



Principle 1
HOPE



“For there is hope for a tree, when it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and its shoots will not fail. Though its roots grow old in the ground and its stump dies in the dry soil, at the scent of water it will flourish and put forth sprigs like a plant.” Job 14:7-9

It was a terrible, cold, lonely night in October of 1998 when I hit rock bottom. It was the night I gave up hope in being a single mom. If there were wrong roads to travel down, I went down them. If there were mistakes to be made, I made them. It seemed that I had exhausted all of my efforts to find some hope and peace in this crazy situation of single motherhood. I looked everywhere; everywhere except to God.

At first, I put my hope in finding a new husband for me and a father for my son. After the first relationship failed, I went further into depression. Then another love came along, and that failed too. Time after time every relationship failed.

Next I tried putting my hope in my finances. I thought that everything would be just grand if I could stay in my nice, upscale neighborhood. It was difficult to hold down a job though, for I was an emotional wreck, and constantly exhausted. Putting my hope in finances failed me too. As you know, it takes a lot of money to pay for everything that you need. It was so much more than I could manage on my own.

I also tried putting my hope in other people, and that failed me too. My married friends stopped hanging out with me, or inviting me over. I also felt like I did not fit in at my church anymore, so I just stopped going. I became totally isolated, and even more depressed.

Then I made the horrible mistake of putting my hope in my son. I thought if everything else failed me that surely I could find my hope in him. I quickly learned how selfish that was to lean on a child like that. We need to pour our heart and energy into our children, but they cannot be our source of hope.

On that lonesome October night, I fell to my knees and cried out to God for help. I told him that he needed to show up or I was checking out. I could not do this single mom life anymore. The moment I called His name the God of the universe paused just for me and said, “Here I am. I’ve been here with you all along. I was just waiting to hear from you.” For the first time, I felt God’s presence with me and His arms of love surrounding me. Then I heard the Lord whisper in my spirit, “Don’t you give up Lori. Don’t you quit; you be strong. You have a son that needs you and I have great plans for your life.” I could not understand what I just heard. Was that God or just my messed up mind hearing things?

Suddenly I recalled the verse a client of mine had in a frame on her desk. It was Jeremiah 29:11 that said, **“For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you, not to harm you; plans to give you hope and a future.”** I was delighted that verse was somehow tucked away in my memory. Unfortunately, that was the extent of my Bible knowledge.

I finally felt that I had something concrete to put my hope in now. I spent the rest of the night nestled in the arms of God weeping. There was an enormous sense of peace within me now. I knew that God was real and that somehow everything was going to be okay.

The next day I bought my first Bible. Any extra time I had was devoted to reading God’s word. The more I read about God, the closer I felt to Him. Hope and joy started stirring up inside of me, even though my situation had not changed.

Over the passage of time, the Lord showed me twenty one verses to follow. He promised me that if I followed them I would live in victory as a single mom. They are now what you are reading the, “21 Principles of a Healthy Single Mom.” You too will live in victory if you use them in your life.

Ever since that dark October night I fell in love with the word hope. It encouraged me to hold on for something better than this life offered. According to Webster’s Dictionary, the word hope means, “To wish for something with the expectation of its fulfillment. To have confidence, or trust. To look forward to with confidence or expectation, one that is a source of or reason for hope.” Jesus Christ is now my source and reason for hope as a single mom.

Here is a wonderful verse the Lord showed me about hope. It is from Job14: 7-9 that says, **“For there is hope for a tree when it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and its shoots will not fail. Though its roots grow old in the ground and its stump dies in the dry soil, at the scent of water it will flourish and put forth sprigs like a plant.”**

Maybe you think that life has cut you down like that tree. Possibly you feel like you are dying and withering away as a single mom. I am here to say to you today, “Don’t give up, don’t quit. One moment in the presence of God and one drop of His living water will change your life forever.” When you put your hope in Jesus, you will flourish as a single mom. He will help you live a life of purpose and meaning, focus and order, balance and harmony.

If you feel you want to give up, please know that you are not alone. I wanted to at one time, and I know of so many other single moms that have felt the same way. It may help you to know that even people in the Bible felt like that. Here is what Job said in 6: 8 – 9, **“Oh that my request might come to pass and that God would grant my longing! Would that God were willing to crush me, that He would loose His hand and cut me off!”** Job just wanted to die, so he could be free from all of his pain and suffering.

God did not grant Job his request, nor mine or yours if you asked him. He has a greater way for you than that because God is a good God. You may wonder, “So what should a single mom

do when she has lost all hope in everything this world has to offer?" The Bible says in First Timothy 5:5, **"The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help."**

My desire for you in this Principle is to apply the verse of Jeremiah 29:11 to your life. The first sentence we will start with says, "For I know the plans I have for you." Who do you think "I" is in this verse? It is God of course. The next issue we need to address is, "Who is God to us?" He is our Heavenly Father; our Abba, Father and Daddy. In this world, we have a Heavenly Father and an earthy father. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray in Matthew 6:9, Jesus started his prayer in this way, "Our Father." Jesus also referred to God as, "Abba" which means "Father" as Mark 14:36 says, **"And he was saying, Abba! Father! All things are possible for you; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what you will."**

As I mentioned earlier, you have two fathers; a Heavenly Father and a human father. Your earthly father did not make you. Yes, your earthly parents conceived you but they are not who made you. God made you as His word says in Psalm 139:13-14, **"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."** Can you believe that God made you for His purpose and joy? I wonder how many of us single moms can wake up every morning and say to God, "Thank you for making me. I am wonderful and beautiful because you made me for your purpose and pleasure." I know I could not say that when I first heard this verse.

Seeing God as our Father does not sit too well with some of us single mothers. *We perceive what God is like by the way important people in our lives have failed us or mistreated us.* That can represent your child's father, parents, family members, friends, husbands, or boyfriends. Possibly you went through some extremely difficult things when you were a child that hurt you. Maybe it was a controlling parent, a weak father, verbal, emotional, physical abuse or parental neglect.

Unfortunately, so many children grow up with severe rejection from their parents that leaves them feeling unwanted by them or God. Maybe some of the important people in your life nipped at you and wanted you to do everything right. Possibly they were unforgiving, cold, demanding, insensitive, uncaring, angry or cruel to you.

For example, a weak father figure in your life can cause you to look for love in all the wrong places. We make other men our knight in shining armor because we were left unprotected, neglected or uncared for. The image we have of God is formed at an unusually young age.

I did not know the truth of God's word as a child or when I first became a single mom. It was difficult for me to realize that God loves me unconditionally. I questioned how he would protect us, and I doubted that he wanted the best for my son and me. For whatever reason your child's father is no longer with you, it can be difficult to understand as a single mom that God is your

husband. His word says in Isaiah 54:5, **“For the Lord your God is your husband – the Lord Almighty is his name.”** It may also be difficult to understand Deuteronomy 31:8 that says, **“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”** With our children not having a father in the house it can be difficult for us, and them, to see God as their father. His word says in Psalm 68:5 He is, **“A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling place.”**

The truth about God is that he is never mean, cruel or abusive to us. People do those kinds of things to each other. It is crucial to believe that God made you for his pleasure. Real love comes from the way God loves you, sees you and treats you. Not what other people have done to you, even though those things hurt.

God is a good God, and he is all about hope not hopelessness. His desire for you on this earth is to live in what His Kingdom is all about; righteousness, peace and joy. Reading the Bible is the best tool you have to learn about God. It is life and truth, and if whatever you are thinking or feeling is not in there then it is a lie.

For example, maybe you believe the lie that God does not think that you are someone remarkable. Possibly your mom, dad, boyfriend or husband did not treat you that way. God thinks you are absolutely incredible. His word says so in Deuteronomy 32:9-10, **“I am the apple of His eye.”**

I have discovered from reading my Bible that God is kind and compassionate. He accepts me, loves me and longs to be with me. One Bible translation says that God “yearns” to be with me. He is patient, kind, gentle, and full of grace and mercy towards me. I am the apple of His eye no matter what I have done. When you use your time to read the Bible on your own, you will see that God is a good God. He truly wants nothing but the best for you and your children. My Bible does not say that God hates me or that he is out to get me. God does not think I am a loser as a single mom. I invite you to discover this truth for yourself. Here is some basic theology that may help you better understand that God is a good God to single mothers.

1. God is an Omnipotent God which means He has absolute power. God can do anything including bringing you through this single mom life victoriously. We have some power, the enemy has some power but God is power!

2. God is an Omnipresence God which means that His presence is everywhere. There is no spot in this world you can go that God will not be there with you. This should provide comfort and safety to you as a single mom to know that you are never alone.

3. God is an Omniscient God which means that he has full knowledge of everything. This should prevent any confusion or concern about your future. God has an incredible plan for you even if you do not have one for yourself. His plan for you is good because God is a good God. He knows everything that has ever gone on with you. God can see behind the mask, and he still loves you. That is why you can put all of your hope and trust in Him as a single mom. Hope in people and things cause death and hopelessness. Hope in God brings life and happiness.

You are a winner with God. You can get through this time in your life, and remember it is a season, and it will pass. God can make you healthy in every sector of your life; spiritually, emotionally, mentally, physically, financially and socially. He can instruct you how to balance your life, family, home and career. He can also help you raise healthy children.

My prayer is that you experience the life that God intended for you. A life filled with purpose and meaning, focus and order, balance and harmony. This can only be achieved by the Holy Spirit working in and through you. I pray that today is the time you will put your hope in God. Let Him lift you up on eagles' wings, so both you and your children can soar to a new life with Him.

Questions:

1. We tend to view what God is like based off of the way people have failed us or mistreated us. How has your view of God changed by realizing this?
2. What plan can you implement into your life to learn more about God?
3. What things besides Jesus have you put your hope in?
4. What changes do you have to make to now put all of your hope in Jesus?



Principle 1

HOPE Part 2

The second part of our verse in Jeremiah 29:11 says, **“My plans are to prosper you.”** Do you believe that it is God’s will to prosper you as a single mom? I admit I did not believe that when I first heard it. Because of the shame and guilt deep inside of me, I did not believe that God’s prosperity was for me. Again, I believed a lie. No where in my Bible does it say that God does not want me to prosper.

What most of us do not realize is that there is a vast difference between the words prosper, prosperity and prosperous. The word prosperity means wealth and success while the word prosperous means to succeed. The word prosper means to flourish, bloom or to be in your prime season.

This definition of God's plan to prosper you is best found in 3 John 1:2 that says, **“Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.”** What I find intriguing about this verse is that God does not mention anything about money. Many single moms tend to think to prosper is all about finances. God is concerned about your finances, soul and body. In this chapter you will discover God's plan for your soul to prosper; or what inner prosperity means.

There are five scriptures about inner prosperity we will use in this part of the Principle of Hope.

1. The first is Genesis 32:12 that says, “I will surely prosper you and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which is too great to be numbered.”

God is saying that for you and your children to prosper all stands on your relationship with Him. In this verse God is saying, “Get to know me. Get into my word and be in prayer daily with me.” In the book of Hosea God's word says, **“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”** In order to prosper as a single mom, you have to daily spend time in prayer and reading God's word. It is also advantageous to fast during the time that you need to hear from God. You are in charge of raising a future generation and it is your responsibility to put the word of God into your children. We cannot impart what we do not know, so read God's word for yourself and then read it to your children. Remember also to pray daily on your own and with them. God can turn any situation around, but most of all when you read and pray God changes you.

2. The second verse God shows us is 1 Samuel 18:24 that says, “David was prospering in all his ways for the Lord was with him.”

When you put God at the center of every detail and circumstances of your life He will honor what you are doing. Everything that we do must be consecrated to God, meaning to dedicate it to God and give it to Him first before you do it. We are to “Seek first His Kingdom” for life here on earth is about being in God's will and not our own.

3. The third verse God shows us is 2 Chronicles 14: 7 that says, “For he said to Judah, “Let us build these cities and surround them with walls and towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours because we have sought the Lord our God; we have sought Him and He has given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered.”

The analogy that I feel led to use here is how to build a house. What is the first part of the house that you build? It is the foundation; the basis on which the entire house stands. Our foundation needs to be the word of God, and the building must first start in our mind. We need to ask our selves, “Do I believe the truth of God’s word? Or, do I believe the world’s lie?” The lies must be erased, and our minds need to be reprogrammed with the truth of God’s word. This is what Paul meant in Romans 12:2 when he said, **“And do not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”**

Filling your mind with truth prepares you for battling the enemy’s lies. The enemy will whisper in your ear how unloved you are because you do not have a husband. With your renewed mind and firm foundation you battle back saying Isaiah 54:5, **“Your husband is your maker. The Lord Almighty is His name.”** The enemy will try to tell you that you can not do this single mom life. With a renewed mind and firm foundation you battle back saying Philippians 4:13, **“I can do all things in Gods will through Christ who strengthens me.”** The enemy will also try to tell you that you are nothing; you are just a single mom. With a renewed mind and firm foundation you battle back saying 1Peter 2:9, **“I am a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a Holy Nation, a people for God’s own possession.”**

The book, “The Art of War” is a classic on achieving victory on the battlefield. It says, “If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained, you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will lose in every battle.” Build your foundation and walls off of God’s truth and not the world’s lies. God’s word is rest and peace for the soul.

4. The fourth scripture God gives us is Psalms10: 5 that says, “His ways prosper at all times; your judgments are on high, out of his sight; As for all his adversaries, he snorts at them.”

Have you ever wondered why wicked people get so wealthy or succeed at everything they do? How about the way they brag how they did it on their own and that God had nothing to do with it? All while we are striving to do the right thing, and sometimes barely have enough food to eat. Remember that wealth is only temporary and not a sign of Gods approval, nor is the lack of it a sign of God’s disapproval. God hates evil, and these people will not go unpunished. I heard a story about a rich man who was asked how much money is enough. He replied, “A little bit more.” To desire more of earth’s treasures and pleasures goes against God’s request to, “Seek first the kingdom.” When you are not thankful or grateful for what you have it is a sure sign that your heart is far away from God.

5. The last verse God gives us about how to flourish or prosper is from Psalm 122:6 that says, **“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, may they prosper who love you.”**

Here the psalmist was not praying for his own peace and prosperity, he was praying for others. Did you know that we prosper when we pray for other people? This is what intercessory pray is about; standing in the gap for others. God works on this earth through humans, and he needs us to pray for others. Paul often asks others to pray for him through out his writings as stated in 2Thes 3:1, **“Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you.”** When we pray we have peace within our selves about our own needs, and we can release that peace to others through intercession.

The apostle Paul set the greatest example of what it means for our soul to prosper in Philippians 4:12 that says, **“I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.”** Paul had his priorities straight here, for he was thankful and grateful for everything that God had given him; no matter how much or how little.

Paul’s secret to contentment, and ours too, is to trust God that He is who he says He is. We need to rely on God’s power and strength, not our own. Paul focused on what he should be doing instead of what he did not have. Sometimes it is beneficial for us not to have all of the material things we desire. Often our desire for more is just a longing to fill a void in our life.

The last part of our verse in Jeremiah 29:11 says, **“My plans are not to harm you. My plans are to give you hope and a future.”** If you do not have a close relationship with Christ it may be easy to think that God is out to get you. Or, that he just wants to beat you up and make your life miserable. I cannot find anywhere in my Bible where it says that. God loves us no matter what we have done or what sin we have committed. It is because of His unconditional love that He sent his only son to die on the cross for us. God’s only son took that beating for us over two thousand years ago, so we can have eternal life with him.

God’s kingdom is about righteousness, peace and joy. He wants your life filled with the fruits of the Holy Spirit which are; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. God’s plan is not for us to be depressed and ready to give up. God sent His son, Jesus Christ, to die for us so we can have life abundantly. That means heaven is right here on earth with a personal relationship with Jesus.

When we can grasp this Principle of Hope the verses of Jeremiah 29:12-14 will come alive for you. They say, **“Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. I will be**

found by you, declares the Lord and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you declares the Lord and I will bring you back from the place of captivity.”

In these verses God did not forget about His people even though they were in captivity. He has not forgotten about you in these times of struggles and trials as a single mom. God planned to give His people a new beginning with a new purpose; to turn them into new people. God is preparing you to be a healthy single mom with Him at the center of your life. That my dear single mom is what hope is all about. I invite you today to make Jesus Christ your one and only source and reason for hope.

Questions:

- 1. What areas of your life are you claiming as your own and not letting God into? What do you think would happen if you let God have control of these areas?**
- 2. How strong is your foundation? In what areas do you need to renew your mind?**
- 3. What is taking priority over God in your life? Why are these things more important to you than God?**
- 4. Who do you know that needs a release of peace that you can pray for?**



Principle 2



IDENTITY

“While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him.” Matthew 17:5

Becoming a single mom felt like moving to a different planet. Everything seemed so strange and totally out of place from the life I once knew. I was lost, and had no concept of who I was

anymore. When I looked in the mirror I saw a strange new reflection staring back. I constantly asked myself, "Who am I as a single mom now?"

If you were once married and now divorced or widowed, your entire identity may have been based off of being a wife. You may wonder, "Who am I now that I do not have the role or title of wife anymore?" Maybe you are a teenager or have never been married before, and now you find yourself in a new role; single motherhood. Just because your position, role, title or marital status changed, nothing has changed about who you are.

One of the greatest questions ever presented to me was from Dr. Charles Stanley. We went into his office to speak for a while before going into the recording studio. He looked at me from across his desk and said, "Lori, tell me about who you are?"

What a fascinating question. There were several choices that I briefly considered telling him about who I was. I could have said that I am the author of the 21 Principles, a speaker, founder of Hope and Help for the Single Mom or Eric's mom. What would you have said? How would you respond to the question, "Tell me about who you are?"

If I answered Dr. Stanley by saying that I was Lori Little that would have been telling him my name. If I said I was an author and speaker that would have been telling him what I do. If I said I was a single mother that would have been telling him my marital and parental status.

I did not want to tell him how I used to think of myself as a single mom ; a total loser. I put on that "Scarlet D" and labeled myself as divorced. Some of us have been divorced more than once, so we add more "Scarlet D's" to our titles. I was merely exchanging one false title for another. I took off the false title of Mrs. and wife, and exchanged it for baggage, unwanted, rejected, ugly, fat, shame, guilt, package deal, insecure and insignificant. I thought that the titles I wore reflected who I truly was. I hated myself more and more with every false title I added. I could not even look in the mirror without being disgusted at what I saw. I remember not even being able to look at a picture of myself without finding fault or cutting myself down.

The more I hated myself the more withdrawn and isolated I became. I just wanted to lock myself up and hide from everyone. I even tried to hide from God. I also disconnected myself from my family, friends and church.

I remember one particularly lonely night I felt a nudge in my Spirit to read the beginning of Genesis. When I got to 3:8-11, the verses hit me like a ton of bricks. They said, **"They (meaning Adam and Eve) heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself. And He (God) said, "Who told you that you were naked?"**

I immediately felt the Holy Spirit ask me, “ *Who told you that you are a loser? Who told you that you and your child are a package deal? Who told you that you are rejected? Who told you that you are unwanted or insignificant? That is not the way that I see you.*” I had to ask myself, “Who did tell me all of those things?” I came to realize that I brought a lot of those things on myself and accepted what other people said about me as truth. I also learned that Satan whispered a bunch of lies to me that I bought right into.

I started thinking about some of things that happened to me when I was just a young girl. I recalled some of the unpleasant things that happened, and the terrible names I was called. What hurt me the most however were the sins that I brought into my own life as I became older, especially with men. I got involved with them because I felt so empty on the inside.

What I have learned is that my *feelings* caused the false labels. My husband left me, so I *felt* rejected and unloved. He left me for another woman which made me *feel* like a piece of trash. I *felt* awful from all the offensive names I was once called. Because I *felt* like a divorced loser, I acted like a divorced loser. Because I *felt* like a piece of trash, I acted like a piece of trash. I hated myself. I remember thinking, “Who is ever going to love me? I have all this baggage, and I’m a divorced loser with a child.” Because I hated myself so much, I lowered my standards in the men I got into relationships with. I did not think I was worthy enough to have anything better come along in my life. It makes me sick to my stomach that I ever once considered my son and myself as a package deal or baggage. What a horrible, horrible lie. I do not know how much cheaper I could get than to believe lies like that. I was letting my *feelings* decide what I thought was the *truth* about myself. The way I *behaved* was based on what I *believed* about myself. Thinking that way is wrong. One of the greatest things I believe I ever heard the Lord speak to my Spirit was when He said, “*Lori, the only person you are is the one that I say you are.*”

What changed my life forever was to see myself the way God truly sees me. Because I changed my way of thinking my son changed his way of thinking. Nowhere in my Bible can I find where God says that I am a loser, baggage, unloved and all of the other things I saw myself as.

Let me share with you what I found in my Bible about how God sees me.

I am the apple of God’s eye (Deuteronomy 32:9-10)

I am the salt and light of the earth (Matthew 5:13-14)

I am God’s child (John 1:12)

I am Christ’s friend (John 15:15)

I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life (John 15:1, 5)

I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit (John 15:16)

I am a personal witness of Christ (Acts 1:8)

I have been justified (Romans 3:24)

I am free from condemnation (Romans 8:1, 2)

I am assured that all things work together for my good (Romans 8:28)

I am free from any condemning charges against me (Romans 8:31-34)

I cannot be separated from the love of God (Romans 8:35-39)

I have been sanctified in Christ (1Corinthians 1:2)

I am righteous and holy (1Corinthians 1:30)

I am God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:16)

I am united with the Lord, I am one spirit with Him (1Corinthians 6:17)

I have been bought with a price. I belong to God (1Corinthians 6:20)

I am a member of Christ's Body (1 Corinthians 12:27)

I have been established, anointed and sealed by God (2 Corinthians 1:21, 22)

I am a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17)

I have received God's righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21)

I am God's co-worker (2 Corinthians 6:1)

I am one in Christ (Galatians 3:28)

I am a saint (Ephesians 1:1)

I am blessed with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3)

I am holy, blameless and covered with God's love (Ephesians 1:4)

I have been adopted as God's child (Ephesians 1:5-6)

I am forgiven, and my sins have been taken away (Ephesians 1:7)

I am marked as belonging to God (Ephesians 1:13)

I have been raised up to sit with Christ (Ephesians 2:6)

I am God's work of art (Ephesians 2:10)

I have been brought near to God (Ephesians 2:13)

I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:18)

I share in the promise of Christ (Ephesians 3:6)

I can come into God's presence with freedom and confidence (Ephesians 3:12)

I am a member of Christ's body (Ephesians 5:29-30)

**I am confident that the good work God has begun
in me will be perfected** (Philippians 1:6)

I am a citizen of Heaven (Philippians 3:20)

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:3)

I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins (Colossians 1:14)

I am complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10)

I am set free from my sinful nature (Colossians 2:11)

I am hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3)

I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power love and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7)

I have eternal glory (2 Timothy 2:10)

I can find grace and mercy in time of need (Hebrews 4:16)

I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me (1 John 5:18)

My first reaction when I read these verses was, “That is the most beautiful thing that I have ever heard about myself.” Then along came Satan saying, “Those things are not for you, not with all of the things that you have done in your life.” Satan does not want you to understand and trust God’s truth about who you are. If you do not believe these verses are true, then you can call God a liar. Remember that Satan is the father of lies, not God.

I had to read these scriptures several times a day for an extraordinarily long time before I started to believe they were all true about me. I had to allow God’s word to remove the lies that I once believed, and reprogram my mind with His truth.

You must allow the *truth* of God’s word to determine what you *believe* about yourself. Then your belief about yourself will determine your *behavior*, and your behavior will determine how you *feel* about yourself.

Let me give you an example of what I mean. The *truth* of God’s word in 1 Peter 2:9 says, **“I am a chosen race, a royal Priesthood.”** I now *believe* that I am a Queen to the King of Kings. I choose to *behave* as royalty like Proverbs 31:10 says, **“A wife of noble character, who can find? Her value is far greater than rubies.”** You see I am not out looking for a husband anymore, or looking for love in all the wrong places. I no longer go out on useless dates just so I can feel better about myself or to feel more like a woman. Nor am I dating just so I can have something to do on a Saturday night, or to get some free food. Ouch! I know that one hurt.

The truth is that I have a husband who is so much more than that. God’s word says in Isaiah 54:5, **“Your husband is your maker. The Lord Almighty is his name.”** Now, I am committed to being the best Bride of Christ, woman and mother that I can be. That my dear single mom is all you will ever need to be happy in life.

As a single mom, you have to understand and accept what Colossians 2:10 says, **“In Him you have been made complete.”** If God has an earthly husband for you he will be looking for a woman who knows who she really is “In Christ,” and acts like it too!

My dear single mom, when you start to understand and live out these scriptures so will your children. I read these scriptures to my son Eric every day, so he will know who he is in Christ. Our children need to hear sound and positive things from their mother. With all they are bombarded with from school, television and radio they need to know they are accepted, secure and significant in God's eyes and their mother's.

My son has memorized these verses for himself. Our children need to get truth engrained in their mind just like we do. They must learn how to win the battle for their minds on their own. The last thing I need is for my child to grow up wearing the false titles the world has to offer him. I refuse to let my son live a defeated life.

I want to share a story with you how the word of God changed my son's thinking. When Eric was only eight years old, he came home from school with a hurt look on his face. When I asked him what was wrong, he said someone on the bus called him stupid. I asked him if it was true, and he said, "No". Then I asked him to tell me who he was. He recited off those scriptures, and when he was done an enormous smile came on his face. He went out to play basketball and acted like nothing bad had ever happened.

There are so many voices shouting for our attention. We have to decide which voice we are going to listen to. Will it be our own voice? What other people say? Or the enemy whispering lies in our ear? The best choice is to do what Matthew 17:5 says, **"This is my son, listen to Him."**

So how did I answer Dr. Stanley's question? I just said I was a child of God disguised here on earth as a speaker and author.

Questions:

1. What are the false label's you are wearing?
2. Identify who gave them to you.
3. What will you do with the false labels?
4. What will you say the next time someone asks you about who you are?
5. Read the scriptures out loud to yourself and to your children on a daily basis.



Principle 3



VICTORY

“Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthen ware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.”

2 Timothy 2:20-21

These last few years of single motherhood have undoubtedly been the greatest experience of my life. I feel whole and complete in God alone, and there is nothing missing in my life now. My wounds and hurts from the past have been healed, and I am experiencing real love from Jesus Christ and other people like I have never known. I am also completely satisfied with my single mom life. For the first time I feel terrific about my self from the inside out. My life is filled with purpose and meaning, focus and order and balance and harmony. Tremendous joy and peace fill each day of my life. God is cradling me in his arms, He is holding and protecting me, and I am resting fully in Him. My eyes have been opened to a new way of life. It seems as if a black veil was lifted off of them. I see my position with God clearly now, and from an entirely different point of view. I am living from the love of God instead of my own mind, will and emotions. Life as a single mom is good. It is really, really good.

How did I ever get to this incredible point in my life? I did what Paul said to do in Ephesians 4:31, **“Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.** As a new single mom I felt angry, rejected and full of fear and anxiety. I harbored hatred against certain people; especially my ex-husband. Inside I was bound up in emotional darkness, and a prisoner to internal rage and fury. I did a remarkable job of fooling everyone, including myself, to believe that I could handle all of this on my own. I also lied to everyone and told them that everything was just fine.

My Pastor preached a message one Sunday on “Strongholds” that changed my life forever. I was so overwhelmed by what I just heard I could not move when service was over. I sat in my chair with tears streaming down my face saying, “I just never knew.” What I learned that day about strongholds is that they are Satan’s way of controlling you from things that have happened in your past. They keep you from fully understanding the truth about God’s love and acceptance of you.

Once we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior the bright powerful light of His truth shines into our heart. This is what turns the darkness of sin into a bright light of forgiving love. The

penetrating power of the Holy Spirit is what comes into your heart and changes you. God's love can not fully penetrate your heart if Satan still has a grip on you from the past.

Satan causes *blockage* and acts as a *filter* to what you can receive from God's truth. It is just like going to the beach. You put on sunscreen to protect your skin from burning, and sunglasses to shade the sunlight from your eyes. The SPF in the sunscreen acts as a filter and blocks certain rays from penetrating your skin. The sunglasses act as a shade over your eyes that keep you from seeing the true light of the sun. The sunscreen and sunglasses act in the same way as strongholds do; they filter, shade and block God's love and the healing rays of His truth.

I learned from my Pastor's message how so many things from our past, starting at conception with the main focus on our younger years of puberty affect the way we think and act today. Situations from you possibly being an unwanted pregnancy, if you were born the wrong sex that a parent wanted, being adopted, a tragic event that occurred in your youth; maybe the death of a parent or loved one, a violation; perhaps you may have been sexually abused or raped, harsh words spoken from parents, parental neglect, involvement in the occult, exposure to pornography, transference from past generations and past sex partners, perhaps your parents divorced or you have experienced one yourself, and our own willful disobedience all cause strongholds in our lives.

As I sat alone that night thinking about the sermon, I recalled some memories from my own childhood. I faced some truly painful things when I was young. Unfortunately, this is real life and these things happen with people. A lot of the destructive behavior we face from other people comes from strongholds passed down from generation to generation. These things must be dealt with and broken in our lives, and in our children.

I sat at my kitchen table with my head in my hands saying, "No wonder I am the way that I am. No wonder I feel such bitterness, rejection, fear, insecurity and have no self worth. No wonder I can never feel good about the way I look. No wonder I never felt like a soft woman or why I thought sex was what love is all about." I could never understand why I just could not say a sincere, "Thank you" when someone paid me a compliment. I always had to find a way to put myself down to them.

I learned that Satan attacks the soul; the precise place that controls our mind (how we think), our will (how we choose) and our emotions (how we feel). The soul is the part of us that houses our deepest hurts and feelings. Satan uses strongholds of deceit, rejection, control, fear and insecurity, bitterness, confusion, pride, independence, jealousy, heaviness and sexual impurity to cause you to remember an event or moment from your past. Then he lodges that event in you like a hook, and controls you like a puppet on a string to think and do things that are not of God. Strongholds also prevent us from giving and receiving love, understanding and acceptance in other relationships.

With a better understanding about strongholds, I finally realized why I was not able to accept God's truth about me. I just love what Proverbs 31:10 says, **"A wife of noble character who can find, her value is far greater than rubies."** I also love 1 Peter 2:9 that says, **"You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood."** As beautiful as those words are to me I could never think of my self as noble, valuable, better than rubies or royalty. I never imagined that I was worthy of or deserved something as beautiful as that.

The more I learned about strongholds I recognized the control Satan had over my life. I accepted the horrible names I was called in my childhood as truth. I thought that I was fat, ugly and never worthy of a handsome godly man for a husband. I genuinely thought that no one good looking would ever look at me. I never finished college, so I viewed myself as someone not worthy of a husband that was a successful business executive. I thought, "What good would I be to him not fully educated and fat?" I started to realize how unhealthy I truly was.

I kept wondering though if the power of Satan was destroyed at the cross why am I not living in that victory? I felt the Holy Spirit say, *"Look at the way you view yourself. It is blocked and shaded from the truth, and you are deceived. You do not feel worthy. You do not feel pretty. You do not feel that anyone recognizes what you do. You do not feel valuable. You do not feel loved and accepted. Stop living off of your feelings and live off of my truth."* That was it! I was not living off of the power of the Holy Spirit and God's word. I was living from my soul and letting Satan control me like a puppet on a string. I was deceived, and that is why "I just never knew." Just then the verse from John 8:31 came to my mind that says, **"You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free."** I wanted to live a life of truth and stop living from lies. I recalled the verse from Psalms 2:3 that says, **"Let us break their chains and throw off of their fetters."** The last sentence from my favorite verse also came to my mind from Jeremiah 29:11-14 that says, **"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all of your heart. I will be found by you, and will bring you back from captivity."** I realized that I was living in captivity, and I wanted out!

I thought about the story in John 5:6-9 that says, **"An invalid man had tried to get into the healing pool when the angel stirred it for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" "Sir, the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me." Then Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your mat and walk." At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and he walked."**

I felt the Holy Spirit say, *"Do you want to get well?"* I did not know that I was sick until I heard about strongholds. It was at that *pivotal* moment that I knew I wanted to be healed. I wanted to be whole, complete and healthy in Christ. I wanted it for myself and my son. I was

willing to do whatever it took so my son did not grow up in the turmoil of bondage. If I was going to experience the complete love of God, I had to give Satan an eviction notice from my life. Like the invalid man trying to get to the healing pool I needed to rise. I had to experience the power of the cross and stop letting Satan control and manipulate me. I needed to take my mat and roll it up. I had to put my past in perspective and start doing what healthy people do. They walk in victory from the truth of God's word. I realized that no one could do this for me. This was something only the power of the Holy Spirit working in me could do. All I had to do was start offering myself to God. If I would start walking, He would start healing me.

I wanted to experience the love of Christ, so I did it. I "Got up" the next day and made an appointment with my Pastor and Woman's Ministry Leader. I "Picked up my mat" and journeyed into my past with them. This was the hardest task I have ever done in my life. I confessed all of my known sins and asked God to forgive me. I also chose to forgive everyone that ever hurt me. I cried for hours and it was radical heart surgery. When we were done I was cured. Instantly the pain that once gripped my heart was replaced with God's love and forgiveness.

I remember the first words I spoke after the tears stopped flowing. It was the most incredible thing that I have ever said about myself. As I spoke the words, "I feel so beautiful" I knew I was going on a journey of a lifetime with God. Darkness was in the past, and I saw true light for the first time in my life. Finally I was able to see myself as God sees me. Psalms 139:13-14 says, **"For you know my innermost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are beautiful, I know that full well."** When I look at myself I see a piece of art, a true masterpiece made by my creator's hands.

The horrible memories from my past were wiped away as Romans 8:1 says, **"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."** Now that my eyes are open to truth I can live in the victory of the cross. I understand that Jesus did not die on the cross for me to live a defeated and depressed life in bondage to the enemy. God wants us to be victorious, and Jesus rose from the dead to enforce that victory in us. I also knew this was going to be a battle with Satan for the rest of my life. He could not possibly be thrilled with what God just did for me. I had just declared war on Satan, and I needed to learn how to fight.

We live in victory as single moms by understanding our position with Jesus. Paul says in Ephesians 1:1 that we are to be faithful "In Christ." As women of God, we are exalted and enthroned above all principalities and powers. Ephesians 2:6 says, **"God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus."** The heavenly places are where Christ is presently enthroned. Ephesians 1:20-22 says, **"He raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and**

authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.”

When we understand our position in Christ, we believe that everything under His feet is under ours also as believers. We are ambassadors of heaven and here on earth we have the authority of Jesus. Our battle with Satan takes charge in the heavenly realm. It is already won before it even starts. Ephesians 6:12 says, **“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”** As believers we do not belong to Satan nor do our children. Satan has no authority over us for we are God’s property. All the kingdoms of this world are overthrown, and Satan is defeated.

I finally understood this point one day at the pool when my son wanted to race. I laughed to myself when he said he could beat me. This five year old boy was fully convinced that he could beat his mom who used to be a competitive swimmer. In Eric’s mind he did not know that he would lose. From my perspective, he was already defeated before we even started the race. That is exactly how we must perceive spiritual warfare.

It is easy at times to say to Satan, “In the name of Jesus, shut up and go away.” James 4:7 says, **“Submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you.”** Other times it will take prayer, and sometimes fasting to win the battle. It is not that I do not take Satan seriously. He is dangerous as John 10:10 says, **“The enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy.”** I have learned not to fear Satan anymore. I realize how much time I wasted paralyzed and living in bondage. How could you be afraid of Satan when you are sitting in heavenly places? The battle with Satan is not a power encounter; it is a truth encounter. The Holy Spirit and Satan cannot exist in the same place. Satan is the Father of lies and Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. It is simply a matter of lies verses truth. If it is not in the Bible then it is not true. That is why my dear single mom you must be in the Bible every day to win this battle. It is your shield, your protection and your victory for you and your children.

On this earth the temptation to sin is enormous and Satan will relentlessly attack to draw us back to him. It is essential as a single mom to make a daily decision to live in victory. It is not easy for me, and it is a minute-by-minute commitment to live a victorious life. If I allow sin, temptation, wrong attitudes, wrong words and past hurts to go un-confessed, unchallenged or unchanged I leave the door wide open with a welcome mat out for Satan. Victory comes when I choose to stay focused on Christ and not the difficult circumstances of single motherhood.

You cannot win this spiritual war on your own. It takes heavenly weapons which are the word of God, and spiritual armor. Ephesians 6:13-18 says, **“Therefore, put on the full armor of**

God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, stand. Stand firm then with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all of this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”

As single moms, we must be strong in the Lord to protect our children and ourselves. The Lord is willing to do His part, and we must do ours to ensure victory for the day. You would not go to work nor have your children go to school without any clothes on, now would you? Do not leave the house without getting spiritually dressed, so you are not entirely defenseless to Satan’s schemes. Put on God’s armor piece by piece and declare his promises for you today.

My son is now living in victory and experiencing the love and joy of Christ. When I came home from my meeting with my Pastor, my son took one look at me and said,

“Mommy, you look so happy, what happened to you?” I told him all about it and to this day the greatest moment for me as a mother was when my son put his little hand in mine and led me to our prayer chair and asked me to pray with him. Strongholds came off of him when he forgave his dad for leaving our family. I prayed over generational strongholds that were in me, and his father that have been passed down to him, and in the name of Jesus broke those strongholds in his life. He has gone a step further and broken those strongholds over himself when he was just nine years old. He is such a healthy young man now spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically. Life as a single mom is good. It is really, really good!

My prayer is that you too will rise, and pick up your mat to do what healthy single moms do. They walk in victory and raise healthy children that walk in victory also.

I hope you enjoyed the first three Principles of Hope & Help for the Single Mom. If so, pass this on to another single mom you know. To order the DVD Leaders Kit, or the book please visit: www.hope4singlemoms.com

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