our lives, it completely changes the way we approach the world around us.

It's also important to realize that hope isn't a quick fix that immediately fulfills our longings and saves us from life's hardships. Instead, amid our aches and sufferings, hope keeps our gaze on Christ, confident in his promises. Too often we turn our focus away from the source of our hope—Jesus—and shift our gaze to earthly things. This shift may go unnoticed for a time. But when life takes a turn for the worse, a lack of hope can cripple us, which is why it's so important to actively ask God for the grace to grow in hope every day.

Hope in Everyday Life

A few years ago, I returned home from a long weekend away where I had been serving on a retreat for a local youth group. Being away from family is never easy, but this time was especially challenging. During the retreat, the camp's water pump broke, and the entire grounds were out of water for most of the weekend. We had no running water for cooking, showers, or toilets. We almost cancelled the event, but we decided to persevere. Thankfully, the retreat was a success. But after spending a long weekend running and playing in the humid Texas woods, I was ready to go home and take a nice, warm, long shower. My dreams of rest and relaxation, however, would soon be

shattered. As I walked across my front lawn, I noticed my sneakers making a strange squishing sound. I looked down and realized that our grass was completely saturated in water from a broken pipe.

While waiting for the water department to arrive, I was consumed with frustration. I'm ashamed to say that my anger, combined with the fear of a hefty bill, led to a major freak-out. I ended up locking myself in the bathroom to escape the predicament for a minute and to collect myself. I had some choice words for God, and they weren't pretty. I was irate. I was incensed. Sure, it was just a broken pipe. I know that now and, to be honest, I knew it in the moment. The situation could have been so much worse. Even so, it all seemed so unfair. I couldn't understand why God would allow these water problems to follow me home.

Standing in my family's little bathroom, I couldn't reconcile how an all-loving, all-powerful, all-knowing God could let such an irksome and preventable thing happen. Now, was I facing a truly exasperating dilemma? Yes. A broken pipe needed to be fixed, and it was an inconvenience. My predicament was made even more inconvenient by my exhaustion and financial worries. In hindsight, however, the real issue wasn't a broken pipe. It was my broken perspective. My focus had fallen from the things of heaven to the stresses and annoyances of this world. And my shift in focus had left me completely unable to deal with what was a relatively small problem.

I'm sure most of you can relate to this ridiculous, rather embarrassing story. Most of us have been thrown

into a tizzy by pretty insignificant things. A friend doesn't text us back quickly enough, and we lose our patience. A family member says the wrong thing at the wrong time, and we snap. A roommate pushes our buttons until we've had enough. Someone on the interstate drives too fast, and we give the person a one-finger salute. At times, the most trivial events can provoke the ugliest behavior. Deep down, however, most of us know that relatively minor problems like these are not the worst things we'll have to face. Inevitably the seasons of our lives will move from little annoyances to far greater struggles. When we're reeling from a family member's recent diagnosis, a broken pipe seems less devastating. Or when we are heartbroken from a recent breakup, we may barely notice a traffic jam that would have left us irate on any other day.

Life's great sufferings put other sufferings in perspective. When we ask God for the grace to hope amid small sufferings, it prepares us to hope when we face more substantial sorrows. If we aren't intentional and disciplined about living hope, however, the small and large issues can compound. Eventually, without hope, our little sufferings can become a weight impossible to bear. This is why hope is so vital. Whether facing daily inconveniences or significant suffering, if we lose our focus on God, our hearts can begin to absorb and reflect the hardness and misery of our trials rather than the love of Christ. Wherever we find ourselves and whatever we are going through, the virtue of hope helps us to trust that we will never be abandoned by God in our time of need. Hope gives us the ability to raise our gaze from our suffering to our Savior.

Jesus Is Our Hope

This chapter opened with a quote from the Letter to the Hebrews. Let's take a moment to read more of that passage:

When God wanted to give the heirs of his promise an even clearer demonstration of the immutability of his purpose, he intervened with an oath, so that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge might be strongly encouraged to hold fast to the hope that lies before us. This we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm. (Heb 6:17–19)

In this passage, we learn that our hope is steadfast, grounded, and sure because it is rooted in the immutable promise and oath of our God. Without hope, the storms of life can cause us to drift away into an abyss of despair. Thankfully, God gave us hope that anchors us to him. With hope as our anchor, nothing can shake us. Our God is trustworthy. He will never leave, abandon, or forget us in times of need.

As Christians, hope is one of the most crucial gifts given by God to carry us through this life. Unfortunately, some of us believe the lie that hope cannot sustain us during life's most difficult events. If by hope we meant something like "good vibes," then this would be true. It would be silly to live in that kind of hope. We'd inevitably end up fools if we depended on something so vague. We all know that things turn out badly despite wishful thinking. Positive attitudes don't protect us from problems.

Hope isn't pie-in-the-sky optimism. Hope is much more grounded. It doesn't blindly assume the best even when things are horrible. Hope sees reality. Hope is neither nebulous nor ethereal. Emily Dickinson once wrote,

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all.³

Though a beautiful sentiment, I disagree with the famed poet. This tune of hope does have words. In fact, our hope is *the* Word. Our hope is Jesus.

We have a God who was willing to become man. God the Father sent his Son to enter into our mire and muck. Jesus took on our humanity in all ways but sin. He knows what it is to feel lonely and angry. He understands our hurt, our brokenness, and our shame. He bore it all on a cross. He died a death he didn't deserve so that we could live eternal life with him, something we could never earn ourselves. Through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our Baptism, we are saved from our sins and given the gift of eternal life. At Baptism our souls are infused with the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. These virtues center us on God and “[make us] capable of acting as [God’s] children and of meriting eternal life” (CCC 1813). In other words, the theological virtues draw us into a deeper and richer relationship with God. Because of this wondrous mystery, we can place our hope in God. No matter what situation we face, hope assures us that our best days lie ahead.

Ways to Read This Book

My objective in writing this book is not to give a thorough theological breakdown of the virtue of hope. Many worthwhile resources do just that. Instead, I offer a field guide for the times in our lives when we most need hope by highlighting the specific hurdles that block our path to a hope-filled life. The first eight chapters focus on cultivating hope in our own lives while the final three examine how we can share hope with those around us. This book won't fix all our problems or give us all the answers our hearts are seeking. But, when read in combination with prayer, it will point us to a God who can.

Before reading any further, please allow me to offer a few suggestions for how to get the most out of this book.

A Simple Read

My idea of a perfect Saturday (or any day for that matter) is to be stretched out on a cozy couch with a cup of coffee and a good book. So if this book is just one on a long list of to-reads, then by all means, read it as you would read any other book. A book read is better than a book unread. But as you read, be sure to say a prayer asking God to help you to grow in the virtue of hope.

Group Study

Study groups and book clubs can really help us to absorb a book's content. People of different viewpoints, ideas, and lifestyles also can shine a brighter light on the

importance of hope for our world. So you might consider inviting a friend to read along with you. Or, even better, invite a group to gather and discuss the book. Each chapter ends with a few questions to help foster discussion and reflection. These questions can serve as a springboard into more in-depth conversations.

Personal Meditations

This book's chapters are not formatted as prayer meditations, but they still can be a companion to prayer. Try taking this book with you to an adoration chapel or keep it next to your favorite prayer spot at home. As you read each chapter, give yourself the time and space to pray and reflect. No need to rush. If any words, paragraphs, or ideas strike a chord, take a break and pray for a bit. God has something more for you than the words on these pages. This book is a blueprint, but God is the actual architect when it comes to your growth in hope.

However you choose to approach reading this book, I pray that it's enjoyable and helps you to grow in the virtue of hope.