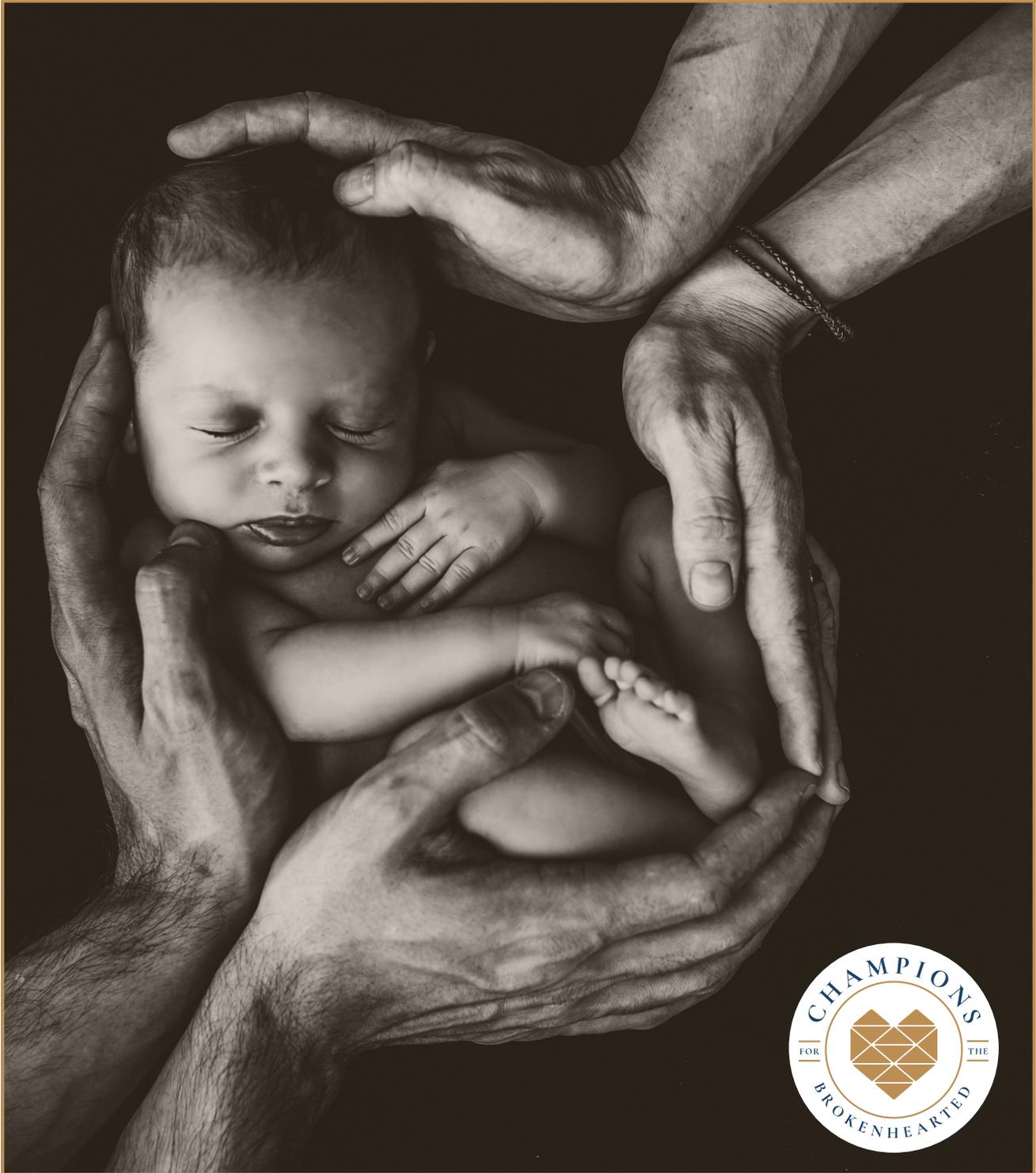




HOPE FOR THE UNBORN



EXCERPT FROM
KEYS FOR LIVING LIBRARY



INTRODUCTION

Dear Friend,

I was born in Melbourne, Australia without arms and legs even though three sonograms had never revealed any complications. Growing up, it wasn't easy. Throughout my childhood, I struggled with depression and loneliness. I even questioned the purpose of my life and tried to take my own life when I was ten years old.

But Jesus met me in my pain and I decided to give my life to him. Since then, I've travelled to 74 countries to share my story with millions of people just like yourself, from students and young people to business professionals and even world leaders. I want to share a special message with the world based on my own story and encounter with Jesus: there is hope.

I may not know what you're struggling with today. But like I've seen in my own life, the Bible teaches us that Jesus is not only present in our pain, but that He is the answer to our heaviest struggles. Jesus says, *"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 16:33).

I'm here to tell you today that you are special, you are loved, and that God does have an amazing plan for your life. He will never leave or forsake you. And if God can use me, a man without arms and legs, to be His hands and feet, then He will certainly use any willing heart. Throughout my life I've always held onto a special verse that says: *"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). If we give our lives to him, he promises to give us hope and a future. Now that is amazing!

Here at Life Without Limbs, we love you and we're praying for you. We're here to be your Champions and to point you back to the true Champion: Jesus. We pray that these resources will help you through whatever challenges you may be facing and bring hope for the way forward.

Thank you and God Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Nick Vujicic and the Life Without Limbs Team

ANXIETY

Calming the Fearful Heart

What Is God's Heart on Anxiety?

Anxiety inaccurately judges reality. It forgets the past and fears the future. It fails to remember how you've made it through past difficulties and focuses instead on potential threats in the future. Anxiety leaves you with a fight or flight response in the present, vigilantly preparing for possible outcomes or avoiding fearful situations altogether.

The Lord, however, sees all things clearly. He says, *"I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please'"* (Isaiah 46:10). God has brought you through the past and holds your future in His hands. And in your present struggle with anxiety, He is with you. The Lord is at work in your life—your anxiety is not without purpose. God longs to be your refuge and help you walk through your fears and troubles.

*"God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble."*

(PSALM 46:1)

10 Biblical Truths When You Become Anxious

God wants you to remember that He is good and gracious—and compassionately cares about you.

"The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made" (PSALM 145:8–9).

God wants you to remember He is with you when you're fearful.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (ISAIAH 41:10).

God wants you to pray and experience His peace when you're feeling anxious.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (PHILIPPIANS 4:6–7).

God wants you to look to Him and His Word when you're filled with anxiety.

"When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy" (PSALM 94:19).

God has brought
you through the
past and holds your
future in His hands.

God wants you to align your thoughts with His truth when you feel anxious.

“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (PHILIPPIANS 4:8).

God wants you to trust Him when you’re anxious—to have faith and not fear.

“When I am afraid, I put my trust in you” (PSALM 56:3).

God wants you to talk to Him about all that causes you to feel anxious.

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 PETER 5:7).

God wants you to talk to others about your fears and anxieties.

“Where there is no guidance the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory” (PROVERBS 11:14 NASB).

God wants you to take care of yourself physically and spiritually.

“For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come” (1 TIMOTHY 4:8).

God wants you to encourage others who struggle with anxiety.

“Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up” (PROVERBS 12:25).

PREGNANCY ... UNPLANNED

What Do I Do Now?

What Is God's Heart on the Unborn?

There's a remarkable scene recorded in the Bible that speaks the unique value of the unborn. Mary, pregnant with Jesus, visits Elizabeth, who is pregnant with John the Baptist. Scripture records what happened when they met, *"At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, 'God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed'"* (Luke 1:41–42 NLT).

While still in the womb, John leapt for joy in the presence of Christ, who was also not yet born. The first person to recognize Jesus was an unborn baby—simply amazing! In this short scene, we see that the unborn are active, aware, joyful, and a blessing from God.

If your pregnancy is unplanned, unexpected, or unwanted ... know that your child is not a mistake. God is not surprised by the creation of this new life. He is the Creator of all life. And those He creates, He loves. And nothing will ever separate you or your baby from the love of God.

*"Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God
that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
(ROMANS 8:39)*

God is with you and will help you throughout your pregnancy.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (ISAIAH 41:10).

God cares for the unborn.

"I have cared for you since you were born. Yes, I carried you before you were born" (ISAIAH 46:3 NLT).

God is the author and giver of life.

"He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need" (ACTS 17:26 NLT).

God opens and closes the womb.

"The Lord ... opened her womb" (GENESIS 29:31 ESV).

"The Lord ... closed her womb" (1 SAMUEL 1:5).

God ordains all pregnancies—regardless of the circumstances.

"This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, the Maker of all things" (ISAIAH 44:24).

God creates every life.

“He is the Creator of everything that exists, including his people, his own special possession” (JEREMIAH 51:19 NLT).

God creates everyone for His glory.

“Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth—everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made” (ISAIAH 43:6–7).

God sustains every life.

“For the life of every living thing is in his hand, and the breath of every human being” (JOB 12:10 NLT).

Those God creates,
He loves.

God cares for every life throughout their entire life.

“I will be your God throughout your lifetime—until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you” (ISAIAH 46:4 NLT).

God has plans for every life He creates.

“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).

Key Passage to Read

Psalm 139: God’s Presence in My Pregnancy

You are not alone in your pregnancy. God is with you every day, every step of the way. Psalm 139 reveals many precious, comforting truths about you, your baby, and God’s constant presence in your life.

God knows me and my baby intimately.

Verse 1: *“You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.”*

God knows what I am thinking.

Verse 2: *“You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.”*

God knows what is happening to me.

Verse 3: *“You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.”*

God knows what I will say before I speak.

Verse 4: *“Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.”*

God will surround me with protection.

Verse 5: *“You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.”*

God has knowledge beyond my understanding.

Verse 6: *"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain."*

God is available wherever I need Him.

Verse 7: *"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?"*

God is always with me.

Verse 8: *"If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there."*

God will guide me wherever I go.

Verses 9–10: *"If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me."*

God will keep me secure.

Verse 10: *"Your right hand will hold me fast."*

God will shed light on my darkness.

Verses 11–12: *"If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you."*

God knows, planned, and created my baby.

Verse 13: *"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb."*

God is making my baby into something wonderful.

Verse 14: *"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."*

God can see the baby in my womb.

Verse 15: *"My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth."*

God can see my baby's unformed body.

Verse 16: *"Your eyes saw my unformed body"*

God knew of this pregnancy even before I was born.

Verse 16: *"All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."*

God thinks precious thoughts about me.

Verse 17: *"How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!"*

God thinks about me beyond what I can imagine.

Verse 18: *"Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand."*

God will never leave me.

Verse 18: *"When I awake, I am still with you."*

God hates evil and wrongdoing.

Verses 19–22: *"If only you, God, would slay the wicked! Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty! They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD, and abhor those who are in rebellion against you? I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies."*

God knows my anxious thoughts.

Verse 23: *“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.”*

God will lead me to the right path.

Verse 24: *“See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

Wisdom for Expectant Parents

The pressure surrounding an unplanned pregnancy can be overwhelming. You might feel you must make a quick decision in order to resolve a difficult dilemma ... but a bad, quick decision can produce long-term grief. Making the best decision for both you and your unborn baby requires wisdom from God's Word.

“Wisdom can save your life.”

(ECCLESIASTES 7:12 NLT)

WISDOM

(The following is an acrostic for WISDOM)

Write down your thoughts and feelings—talk to God about any anxiety, guilt, or difficult emotions and give your burdens to Him.

“Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you” (PSALM 55:22 NLT).

Imagine what life would be like for you and your baby in the short-term (next year) and in the long-term (ten years from now) if you chose abortion, parenting, or adoption.

“The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways” (PROVERBS 14:8).

Sort through your options, looking to God's Word on He says is best for your child.

“Teach me your ways, O LORD, that I may live according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honor you” (PSALM 86:11 NLT).

Develop a support structure of family and friends.

“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help” (ECCLESIASTES 4:9–10 NLT).

Obtain godly counsel from wise people that lines up with God's Word.

“Where there is no guidance the people fall, But in an abundance of counselors there is victory” (PROVERBS 11:14 NASB).

Make a decision to entrust your future and your baby's future into the hands of the Lord.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight” (PROVERBS 3:5-6).

THE ABORTION DILEMMA

Tackling the Tough Questions

What Does the Bible Say about Abortion and the Sanctity of Life?

As the Creator of all life, God is not silent on the issue of abortion. If you are seeking to gain God's perspective on abortion, the most beneficial thing you can do is read the Bible. When we read His Word, we see the heart of the Giver of life and what He thinks of those He created.

*"Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long."
(PSALM 25:5)*

God created humankind in His image. God, in His infinite sovereignty, uniquely formed human beings to be His image-bearers and gave them a special dignity, personal freedom, and individual accountability above all the works of creation.

"God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground'"
(GENESIS 1:26).

Human life begins at conception and human beings have been made to be in relationship with God, who created each person's inmost being, knit together in their mother's womb.

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ... Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (PSALM 139:13–14, 16).

From conception until natural death, every human life is sacred because every human life has been created by God.

"This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself" (ISAIAH 44:24).

Human life, even before conception, is designed by God for a specific purpose. Every human life must be recognized, respected, and protected as having the rights of a person and the irrevocable right to life.

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations" (JEREMIAH 1:5).

Human life is created in the image of God. The right to life of every unborn human being is inherent by virtue of being created in the image of God.

"God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them"
(GENESIS 1:27).

Human life is precious and deserves to be saved. All life is precious. Therefore, deliberately terminating human life after conception is a sin against God for which individuals are held accountable. Extremely rare situations exist where saving the life of the mother can result in losing the life of the baby. However, this is a matter of trying to save one life or two lives, as opposed to causing the death of one or both.

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and the one who is wise saves lives” (PROVERBS 11:30).

Human life must be protected and defended from conception to natural death. We are ethically bound to defend all human life from destruction, whether by surgical abortion or use of drugs, devices, or procedures with the intent of terminating human life.

“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, ‘But we knew nothing about this,’ does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay everyone according to what they have done?” (PROVERBS 24:11–12).

Human life must be publicly and peacefully proclaimed as sacred. Those who make up the Christian church, including and led by Christian ministers and ministries, should be public witnesses regarding the intrinsic and irrevocable dignity of all human life, from conception to natural death.

“This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live” (DEUTERONOMY 30:19).

Human life at conception defies that a fetus is just a “mass of tissue.” According to the Bible, a fetus is not merely a mass of tissue. God’s Word does not distinguish between a “potential baby” and a “newborn baby.” In the Bible, the same Greek word *brephos*, which means “babe,” is used to describe both a fetus and a newborn baby.

Fetus: *“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb” (LUKE 1:41).*

Babies: *“People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them” (LUKE 18:15).*

Human life at conception negates that females have the right to choose abortion by asserting, “It’s her body!” A woman should have rights over her own body, but in pregnancy there are at least two different bodies, two different heartbeats, two different brain wave patterns, two different genetic codes (DNA), and often two different genders and blood types. Every woman has choices within her own life, but not the freedom to destroy the life of a developing human being within her.

“I have cared for you since you were born. Yes, I carried you before you were born” (ISAIAH 46:3 NLT).

Human life is unique from all other forms of life. A human being is defined as a member of the species *Homo sapiens*. All human beings have their own genetic codes (DNA), singularly unique and established at conception. The DNA of a human fetus is distinct not only from animals, fowls, and fish, but also from the mother’s DNA.

“Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another” (1 CORINTHIANS 15:39).

A Personalized Plan for Those Contemplating Abortion

If you or your partner is pregnant and unsure of what to do, take a deep breath and do not rush to make a permanent decision. This is likely the most important decision you will ever make. Whether to carry the child to term or to terminate the pregnancy is literally a choice between life and death. The pregnancy may be unexpected and unplanned and may even feel unbearable, but it is not a surprise to God. He has a plan for your life and the life of your child.

You're not alone. There are many people, agencies, and support groups who can help you. Above all, remember that God is with you every step of the way.

*“For I am the LORD your God
who takes hold of your right hand
and says to you,
Do not fear; I will help you.”
(ISAIAH 41:13)*

The following are a few initial steps and considerations that you (and/or your partner) can take when contemplating what to do with your unborn child. Personalize these steps to your unique situation and pray for God's guidance and grace as you seek Him.

With God's help, I will ...

Seek wise counsel.

- I will pray and look to God's Word for direction.
- I will seek godly, wise counsel about what to do.

*“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you”
(PSALM 32:8).*

Look for support.

- I will remember I'm not alone, and there are people willing to help me.
- I will look into local churches, pregnancy centers, community support groups, and online services and hotlines for help with my pregnancy, parenting, and needed resources.

“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help” (ECCLESIASTES 4:9–10 NLT).

Take care of myself (and/or partner) physically.

- I will seek a healthy lifestyle while I am pregnant for the sake of the baby and myself.
- I will go to the doctor for regular prenatal check-ups and guidance.

*“I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well”
(3 JOHN 1:2).*

Do what is best for my unborn child.

- I will think about my child’s future and what God desires for them.
- I will consider options of parenting and adoption and what each option means for me and the child.

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others” (PHILIPPIANS 2:3–4).

ADOPTION

A Child Born in the Heart

What Is God's Heart on Adoption?

Consider the role of adoption in God's Word. The two greatest figures in the Bible, Jesus and Moses, involved adoption. Moses, the greatest prophet of the Old Testament who led the Israelites out of Egypt, was adopted. (See Exodus 2:1–10.) And Jesus, the Son of God and Savior of the world, was raised by Joseph, who is considered the adoptive father of Jesus.

And then there's *you*. God chose the picture of adoption to portray how He loves His children—how He loves *you*. Adoption is at heart of the gospel ... at the heart of why Jesus came ... because adoption is at the heart of God.

*"I will be a Father to you,
and you will be my sons and daughters,
says the Lord Almighty."
(2 CORINTHIANS 6:18)*

Adoption is a picture of God's love—showing how God joyfully welcomes us into His family.

"Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure" (EPHESIANS 1:4–5 NLT).

Adoption is a picture of salvation—showing how God sets us free and becomes our Father.

"But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, 'Abba, Father.' Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir" (GALATIANS 4:4–7 NLT).

Adoption is a picture of security—showing how we belong to God as His children and heirs.

"So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, 'Abba, Father.' For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory" (ROMANS 8:15–17 NLT).

Adoption is a picture of hope—showing the glorious future that awaits God's children.

"We believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. We were given this hope when we were saved" (ROMANS 8:23–24 NLT).

What Do Expectant Parents Need to Know about Adoption?

An expectant mother and father likely have many questions and concerns about adoption. As you seek the Lord and talk to others, pray for the Lord's guidance, and trust Him to lovingly direct your path.

*"Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love,
for I have put my trust in you.
Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life."
(PSALM 143:8)*

An expectant mother and father with an unwanted, unplanned, or unexpected pregnancy needs to know this:

Adoption can provide the most stable environment for the baby.

Adoption can be an answer to prayer for countless childless couples.

Adoption agreements include provision that all birth expenses be paid by others.

Adoption offers peace to birth mothers who realize that their baby will be raised in a loving home.

Adoption gives many birth mothers the opportunity to get an education and a job and to marry in the future.

Adoption (open adoption) **allows the child's mother to have meaningful contact with her child** and with the adoptive family at agreed upon times.

Adoption can be the greatest gift of sacrificial love by a birth mother on behalf of her child.

Adoption is often the answer to the question, "What is in the child's best interest?"

*"In humility value others above yourselves,
not looking to your own interests
but each of you to the interests of the others."
(PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4)*

God chose the
picture of adoption
to portray how He
loves His children.

20 Questions to Consider When Adopting a Child

If you are considering adopting a child, the following questions can help guide your thoughts, feelings, and some discussion around this important decision. Talk through these questions with your partner and other trusted individuals if needed. Realize, adoption is a lifelong and life-changing choice—for you, your marriage/partner, and for the child. This decision must be treated with utmost care, prayer, and discernment.

“Give discernment to me, your servant.”

(PSALM 119:125 NLT)

1. Are you looking for a child to fill your emotional needs?
2. Are you seeking your identity through parenting?
3. Do you fear dealing with inherited weaknesses?
4. Are you able to talk openly and honestly about the adoption?
5. Are you and your partner in complete agreement about the adoption?
6. Do you secretly feel that an adopted child is second best to having a birth child?
7. Are you attempting to save your marriage?
8. Do you have unrealistic expectations of yourself and others?
9. Do you feel uneasy about the biological history being revealed?
10. Are you willing to pursue only a legal adoption?
11. Are you willing to wait for months (or years) if the adoption process is delayed?
12. Do you have a happy, stable marriage that is flexible enough to include another person?
13. Do you believe you can truly love and accept a child who is not born to you?
14. Are you and your spouse ready for a lifelong commitment to sacrificially love and provide for a child?
15. Are you prepared to accept the bad times along with the good times?
16. Do you and your spouse believe adoption is God’s will for you?
17. Are you prepared for tension you may experience if you conceive a child after adopting?
18. Are you willing to accept the child’s failures and imperfections?
19. Are you willing accept possible rejection and wait patiently for the child’s love and acceptance?
20. Do you have an understanding of godly discipline for children?

“By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established.”

(PROVERBS 24:3)

DECISION MAKING

Discerning the Will of God

What Is God's Heart on Decision Making?

We make decisions every day. Many are of little significance, but some will change our lives forever. Do you make decisions by “doing what comes naturally,” or do you struggle with delay because of a paralysis of analysis? We too often make bad or unhealthy choices because we do not take the time to discover God's perfect will for our lives.

Be assured, God doesn't play “hide and seek” as you try to discover His will. He reveals His will in His Word. The more intimately you draw close to the heart of God and His Word, the more clearly you will know the will of God.

Consider what an indescribably awesome privilege it is that the God of the universe cares about the decisions concerning your life—your health, your job, your marriage, your children—all of it. None of us knows what the future holds, and at times we truly don't know which way to turn. But when we seek the Lord, He never fails to direct us—for our good and for His glory.

God wants to help us with our decisions. We can come to Him at any time to ask for guidance, and He will graciously help us in our time of need.

*“Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence,
so that we may receive mercy and find grace
to help us in our time of need.”*

(HEBREWS 4:16)

God is the ultimate source for true wisdom and guidance.

“For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding” (PROVERBS 2:6).

God is faithful to lovingly guide you.

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you” (PSALM 32:8).

God wants you to seek His will.

“I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart” (PSALM 40:8).

God wants you to look to His Word for guidance.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (PSALM 119:105 ESV).

God can use wise counselors to help you make decisions.

“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed” (PROVERBS 15:22).

God wants to
help us with our
decisions.

God wants you to desire His will above your own.

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done” (LUKE 22:42).

God wants your decisions to please Him above pleasing people.

“We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts” (1 THESSALONIANS 2:4).

God wants you to wait patiently for Him.

“I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope” (PSALM 130:5).

7 Don'ts of Decision Making

“Doing what comes naturally” or “what feels right” is not a good barometer for determining God’s will for your life. What comes naturally to us can be our sinful nature or the “flesh,” which operates apart from the Spirit of God. The following “7 Don'ts of Decision Making” can help you determine whether your decision reflects God’s will or your own natural desires.

*“For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit,
and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh.
They are in conflict with each other,
so that you are not to do whatever you want.”*
(GALATIANS 5:17)

1. Don't wait until all else fails before seeking God’s will.

“First seek the counsel of the LORD” (1 KINGS 22:5).

2. Don't just seek the plan but rather seek the Lord who reveals the plan.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight” (PROVERBS 3:5–6).

3. Don't ask for permission regarding something God has forbidden.

“I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws” (PSALM 119:106).

4. Don't make decisions based on feelings.

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (PROVERBS 4:23).

5. Don't assume that God’s will is too difficult for you to do.

“This is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome” (1 JOHN 5:3).

6. Don't test God by seeking visible signs.

“Jesus answered ... ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” (MATTHEW 4:7).

7. Don't think trials and adversity indicate you are out of God’s will.

“Those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good” (1 PETER 4:19).

8 Tests of Decision Making

From God's perspective, decisions are not to be determined by random selection, supernatural events, people's opinions, delay tactics, or our feelings. God wants you to measure your decisions by His Word. Rather than testing God, test your decisions against the following eight Scriptures. This will help you to make choices that are pleasing to the Lord.

"We make it our goal to please him"
(2 CORINTHIANS 5:9)

1. Scriptural Test: "Has God already spoken about it in His Word?"

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness"
(2 TIMOTHY 3:16).

2. Secrecy Test: "Would it bother me if everyone knew this was my choice?"

"The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity" (PROVERBS 11:3).

3. Survey Test: "What if everyone followed my example?"

"Set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity" (1 TIMOTHY 4:12).

4. Spirit Test: "Am I being people-pressured or Spirit-led?"

"Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ" (GALATIANS 1:10).

5. Stumbling Test: "Could this cause another person to stumble?"

"It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall"
(ROMANS 14:21).

6. Serenity Test: "Have I prayed and received peace about this decision?"

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7).

7. Sanctification Test: "Will this keep me from growing in the character of Christ?"

"We all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 CORINTHIANS 3:18).

8. Supreme Test: "Does this glorify God?"

"Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 CORINTHIANS 10:31).

4 POINTS OF GOD'S PLAN

Whether you're trying to make sense of your past, trying to overcome something in the present, or trying to make changes for a better future, the Lord cares about you. He loves you. No matter what challenges you or your loved ones are facing, no matter the pain or difficult feelings you may be experiencing, no matter what you've done or what's been done to you, *there is hope*. And that hope is found in Jesus Christ.

God has a plan for your life, and it begins with a personal relationship with Jesus. The most important decision you can ever make is whether you will accept His invitation. If you have never made that decision, these four simple truths can help you start your journey together with Him.

*“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)

God's Purpose for You: *Salvation*

What was God's motivation in sending Jesus Christ to earth? To express His love for you by saving you! The Bible says, *“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him”* (John 3:16–17).

What was Jesus' purpose in coming to earth? To forgive your sins, to empower you to have victory over sin, and to enable you to live a fulfilled life! Jesus said, *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”* (John 10:10).

The Problem: *Sin*

What exactly is sin? Sin is living independently of God's standard—knowing what is wrong and doing it anyway—also knowing what is right and choosing not to do it. The apostle Paul said, *“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway”* (Romans 7:18–19 NLT).

What is the major consequence of sin? Spiritual death, eternal separation from God. The Bible says, *“Your iniquities [sins] have separated you from your God”* (Isaiah 59:2). Scripture also says, *“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 6:23).

God's Provision for You: *The Savior*

Can anything remove the penalty for sin? Yes! Jesus died on the cross to personally pay the penalty for your sins. The Bible says, *“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

What is the solution to being separated from God? Belief in (entrusting your life to) Jesus Christ as the only way to God the Father. Jesus said, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”* (John 14:6). The Bible says, *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved . . .”* (Acts 16:31).

Your Part: *Surrender*

Give Christ control of your life, entrusting yourself to Him. Jesus said, *“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?”* (Matthew 16:24–26).

Place your faith in (rely on) Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and reject your “good works” as a means of earning God’s approval. The Bible says, *“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast”* (Ephesians 2:8–9).

Has there been a time in your life when you know you’ve humbled your heart and received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior—giving Him control of your life? You can tell God that you want to surrender your life to Christ in a simple, heartfelt prayer like this:

*“God, I want a real relationship with you.
I admit that many times I’ve chosen to go my own way instead of your way.
Please forgive me for my sins.
Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins.
Come into my life to be my Lord and my Savior.
Change me from the inside out and make me
the person you created me to be.
In your holy name I pray. Amen.”*

What Can You Now Expect?

When you surrender your life to Christ, you receive the Holy Spirit who empowers you to live a life pleasing to God. The Bible says, *“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life . . .”* (2 Peter 1:3). Jesus assures those who believe with these words:

*“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)

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QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

God gives us His Word not just for information but for transformation. The Lord wants you to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Romans 12:2). This isn’t something you do alone, but something God does in you by His Spirit.

The following questions are designed to help you reflect on the biblical truths in this resource. Take a moment to pray and ask God to settle your mind and quiet your spirit as you reflect on His truth.

“Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.”
(2 TIMOTHY 2:7)

What are two key truths, Bible verses, or “takeaways” from this resource that you found helpful—or that you simply needed to be reminded of?

In relation to these topics, what behavior(s) do you need to *begin, change, or stop* in order to help you grow into the person God created you to be?

In relation to these topics, what is the biggest obstacle you need to overcome in order to move forward?

What might your life look like a few years from now if you do *not* make changes regarding this issue? How might your life be different if you *do* make changes?

Is there anyone in your life who needs help with these topics/issues? How can you pray for them, and what is one thing you can do to encourage them?

What can you give thanks to God for today?

*“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself
and God our Father, who loved us
and by his grace gave us eternal comfort
and a wonderful hope,
comfort you and strengthen you
in every good thing you do and say.”
(2 THESSALONIANS 2:16–17 NLT)*

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For more information on the topics in this resource, click on the topics to the right to find helpful books from Hope for the Heart. The resources of Hope for the Heart provide clear answers from God's Word and concise, practical guidance on life's challenges so you can grow personally and be equipped to help others.

- **Anxiety**
- **Pregnancy ... Unplanned**
- **Abortion Dilemma**
- **Adoption**
- **Decision Making**

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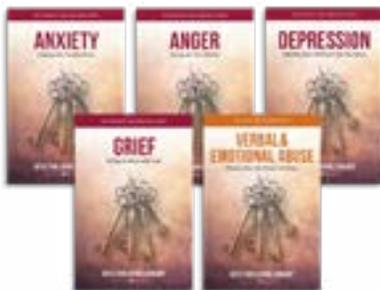
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Special thanks to author, broadcaster, and biblical counselor June Hunt, founder of Hope for the Heart, for her years of research, writing, editing, and guidance in developing the *Keys for Living Library*.



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