


# Hoping for Hope

## *Finding Hope Can Be Music to Your Ears*

by Debbie Cox Schwalbe



***When it was evident God was leading this issue to the central theme of HOPE, my thoughts instantly went to the Tommy Walker song, “I Have A Hope.”***

If you aren't familiar with this song, I recommend you get on the internet and search for it on your favorite music site. I tend to use YouTube and iTunes.

This song has the amazing ability to refresh your spirit at those times when it needs a reminder of the real Truth and Hope we have in Jesus Christ. Yet it can easily be applied to everyone in all walks of life, rich or poor, faithful, or faithless. It is also one song that tends to be a “regular” our Praise and Worship Team plays for our monthly service at the Decatur Correctional Center.

Hope. What an amazingly, powerful word. In just four simple letters this word is more than just a concept, it is the Truth. We “hope” to take a vacation this year, we “hope” to marry and start a family someday, we “hope” to do/ accomplish/achieve many things in our lifetime. Hope can be tailored to all of our wants and desires, and it speaks volumes in, and for, itself.

As a therapist, I see so many individuals who lack hope. Clinically speaking, one of the benchmarks of depression is a sense of “hopelessness.” The Diagnostic Statistical Manual IV, Revised version (DSM-IV, tr) indicates there is also a condition called “dysthymia” which is a lower grade, chronic form of depression that has strong elements of perceived hopelessness, helplessness, and other criteria that do not fully meet a diagnosis of major depression. Many individuals fit into this category.

Dysthymia is often difficult to treat. I find that is especially true in my non-Christian clients. You may ask, “why is that?” Well, let's go back to that Tommy Walker song. It begins, “I have a hope, I have a future, I have a destiny that's yet awaiting me...”. There are many parts of this song that I would love to recite for you, but that would take away the fun of you researching this on your own!

I have often said it is so much easier to work with Christian clients because we are reminded of the hope that is found only through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who loves us so much that He went through unspeakable torture that we might know *our hope* is not just a concept, but is in fact a reality.

Being human, we sometimes (or oftentimes) experience either depression, dysthymia, or just plain ole down in the dumps blues. Yes, even Christians! However, and this is a big “however,” we know the Truth. We know there is a future; one that is free of the pain and suffering of this fallen world.

Depression (or various forms of thereof) is such a prevailing malady in our society today. It's no wonder. All you have to do to become depressed is read the morning paper or watch the evening news. Seeing suffering, pain, and hopelessness is an everyday experience for all of us.

I find this sense of hopelessness is most often the root underneath why individuals seek treatment in the first place. It is my job to help facilitate hope in them. I often tell clients that we, as humans, tend to base our fears and perceptions on what we feel, rather than on what we know.

How many times have you had an imaginary argument with someone as you are lying in bed, or driving down the road? It's simply make believe. Those types of thoughts are based on feelings rather than actual truths.

So, as a Christian, what do we know? In those times when we temporarily "forget" we can simply turn to the Word of God, which was, is, and always will be, the Truth. I could quote many scripture verses at this time to substantiate what I just wrote. I'm also sure many of you could find more verses of hope than I can!

One verse that stands out in my mind is from a devotional titled, "Everyday Hope" by Debora M. Coty. It is from a chapter on Fear. It reads, "I sought the Lord, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears." Ps. 34:4, NASB.

Fearing the unknown is a very frightening thing. It fuels the fires of depressions and anxieties. I often ask my clients, "what do you know" about a situation. Most often their response centers more on what they don't know and subsequently, their feelings are about what they don't know. We then do some reality based intervention, teaching the importance of rational thinking, and that their fear of the unknown has been problematic for them.

How blessed we are as Christians to know the Truth! While everyday issues can become troublesome for us, we can be confident of the ultimate outcome. We may still be plagued by the problems of this world, but we know that we will triumph in the long haul.

Since there is such number of hope-filled and uplifting Christian songs available to us, I challenge you, dear readers to focus on one, two, or several songs that center on hope and our God filled peace. When your spirits need a lift, listen to them. Blast them out on your stereo. Crank them up in your car. Most importantly, play them in your mind. Remember, your thoughts impact your being.

May our God of hope remain steadfast in your heart and mind. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

*Debbie Cox Schwalbe is a Family Therapist with Lutheran Child and Family Services. She accepts individuals, couples, and families. You can make an appointment by calling LCFS 1-800-252-2873.*



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'Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord.'

- Leviticus 19:32



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