

Our Eternal Hope



Finding Hope Despite Life's Heartaches



INTRODUCTION: Life of Tragedy, Life of Hope

A beautiful, athletic, seventeen-year-old student dove into Chesapeake Bay on a warm summer day in 1967, and it would change the course of her life forever.

Two long years of rehabilitation followed as she endured surgery, traction, therapy, painful processes designed to stabilize her broken body, prohibit further injury, and teach her to live without the use of her arms and legs.

For months she languished in sterile facilities as she came to terms with the extent of her injury.

Death began to look preferable,
even desirable.

Medicine offered her no hope. Her spine could never be repaired and her motor functions would never be restored.

God heard the desperate prayers of Joni
Eareckson Tada over fifty years ago.

What came was hope.

**She began to paint with a brush clenched
between her teeth. She began to write her
story. She began to study the word of God
with a voracious appetite for His truth.**

“Oh, how we need to grasp the soul-settling hope found in the pages of God's Word – not only grasp it, but allow the hope of God to fill and overflow our hearts, transforming us into people who are confident and at peace with themselves, their God, and their circumstances.”

Joni Eareckson Tada



What is this “soul-settling hope” that she writes about and lives out to this day?



PART 1: Hope - Beyond the Platitudes

**“I have set the Lord always before me: because
he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory
rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.”**

Psalm 16:8-9



We throw the word “hope” around all the time, using it in trite little phrases offering well wishes to others and expressing our desire for positive outcomes.

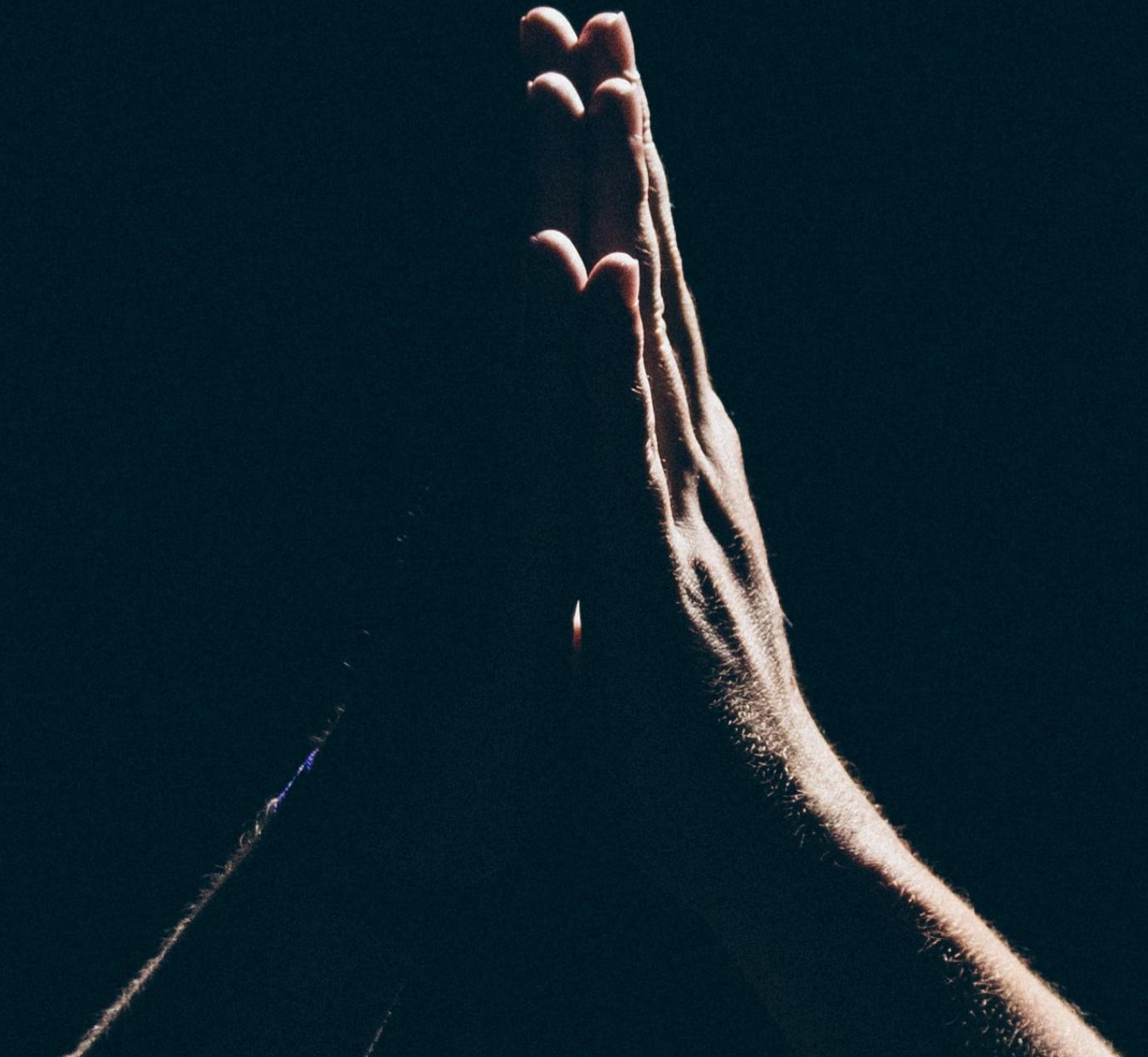
Then there are the platitudes about hope that you'll find on greeting cards, plaques to hang on the office wall, and inspirational calendars offering words of encouragement.

But do any of these things describe the “soul-settling hope” that Joni Eareckson Tada found while newly bound to a wheelchair?

The hope that Joni found is the same hope that David speaks of in Psalm 16 where he declares, “my flesh also rests in hope.”

This is not the word “hope” used in the common language of well wishes and desires.

Prayer



God of all hope, I confess that I use this little word improperly all the time.

I confess that I too often put my hope in
all the wrong things.

Hoping in the things of this world
is a practice in futility.

You offer a deeper, truer, greater hope.

Help me to understand this hope as
I study it here.



PART 2: Biblical Hope Defined

**“This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.
It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not
consumed, because his compassions fail not.
They are new every morning: great is thy
faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my
soul; therefore will I hope in him.”**

Lamentations 3:21-24



When we use the word “hope” in our daily lives, it usually implies a level of uncertainty.

When we say we are hoping it implies we are
doubting, because we are!

Biblical hope is more than just crossing our fingers, closing our eyes, and wishing for the best, because it is a hope rooted in the person and character of God.

God has so many names which all reflect his character.

God is all of these things and so much more.

The writer of Lamentations, in the midst of destruction, loss, misery, and grief, finds hope.

He remembers the mercy, compassion, and
faithfulness of God.

Prayer



Heavenly Father, the hope the world has to offer is always clouded by doubt.

**God, I know that I can have confident hope in
you when I root that hope in your character.**

Sin causes me to doubt. Please help me
remember all that you are and all that you
have done.

Help me fight the urge to put my hope in
things that will fail me.

God, be the God of all hope to me today.



PART 3: A Longsuffering Hope

**“(Abraham) Who against hope believed in
hope, that he might become the father of many
nations, according to that which was spoken,
So shall thy seed be.”**

Romans 4:18



The Genesis account of the life of Abraham
teaches us much about hope.

Until God gave them hope.

Gazing at the countless stars in the sky,
God showed Abraham the vast number
of his offspring that would walk the face
of the earth.

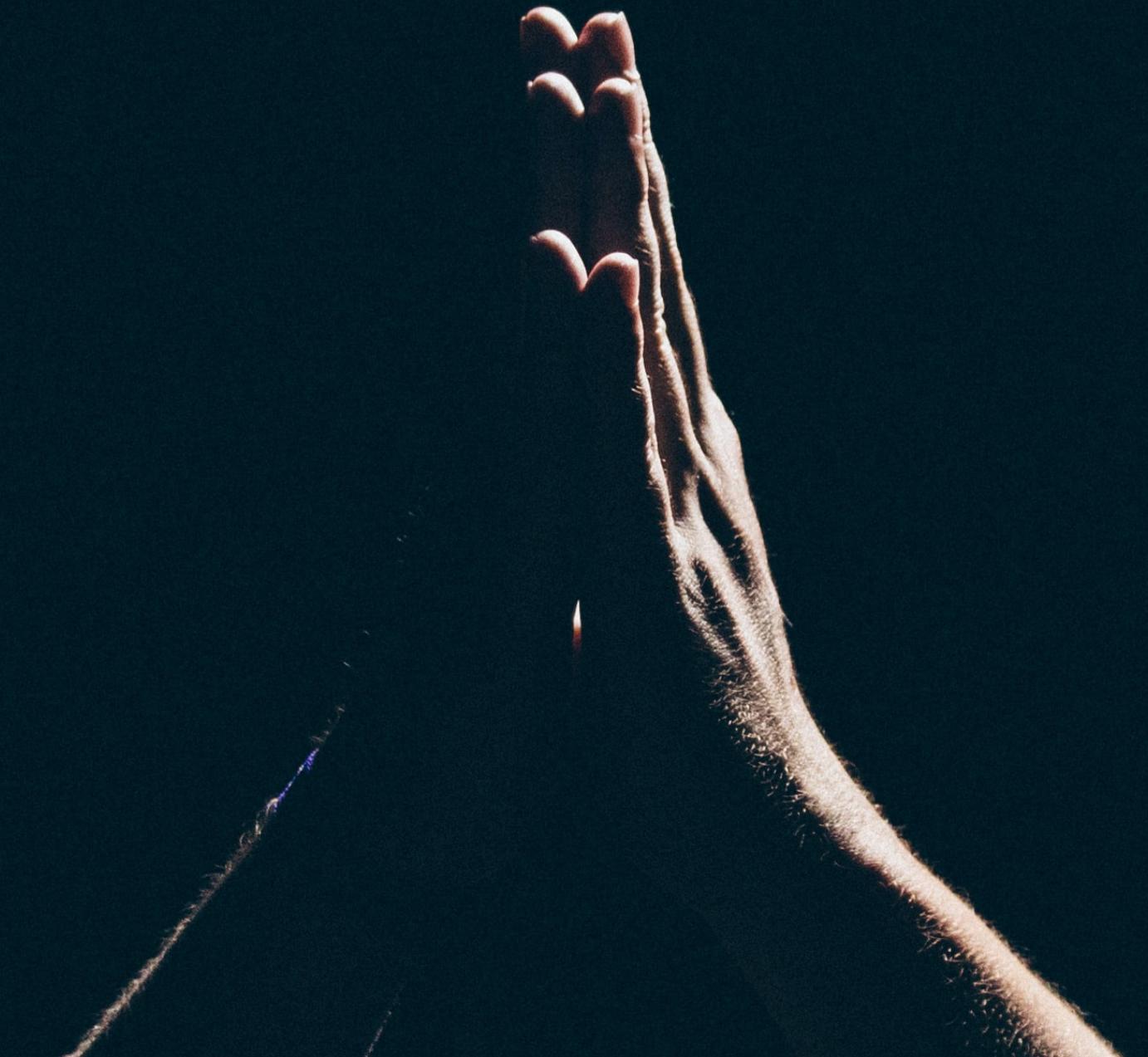
Taking matters into their own hands,
Abraham fathered a child by Hagar.

He clung to hope, which increased his faith.

Paul tells us in Roman's 4 that Abraham's
hope was against all hope.

But this wasn't a false hope or a pipe dream.

Prayer



God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the story
of these forefathers gives me greater faith
and hope in you.

Abraham believed you, but he was not perfect.

Help me to not lose hope and take matters
into my own hands.

Remind me of your love, faithfulness,
mercy, and grace.

You are the God of all hope and in you
I put my trust.



PART 4: Hope in God's Word

**“For whatsoever things were written aforetime
were written for our learning, that we through
patience and comfort of the scriptures might
have hope.”**

Romans 15:4



Laying in her bed in a rehab facility
months after the catastrophic accident that
left her paralyzed, Joni Eareckson Tada
began to find hope.

The Apostle Paul tells us of the hope found in the scriptures in Romans 15:4.

1. He first tells us that the scriptures were written for our learning.

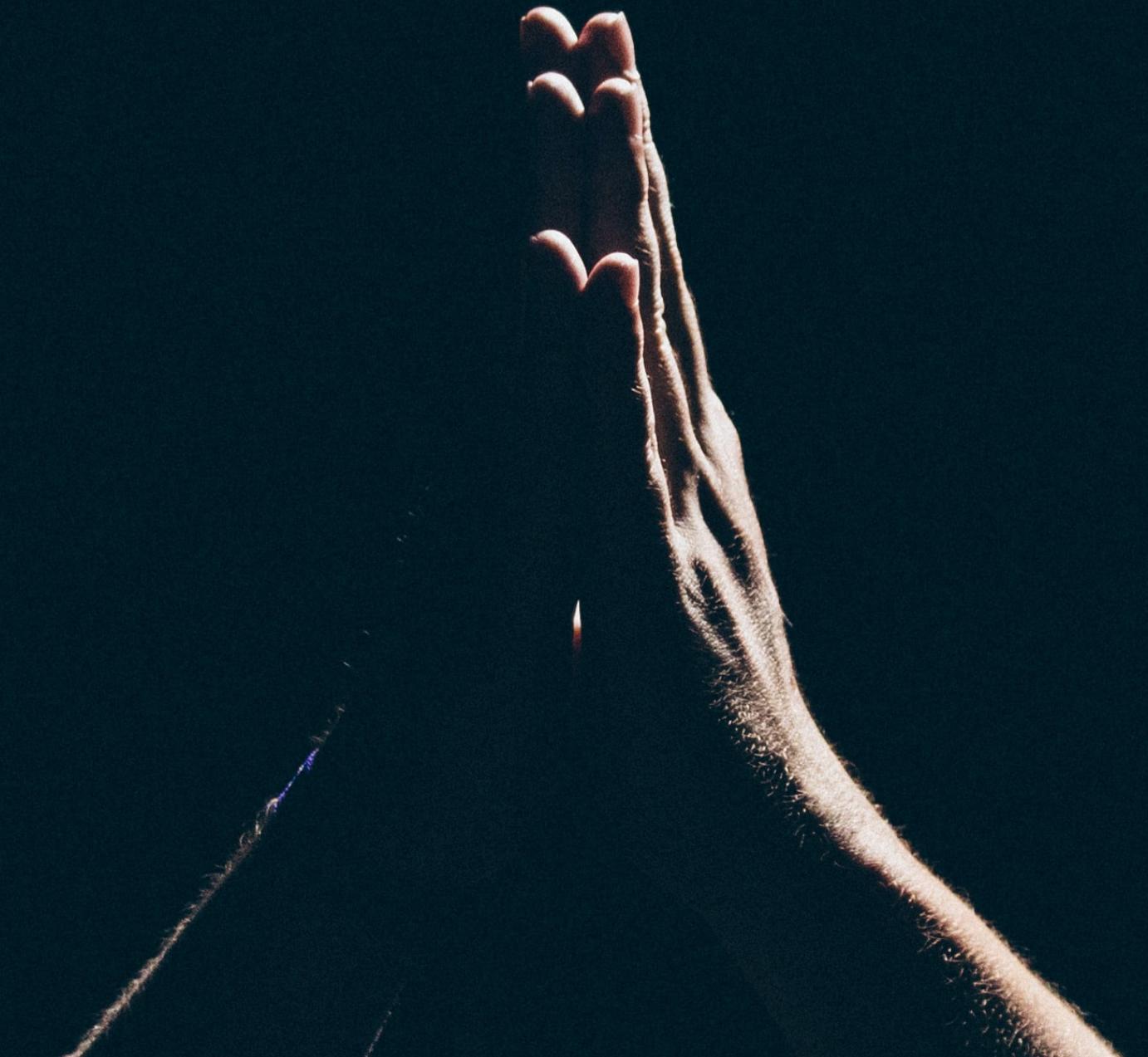
We have the whole counsel of God's word to instruct us in countless ways.

2. Paul then speaks to the patience we can find through the scriptures.

3. Finally, Paul tells us that the word can bring us comfort.

Learning the scriptures encourage us to endure through this life and find comfort in God, which ultimately leads to hope.

Prayer



Heavenly Father, you have seen fit to give us
your holy and abiding word.

Your word is for my instruction, and I have
much to learn from it.

I can endure through this life with the
help of your words.

I am comforted by your word.

By learning your word, enduring in it,
and finding comfort in it, I become
increasingly hopeful!



PART 5: Hope in the Hardships

“...but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

Romans 5:3-5



Holding onto hope in the midst of great
suffering is one of life's hardest challenges.

Biblical hope held out to a suffering person is anything but empty or hollow.

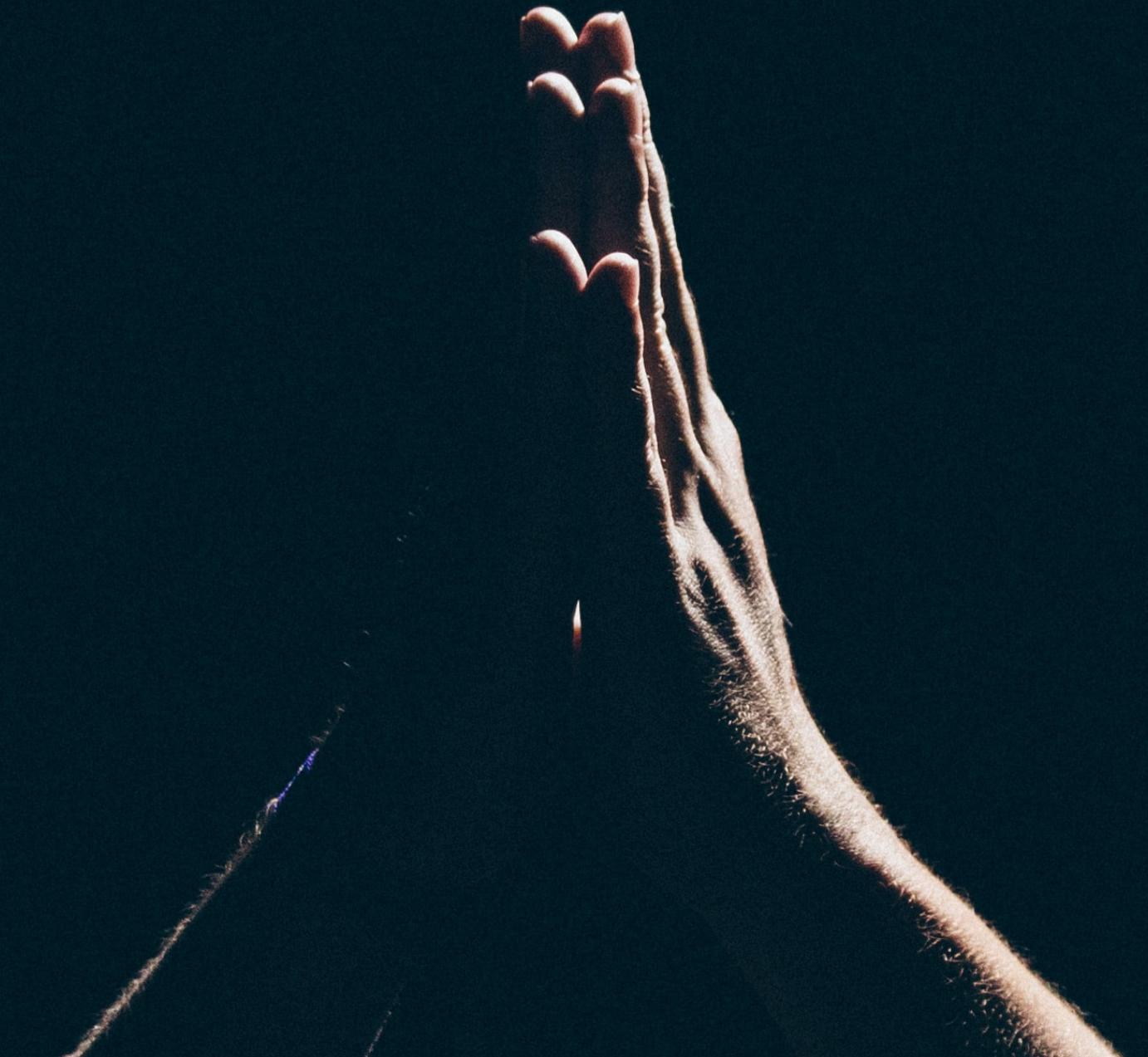
It sounds like complete and utter nonsense to speak of rejoicing when we face troubles.

Suffering produces endurance, that long-suffering patience we've already discussed.

That endurance then produces
experience, or character.

Character produces a hope that does
not put us to shame.

Prayer



**God of all hope, you are at work in me in the
midst of my trials.**

You are sanctifying me through my suffering,
making me more like Jesus.

This suffering is producing endurance in me.

Endurance through this trial is producing character in me.

I have hope in the midst of my suffering
because you are at work in me,
and in that I rejoice.



PART 6: A Future Hope

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”

1 Peter 1:3-4



God's abundant mercy has birthed
us into a living hope.

Peter could speak of this hope perhaps
better than anyone.

This living hope that Peter spoke of is rooted in the person and work of Jesus.

Sometimes we get a little glimpse of our
future hope here on earth.

Our living hope is found in Jesus, who endured the ultimate suffering on our behalf.

Prayer



Father God, according to your great
mercy you have caused me to be born
again into a living hope.

An inheritance awaits me in heaven
because I have put my faith in you.

The inheritance you are keeping in
heaven for me cannot be corrupted
by the things of this world.

Help me not put my hope in the little glimpses
of heaven that I see here on earth.

I rejoice in you and your generous,
lavish love and grace.



CONCLUSION: Abiding In Hope

The hope found in God is impossible for people to understand unless they have experienced His love, grace, and mercy.

The hope found in God, described all over His word, is eternal because He is eternal.

When we put our faith in Jesus, we can dwell
in the hope of His love, grace, and mercy,
despite the suffering we face.

The joy and peace of God comes
with believing in Him through the power
of the Holy Spirit, and by it we abound in
an everlasting hope.