

Hope Isn't Hype—It's What You Carry

We live in a moment when people are stretched thin, worn down, and quietly wondering, “Is it always going to feel like this?”

Work is heavy. The news is loud. And in a world full of noise and need, one thing quietly makes the difference: hope.

Not the hashtag version. Not the fake-it-til-you-make-it kind. Real, rooted hope that can hold up under pressure—and pass from one person to another.

Because according to Gallup, the #1 thing followers want from their leaders isn't clarity or control. It's hope.

And let's be real: most of us don't feel like we're carrying much of it.

But what if hope isn't something we *feel*? What if it's something we *carry*—and something God *forms* in us, even when we're in the middle of the mess?

Let's rewind for a minute. My childhood wasn't exile-level hard, but I had my own moments of hope that felt pretty epic at the time. And just like the Israelites during the Babylonian exile, some of those hopes came true, and some... didn't exactly pan out.

Let's rewind for a minute.

Hope starts small. A snow day. A dance invite. A game console. A very specific Christmas gift. For me, it was things like:

- Finding a \$20 bill at the mall (happened—twice!)
- Getting asked to Sadie Hawkins (never happened—still not over it)
- The Broncos winning a Super Bowl (finally happened in

'98—thank you, John Elway)

- Dating the girl of my dreams, Kathy (never happened—she chose the quarterback instead)

Hope isn't just a grown-up concept. It's been shaping us since before we realized it. And it's not something you feel—it's someone you know.

When Hope Gets Heavy

Hope sounds great until it doesn't show up. Until you're stuck. Until life hits hard.

That's exactly where God's people were in exile. Their land was lost. Their temple destroyed. Their identity shattered. Everything looked hopeless.

But God had given them a promise *before* the exile even began:

“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles...” (Isaiah 40:31)

That promise wasn't a last-minute pep talk. It was a word *for* the exile. A reminder that even when everything looks lost, hope remains.

What You Feed, Grows

Hope doesn't just appear. Neither does despair. They grow. One is a tree rooted in faith, the other in fear. One flourishes. The other withers.

Here's the difference:

- Despair feels abandoned. Hope knows God is present.
- Despair asks, “What's the point?” Hope asks, “What's the next step?”
- Despair shuts down. Hope presses on.

So which one are you feeding?

Because what you focus on... grows.

Hope Has a Source

Before we talk about how hope is formed, we need to be clear about something: hope isn't something we conjure up. It's not a mood we manufacture, or a mindset we fake until we make. Biblical hope has a source—and it's not us. It's Jesus.

Our hope doesn't come from circumstances, from personality, or from wishful thinking. Our hope is rooted in the unchanging character of God and the finished work of Christ. He is our anchor in the storm, our light in the dark, and our strength when we're running on empty.

Romans 15:13 says, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him..."

Not the God who *has* hope. The God who *is* hope. And as believers, we don't just hope for something—we hope in Someone.

With that in mind, here's the invitation: to let Jesus form something deep and lasting in you. Because hope isn't self-made. It's Spirit-shaped. It's not instant or easy—but it is possible, and powerful, when He's the one doing the building.

Hope is FORM'd in You

Here's how He forms it:

Hope isn't something you find. It's something you build. It's formed in you—through faith, pain, memory, and movement. That's what the FORM framework is all about:

F – Faith-Filled Foundation (Romans 5:1–5)

Hope begins when you're anchored in who God is—not how things are going.

You don't have to earn your foundation. It's already under you. You're not building on quicksand—you're rooted in grace.

O – Overcoming Through Suffering (James 1:2–4)

Hope isn't found in escaping pain. It's formed by walking through it with God.

When my wife Carla was told she'd likely lose five of her front teeth from bone and gum loss, despair showed up fast. Embarrassment. Fear. Shame. It was all there.

But we turned to God—and yes, we prayed hard. Radical treatments followed. Months of uncertainty. But God led us to the right doctor. The bone healed. The teeth were saved. Her case is now studied by dentists around the world.

Hope didn't ignore the diagnosis. It clung to God through it.

R – Remembering God's Faithfulness (Psalm 77:11)

When you can't see what's ahead, remember what God has already done—and what He's already promised.

Hope doesn't come from predicting the future. It comes from remembering the past and standing on God's Word. Scripture is packed with promises that speak directly to our doubts and detours. When we recall what He's done and what He's said, we give hope a firm place to stand.

You don't need new proof. You need old faith grounded in eternal truth.

M – Moving Forward with Expectation (Isaiah 40:31)

Hope doesn't freeze you in place. It gives you courage to take the next step.

Biblical hope isn't passive. It's not wishful thinking. It's active trust. As Paul said, "I press on." Even when it's slow. Even when you limp.

Hope doesn't need a spotlight. It just needs shoes. If you're still walking, you haven't given up.

And Then... It Flows Out of You

According to Gallup, the #1 thing followers want from their leaders isn't clarity or control—it's hope. In fact, 56% of all positive leadership traits mentioned by followers fall under the theme of hope, according to Gallup's 2025 Global Leadership Report.^[1]

That might surprise you. But it makes sense. Because hope is what helps people keep going, even when things are unclear, overwhelming, or painfully slow.

Someone once said: a person can survive 30 days without food, 3 days without water, but only a few seconds without hope.

Hope is oxygen. And leaders—whether you're a CEO or a shift supervisor—are often the ones handing out the oxygen masks.

Hope isn't just personal—it's contagious. What you carry, they catch.

People are watching you. Your team. Your family. Your coworkers. They're looking for a reason to believe things can be better than they are right now.

So how do you lead with hope?

1. Cast a Clear Vision

Hope thrives on direction. People don't need every detail mapped out—they just need to know where we're headed and that it's worth going.

You don't have to hand your team a five-year plan. But you do need to offer a picture of a better future. Something beyond the mess of the moment. Something that says, "There's more than this."

Vision doesn't mean having all the answers. It means offering a reason to keep going.

2. Be Consistently Trustworthy

Hope needs stability to survive. If people don't know what to expect from you, they stop expecting anything at all.

Consistency builds trust. And trust is the soil where hope takes root. It's not about being flashy—it's about being faithful. Following through. Being steady.

Hope doesn't grow in chaos. It grows where there's a dependable leader showing up, doing what they said they'd do.

3. Encourage in the Middle

Hopeful leaders speak up when things are unclear, progress is slow, and people are tired. Not with hype—but with presence.

You don't have to be a motivational speaker. Just say what matters: "I see you. I know it's hard. Keep going."

Don't wait for a result to affirm someone. Acknowledge the effort—it might be the thing that helps them hold on.

4. Invest in Their Growth

Hope always looks forward. So when you invest in someone's development, you're not just assigning tasks—you're shaping their future.

People thrive when they know they're seen, valued, and being equipped for what's next. Even a small step—a check-in, a stretch opportunity, a word of belief—can reignite their sense of purpose.

It doesn't have to be formal. It just has to be intentional.

Choose one of these to lean into this week. Small step. Big impact.

Full Circle: Hope is Formed in You—and Flows Out of You

Hope begins as something deeply personal—a shift in perspective, a quiet trust, a small flame in a dark place. But it doesn't stay personal.

When hope is formed in you—through faith, through pain, through memory, and movement—it begins to overflow. It spills into your leadership, your relationships, your team culture. And the effect? It's powerful.

Because when people see hope in you, they start to believe something is possible for them too.

Hope isn't a leadership technique. It's a presence. It's a posture. And over time, it becomes a pattern: one that influences how decisions get made, how challenges are faced, and how people grow.

Hope isn't a strategy—but it shapes every strategy worth building. It fuels vision, invites people to believe in a better tomorrow, and helps them see how they can contribute to it.

That kind of hope activates teams. It builds resilience. It invites ownership. It shapes cultures that are rooted in purpose, not pressure. That run on grace, not grind.

When leaders carry hope, organizations move forward—with clarity, courage, and a sense that the best isn't behind them—it's ahead.

But before we close, let's rewind one last time.

I had a few more childhood hopes that never quite made the cut:

- Getting picked first in PE (it happened once... and the gym burst into laughter)

- Not getting caught throwing plums at cars (we didn't—but barely)
- Becoming senior class president (ran on “Poore for President”—shocker, I lost)
- Winning homecoming court (nope—not even close)
- Driving a cool first car (I got a Ford Ranchero. Google it. Then laugh.)

Those hopes felt big back then. Now, they're funny stories. But they still matter.

Because hope always matters.

Today, the hopes we carry are heavier. The stakes are higher. And some of us feel like we've hit a wall.

That's why this quote from *The Lord of the Rings* always gets me:

“Even darkness must pass. A new day will come... and when the sun shines, it will shine out the clearer.”

That's hope.

Not that everything turns out exactly how we imagined. But that God is still writing the story. He's present. He's faithful. And He's not finished.

So—what's the next faithful step for you?

Because hope isn't hype. It's who we follow. It's what He's forming in you. And it's what the people around you are hungry to catch.

Call to Action: Reflect on where you're placing your hope today. Which tree are you feeding? What's your next faithful step?

Then, share this with someone who might need it. You never know what they're carrying—and what you carry, they might

catch.

Because hope isn't hype. It's who we follow. It's what He's forming in you. And it's what the people around you are longing to catch.

This blog is based on my *The Hope Effect: What You Carry, They Catch* workshop delivered for the 2025 Office Pride Franchisee Retreat. If you'd like to bring this message to your organization or learn more about my speaking and leadership development services, visit prestonpoore.com.

^[1] Gallup. Global Leadership Report: What Followers Want. Washington, D.C.: Gallup, 2025. 10.