

A  
**MESSAGE OF HOPE,**  
comfort and freedom in Jesus Christ

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**“A Living Hope” by Kyle Murphy**

Message of Hope began and is built on a foundation of hope, specifically the kind of hope that can only be found in Jesus Christ. It seemed fitting, then, to revisit the topic of hope this quarter. Hope is such a powerful feeling. It transforms, uplifts, inspires, and (for some of us) saves us.

A few weeks back, in our Monday night Next Step Christian Recovery program, we were discussing Step Three in our workbook, “12 Steps To A Closer Walk With God.” The author of the Step Three story shared this:

I had never thought of my addictive behavior as a “sin.” Illegal or extreme or a coping mechanism, but not “sin.” Without knowing anything about me except the darkness I had revealed, he told me I was forgiven. Me. Forgiven. My eyes welled up with tears as it dawned on me that I’d always lived without hope. My heart was pierced. I didn’t deserve hope. I didn’t deserve forgiveness. But that night, hope is what I received.

I can relate to this. Looking back at my life prior to stepping into recovery I, too, was living without hope which resulted in a great deal of destruction in my life. Similar to what was shared by the author of our Step Three story, a friend and mentor helped me to realize I was living without hope. (God bless you George. Much love to you brother!) By turning back to God and recommitting my life to Him, my hope was restored and He, quite literally, saved my life.

Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology defines hope this way: to trust in, wait for, look for, or desire something or someone; or to expect something beneficial in the future. With this definition in mind, it comes as no surprise that hope is often discussed throughout the Bible. It is a common theme in the book of Psalms as well as in Jeremiah’s writings (Jeremiah and Lamentations). Paul and Peter reference the concept of hope repeatedly in their Epistles as does the author of Hebrews.

Our quarterly scripture verse comes from one of these references, which is found in 1 Peter 1:3. The Apostle Peter writes about a living hope that each of us is able to enjoy through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He continues in 1 Peter 3:15, and tells the church to “always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the *hope* that you have.” (emphasis mine)

Regardless of our past, what we experienced or did prior to obtaining the living hope found in Jesus Christ, we need not be ashamed to share our story. We should instead, as Peter discussed, be prepared to share with others about our new life – a life built on a foundation of hope in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ! This is an occasion and reason to celebrate. We have been given new birth into a living hope!

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**Quarterly Scripture Focus:**

1 Peter 1:3

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

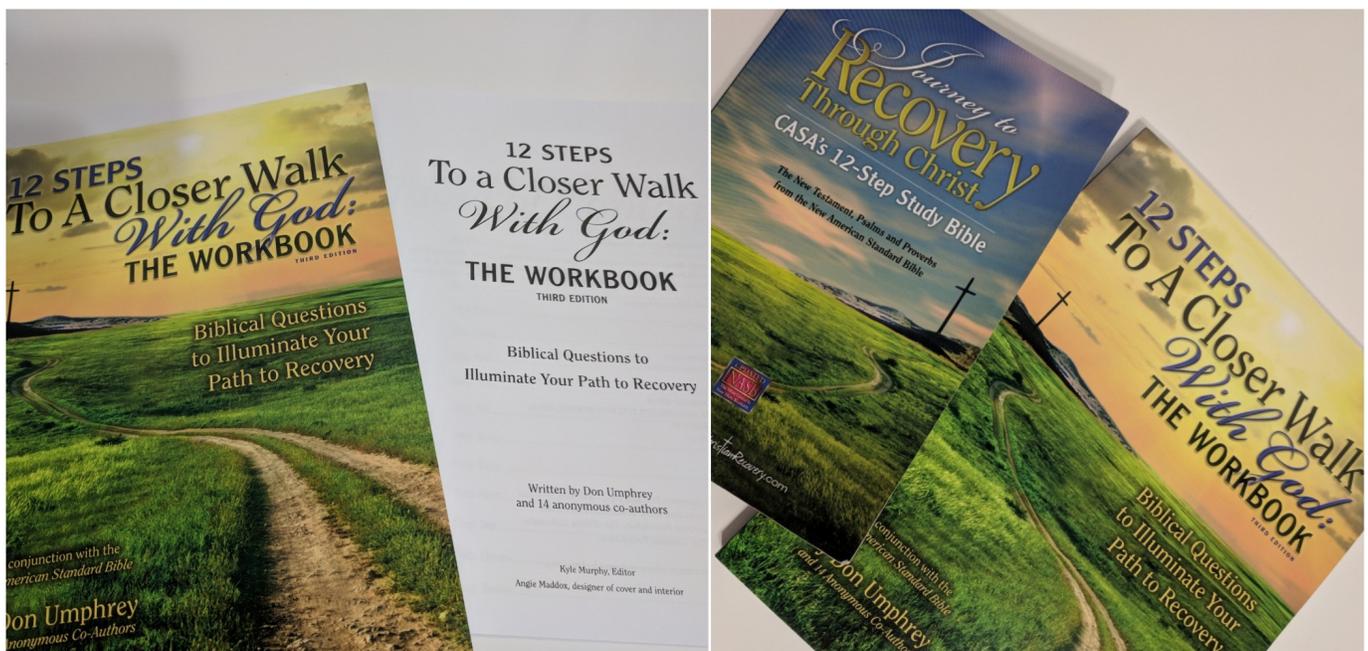


We are excited to share that over the course of the next several weeks we will be making use of the third edition of our workbook “12 Steps To A Closer Walk With God.” In addition to new material and introduction stories, this third edition is complemented by a recovery Bible entitled “Journey to Recovery Through Christ.” These are amazing resources and study tools for anyone who is in recovery or knows someone who is, or for individuals desiring to strengthen their relationship with God (which is hopefully all of us).

Our thanks to Don Umphrey of Quarry Press for his efforts in putting together this incredible combination. He and his wife, Kim, have devoted their lives to serving God. One of the ways they do this is by helping those who struggle with addiction to find freedom through Jesus Christ. We are so grateful for them and everything they do! Please keep them in your prayers and ask that God continue to provide them with the strength and endurance they need to continue in their ministry.

One of our very own volunteers, Kyle Murphy, was blessed to be a small part of this newest edition of the workbook. He assisted in the editing process and was able to make some contributions based on discussion and insight provided by the members of the Next Step Christian Recovery program at Macomb.

You can order a copy for yourself directly from the publisher by visiting their website at: [nextstepchristianrecovery.com](http://nextstepchristianrecovery.com). The workbook and Bible can be ordered as a set (at a discounted rate) or separately. They have many other excellent resources available as well so make sure to spend some time perusing their site while you are there!



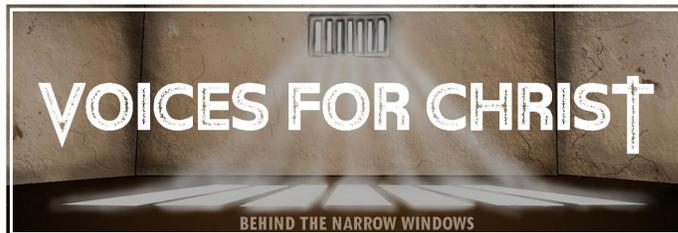
## Message of Hope Jail and Prison Ministry



For those who aren't aware, Message of Hope provides Bible-based correspondence courses to our friends inside. Below is a list of the courses that are currently available. For our friends inside who are interested in any, please let us know which course and we will get the first lesson to you in the mail. (We ask that you please select only one course at a time.)

Each lesson is approximately ten pages long and has a multiple choice quiz and reflection question at the end. A self-addressed stamped envelope is provided so you can return the quiz to us at no cost to you. Once we receive it, an instructor will grade it and send it back to you along with the next lesson. Upon completion of each course, you will receive a Certificate of Completion from Message of Hope!

- Redefining Addiction: Merging Science and the Bible (8 lessons)***  
This course helps the student gain a better understanding of addiction – the definition, the causes and effects of addiction as well as what the Bible has to say about being set free (and staying free) from the bondage of addiction.
- Biblical Principles for Handling Money God's Way (8 lessons)***  
This course helps the student gain a better understanding of what God teaches us in His Word about handling money and realize that God owns everything.
- Christians Against Substance Abuse (CASA) (13 lessons)***  
This course looks at each of the Twelve Steps as related to what the Bible teaches. These steps work because they present God's path to recovery from any negative, habitual and destructive behavior.
- A Sense of Self (13 lessons)***  
This course helps students better understand themselves – where they came from, why they are here, where they are going, and why they think, feel and act as they do.
- A Sense of Family (13 lessons)***  
This course helps the student recognize the value of each member of the family unit and how we relate to each other functionally in healthy ways.
- Christian Marriage Skills (13 lessons)***  
This course defines and outlines the roles of the Christian husband and wife and how to strengthen this relationship – especially when one marriage partner is not present.
- Attitudes and Behaviors (13 lessons)***  
This course looks at seven godly virtues and seven destructive vices. These attitudes are behind our actions and behaviors – for good or evil.
- True Freedom (13 lessons)***  
This course examines the Truth that sets us free from sin in spite of our physical surroundings, introducing us to the peace that surpasses understanding.
- Managing My Anger (13 lessons)***  
This course explores the meaning and nature of anger, including how to deal with our emotions in positive ways – for our own benefit and for that of others.



“Don’t Let Your Journey Last Too Long”

By Walter Bass

Muskegon Correctional Facility, Muskegon, MI

Through God’s instruction, Moses led the people of Israel in their escape from Egypt. Israel started out on a journey that was only supposed to last for 11 days, but because of their rebellion and disobedience they ended up wandering in the wilderness for 40 years.

My brothers and sisters, don’t let your journey last longer than it has to. Don’t let your rebellion and disobedience cause you to wander in the wilderness. We must listen to the word of God and do what He instructs us to do. God has placed a calling on your life. He has instructed you on how to conquer your problem, but because you perceive your problem to be bigger or greater than God, you allow the problem to constantly exist.

When the people of Israel became scared, Moses said to them, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today” (Exodus 14:10-14).

Each one of us has our own journey to walk. However, on that journey when we are faced with problems and difficulties, we have to remember that our God whom we serve is a God that says He will never leave us and that God is bigger than any problem that we may face. Remember that God is with you on your journey. It is on this journey that we must listen to the word of God and follow His instructions and not our own fears. Don’t let your journey last longer than it has to.

“Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today.”

May the grace and mercy of God be yours in abundance.

“The Whole Duty of Man”

By George Walker

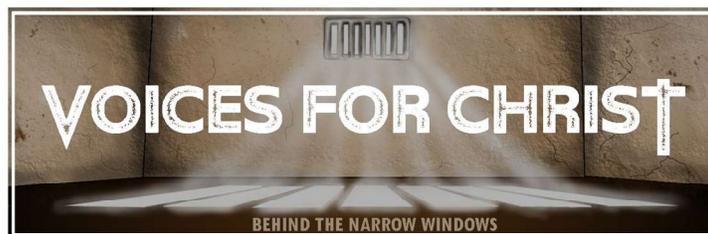
Muskegon Correctional Facility, Muskegon, MI

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

There are some days when I question my service to God. I ask myself, is this working or meaningless? Sometimes I doubt what I am doing and I ask myself am I just going through the motions, being religious with what I think, say and do. While reading the book of Ecclesiastes these were some of the questions that came to mind. This caused me to look at myself and evaluate the life that God gave me and He asked me this question: “Does His love determine how I think, say or do things?” I can truthfully say not all the time. If His love is not determining how I think, say or do things then I am not fearing God and keeping His commandments. And if I am not fearing God and keeping His commandments, then I am not doing the whole duty of man.

According to Solomon (the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes) if I am living my life apart from God then my life is meaningless. The Word of God tells us to examine ourselves. Fearing God means having respect for Him and being in awe of Him. His plan to prosper us and do us no evil should cause us to respect Him. Jesus Christ being beaten, spit on and nailed to the cross, and killed for people who didn’t care for Him, should keep us all in awe of him. He loves us that much that He was obedient till death on the cross so that we can live. Fearing God and keeping His commandments is the least that I can do for Him – The one who has done it all for me – Thank You Jesus!

## Message of Hope Jail and Prison Ministry



### “Purpose”

By Raymond Carr

Lakeland Correctional Facility, Coldwater, MI

Purposed, into this world, on purpose, for a purpose.  
And determined to strive towards the desired goal,  
with a willful and deliberate intent, with favorable  
results, on purpose.

To everything there is a season, a time for every  
purpose under heaven. There are many plans in a  
man’s heart. Nevertheless, it is the Lord’s purpose  
that prevails.

Now, it is God who has made us for this very  
purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, a  
guarantee for what is to come.

So is His word that goes out from His mouth: It will  
not return to Him void, but will accomplish what He  
desires and achieves the purpose, for a purpose, and  
on purpose we are.

You see, love has been purposed in us, so we would  
love one another on purpose. For God has put love  
in our hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one  
mind, according to His purpose, on purpose.

Romans 8:28; Proverbs 19; Ecclesiastes 3:1;  
Revelation 17:17; Ephesians 3:11; Isaiah 55:11;  
2 Corinthians 5:5

**V4C accepts and publishes works (such as testimonies, lessons, words of encouragement, and poems) from individuals currently incarcerated. Works may be submitted by mail or through Jpay. A completed Consent to Publish must be submitted before any works can be published.**

For more information or to become a part of V4C, please mail all submissions, consents, and/or requests to be added to our Jpay account to:

Voices for Christ, PO Box 221, Washington, Michigan, 48094

### “I Was”

By Timothy Pelfrey

Macomb Correctional Facility, New Haven, MI

I was lost, so that I could be found;  
I was forgotten, so that I could remember;

My friends and family left me, so that I could find  
a Friend that stays closer than a brother;

I was imprisoned, so that I could find freedom;  
I was convicted, so that I could be made righteous;

I was sickened, so that I could be made well;  
I was untrusted, so that I could learn to trust;  
I was lonely, so that I could know that I am never  
alone;

I was a thirst, so that I could be refreshed with  
living water;

I was hungered, so that I could be filled with the  
bread of life;

I was unloved, so that I could learn to love  
unconditionally;

I was a sinner, so that I could be saved.  
Thank You LORD for another day



## Sponsorship Opportunities

One way Message of Hope shares the love of Jesus with our friends inside is by sending a birthday card to each of them. Many have lost touch with friends and family and do not receive cards or letters. Sending a card is a reminder that they are not forgotten. One of our friends talked about how when the mail cart went through his unit they would announce that they had either got “Love” or “No Love” that day based on whether or not they received mail.

It costs MOH about \$40/month to make sure our friends get “Love” on their birthday. Please consider becoming a sponsor and covering this cost for a month (or more!).

- Yes, I would like to become a Card Ministry sponsor and cover the cost of \_\_\_\_\_ month(s) with my donation of \$40 per month.

Another way Message of Hope ministers to those inside is through a program called Next Step Christian Recovery. Next Step Christian Recovery is a Christ-centered Twelve Step program devoted to helping its members break the cycle of addiction in their lives. Through this program we work with anyone with any type of addiction. We believe the Twelve Steps to be the practical application of the life-changing principles which are so clearly defined in the Scriptures. The program runs about 14-16 weeks and each member receives a Certificate of Completion at the end of the course.

It costs MOH about \$25/student. This covers the cost of the following materials which are provided to each member: a recovery Bible, workbook, Welcome Packet and Certificate of Completion. Please consider sponsoring a student and help them to break the cycle of addiction in their life and find freedom through Jesus Christ.

- Yes, I would like to sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ student(s) in the Next Step Christian Recovery program with my donation of \$25 per student.

Donations can be submitted securely via Paypal through our website at [messageofhope.org](http://messageofhope.org) or by mailing them directly to the ministry at:

Message of Hope  
PO Box 221  
Washington, MI 48094

Checks or money order can be made payable to: **Message of Hope**

**Message of Hope is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization. All donations are 100% tax-deductible as provided by law of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are directly applied to the work of the ministry as we have no paid personnel.**

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When we realize the magnitude of this in our lives, we should be excited to share it with others. Through sharing about our hope, we glorify God as well as help others to renew their hope and be uplifted. We all have so much to be hopeful about, so much to be expectant for, to trust in, to wait for and look forward to.

Here are just a few of the things the Bible states those in Christ can hope in: Christ Jesus, salvation, glory, righteousness, a glorious inheritance, eternal life, grace, the appearing of Jesus Christ, the glory of God, God's unfailing love, God's word and resurrection.

As if this wasn't enough, we are also told (in 1 Thessalonians 1:3) that it is our hope which provides the endurance necessary to run our race. That is something I desperately need in my life – endurance. Life can get tiring at times, but praise God that He has provided us with a living hope that will give us the endurance we need. When I find myself getting weary or growing frustrated, I place my focus on Jesus Christ and all the promises and blessings I have through Him. This living hope inspires me and brings me peace.

It is my prayer that all who read this will be encouraged to allow this living hope to do all that God intends. Let it uplift and inspire you. Let it provide the endurance necessary for you to move forward, to overcome, and to live this life with joy! And don't keep it to yourself. Share this living hope with others!

In closing, I leave you with this poetic verse shared in the book of Psalms:

“May your soul find rest in God; for our hope comes from Him” (Psalm 62:5).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

We have a couple of upcoming events in April!

The first event will be at Bethel Christian Church in Warren, Michigan. We will be speaking to the congregation on Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> about Message of Hope and ways to can get involved. Dinner will be provided at 6:30 p.m. followed by a brief presentation. We invite you to join us to find out more about how you can get involved.

The second event will be our annual Easter Card Assembly party. Evident Church in Chesterfield, Michigan has volunteered to host this event and assist us in preparing approximately 400 Easter cards for our brothers and sisters in Christ inside. We will meet Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup> from 6 - 8 p.m.

Whether you have 20 minutes or 2 hours to spare, please consider joining us and sharing the hope of Jesus Christ with our friends this Easter. We hope to see you there!

## SERVE WITH MESSAGE OF HOPE

If you desire to answer God's calling in your life to carry a message of hope to our friends inside, below are some of the ways in which you can partner with us and #ServeWithMOH:

- Regular Volunteer – volunteering in a classroom setting with our Next Step Christian Recovery program
- Outreach Volunteer – visiting inside in a one-on-one setting
- Correspondence Course Instructor – providing lessons through the mail to our friends inside
- Card Ministry – sending out birthday, Christmas and Easter cards
- Prayer Team – praying for our friends inside for specific requests they submit
- Encouragement – writing words of encouragement for use with our Social Media pages

**Website:**  
[messageofhope.org](http://messageofhope.org)

**Phone:**  
(586) 270-6226

**Email:**  
[info@messageofhope.org](mailto:info@messageofhope.org)

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**Message of Hope Facebook Page:**  
[facebook.com/messageofhopejailandprisonministry](https://facebook.com/messageofhopejailandprisonministry)

**Voices for Christ Facebook Page:**  
[facebook.com/voices4christ.org](https://facebook.com/voices4christ.org)

**Voices for Christ website:**  
[voices4christ.org](http://voices4christ.org)



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