

BELIEVE

Hope Has Your Name on It

JOEL OSTEEN



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The Power of Believing

One of the greatest abilities God has given each of us is our ability to believe. If you believe, you can be successful. If you believe, you can overcome mistakes of the past. If you believe, you can fulfill your God-given destiny. There is incredible power in what we believe.

What you believe is greater than what the medical report says. We respect medical science, but God has the final say. When you get in agreement with God and believe what He says about you, what you believe can supersede any natural law.

What you believe is greater than what is in your bank account. I have a friend who came to the United States with nothing but the clothes on his back. Today, he runs a Fortune 500 company. Against all odds, he believed he could do what God put in his heart.

Activate the Greatness of His Power

The apostle Paul prayed in Ephesians 1:19 that those who believe would understand the incredible greatness of God's power. Notice the power is activated only when we believe. That means right now the Creator of the universe is just waiting to release healing, restoration, favor, promotion, and abundance. The only catch is that we have to believe.

Sometimes God will put a promise in your heart that seems impossible, a promise that says, "You will be healthy. You will start a business.

You will meet the right person and get married.”
It’s easy to think, *It’s never going to happen to me. I’ve been this way too long. I’ve made too many mistakes. The medical report is too bad. Nobody in my family has been successful.*

We can always come up with excuses. But instead of talking yourself out of it, just respond with three simple words: “Lord, I believe.”

God says your children will be mighty in the land. “Lord, I believe.”

God says He will restore the years that were stolen. He will bring you to a flourishing finish. “Lord, I believe.”

God says whatever you touch will prosper and succeed. You will lend and not borrow, be the head and never the tail. Now, don’t come up with five reasons why that will not happen. Your response should be: “Lord, I believe.”

When you get in agreement with God, the incredible greatness of His power is activated.

Only Believe

In the Scripture, a man came to Jesus and said, “My little daughter is very sick. She is close to death. Will You come to my home and pray for her?” Jesus agreed, but along the way, He kept getting stopped, one interruption after another. Finally, word came back to Him saying, “No need to come. You’ve waited too long. The little girl has died.”

The people were very distraught, but Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid. If you will only believe, the little girl will be well.”

Notice the phrase *only believe*. Jesus went to the home and prayed for the little girl, and she came back to life. You, too, may be facing situations that seem impossible. In the natural, you can’t see how you could ever be healthy, how you could overcome the addiction, or how your family could ever be restored. But God is saying to you

what He said to them: “If you will only believe, I will turn the situation around. If you only believe, breakthroughs are headed your way.”

It’s not complicated. God didn’t say, “If you pray three hours a day” or “If you quote twelve chapters in the Scripture, I’ll do it for you.” No, He said, “If you will only believe.” In other words, you just have to get your mind going in the right direction and believe you can rise higher. Believe you can overcome the obstacle. Believe your family can be restored. Believe you can do something great and make your mark in this generation.

When you believe, the surpassing greatness of God’s power is released. You may have to develop new habits. If you’ve been negative for a long time, you will have to retrain your thinking from “I can’t” to “I can.” From “It won’t happen” to “It will happen.” From “I’ll never get well” to “God is restoring health to me.”

Don't Be Intimidated

First Chronicles 28:20 says you shouldn't be discouraged by the size of the task, for the Lord your God is with you. He will see to it that it is finished completely. When you believe, God will see to it that it's taken care of. When you believe, you have the Creator of the universe fighting your battles, arranging things in your favor, going before you, moving the wrong people out of the way. You couldn't have made it happen in your own strength, but because you are a believer, the surpassing greatness of God's power is at work in your life.

Now don't be intimidated by the size of the problem or the size of your dream. "Well, Joel, I was laid off, and you just don't know my financial situation." But I do know Jehovah Jireh, the Lord our provider. He is still on the throne. One touch of God's favor and you'll go from barely making it to having more than enough.

“Well, you just don’t know my medical situation. It doesn’t look good.” But I do know Jehovah Rapha, the Lord our healer, has not lost His power. He has done it in the past. He can do it in the future.

“Well, Joel, I have big dreams, but I don’t know the right people. I don’t have the connections.” That’s okay. God does. You have friends in high places. When you believe, God will bring the right people across your path. Don’t be intimidated by the size of what you are facing.

Here’s what I’ve learned: The bigger the problem, the bigger your destiny. The enemy would not be fighting you this hard unless he knew God had something amazing in your future. On the other side of that challenge is a new level of your destiny.

No disappointment, no setback, no injustice, no person, no hater, and no jealousy can stand against our God. When you believe, all the forces of darkness cannot stop God from taking you where He wants you to go. Be a believer and not a doubter.

Discover Who He Is

It says in the book of Hebrews, “When we come to God we must believe that He is.” It doesn’t really finish the Scripture. Believe that He is *what*? The passage leaves it open-ended. This is saying that when you believe, God becomes whatever you need Him to be. He is strength when you’re weak. He is healing when you’re sick. He is favor when you need a good break. He is a way maker when you don’t see a way. He is restoration when something has been stolen. He is vindication when you’ve been falsely accused. He is whatever you need Him to be.

You may know God by one name. You know Him as the Savior, and that’s great. That’s the most important way. But you need to find out what else He is. Do you know Him as a resurrection God, a God who can bring back to life what you thought was dead? Do you know Him as an Ephesians 3:20 God, a God “who is able to do

exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think”? Do you know Him as a healer, a restorer, a God who gives beauty for ashes?

You may have endured hurts and disappointments, and people may have done you wrong, but you don't have to live defeated, depressed, in self-pity. God wants to heal the hurts, give you a new beginning, and bring you out better off than you were before. But you have to know Him as a God who gives beauty for ashes. There is so much more to our God. Don't keep Him in a box. Discover what else He is.

It Shall Be Well with You

A young couple who belong to Lakewood Church dreamed of buying their first home. For about a year and a half, they heard me talking about believing for Ephesians 3:20 and how God wants to show us His unprecedented favor. And they dared to believe. They let that seed take root. For

the past ten years, they'd been working very hard and saving their funds so they could hopefully purchase a home.

At one point, everything came together. They found the house they liked. It was a good price. They had the money for the down payment, and they were so excited. But when they went to close on the home, there was a problem. The young lady was finalizing details at the real estate agent's office when her husband called. He said he had just been let go from his job. He had worked for that company for over six years. He always worked hard and had a good attitude, but his supervisor never particularly liked him. Over the years, his wife just kept encouraging him, "You're not working unto people. You're working unto God." He did his best to stay on the high road, but it seemed like at the worst possible time he was let go. To make matters worse, this all happened on his birthday. He lost his job and the house of their dreams on the same day.

They were very disappointed. But the good

news is that this young couple didn't just know God as a Savior. They knew Him as a God of restoration. They knew Him as a God of justice, a God who will make your wrongs right. They could have easily gotten bitter and dropped out of church, but they understood this principle: If you believe, you will see the goodness of God.

Instead of sitting at home every day depressed, in self-pity, the young man was either looking for a new job or at our church working as a volunteer week after week, month after month, as faithful as can be. In the natural, it didn't look as though anything was happening, but they weren't discouraged by the size of their problem. They knew that as long as they believed, the Lord their God would see to it that they were taken care of.

Five months after the husband was fired, he got a call from his old company. He hadn't talked to them since they let him go. It was an executive from the corporate headquarters. They had fired the old management team, and this new boss wanted him back. He not only restored his

job but also restored all of his benefits, all of his retirement, and all of his seniority.

The house they'd wanted to buy had been sold by this time, but they found a better house in a better neighborhood for a better price. Today, the young husband has his job back, and they are living in their dream home. God is a faithful God.

Isaiah 3:10 says, "Say to the righteous, 'It shall be well with you.'" You may go through some difficulties. People may do you wrong. But because you're a believer, it shall be well with you. You lost your job, but another job is coming. It shall be well with you. The medical report doesn't look good, but we have another report: It shall be well with you.

You may have been praying and believing for your situation to change for a long time, but you don't see anything happening. Just as with the Lakewood couple, God is working behind the scenes right now arranging things in your favor. The answer is already on the way. It's just a matter of time before it shows up. It shall be well with you.

Set Your Thermostat

I like to think that having faith is like setting the temperature on a thermostat. You set the temperature to seventy-two degrees. Now it may be ninety-six degrees in the room, far off from where you set it. You could go to the thermostat and think, *This isn't working. It's not matching up.* Instead, you know it's just a matter of time before the air conditioning brings the temperature in the room down to match the temperature that you've set.

In the same way, we should set our thermostats on what God says about us. God says you will lend and not borrow. I'm setting my thermostat right there. That's what I'm choosing to believe. I may be far from that right now. I may be far in debt, but that's okay. I'm not worried. As long as I've set my thermostat, as long as I keep believing, keep honoring God, keep being my best, I know it's just a matter of time before the conditions in my life match up to the conditions in my thinking.

You may have a son who is at 140 degrees, out living wild. It doesn't matter. As long as your thermostat is set, you're not worried. You're not frustrated. You don't have to live wondering if he will change. You know God is in complete control.

God goes to work when He sees you have a made-up mind. Your thermostat is set on His promises, on faith, on restoration, on healing, on victory. It may not happen overnight, but God is faithful. He will do what He promised.

You may need to readjust your thermostat. At one time, you believed you would do something great. You believed you would start that business. You believed you'd beat that addiction. You believed you'd meet the right person and get married. But it didn't happen on your timetable. You grew discouraged, and you gave up.

God is saying, "Reset the thermostat." Start believing once again.

Believe you can live free from pain. Believe you can move into that nicer home. Believe God

is bringing the right people across your path. Keep the thermostat set. Have a made-up mind.

When it gets cold or when it gets hot, stay in faith. Our attitude should be: *This is what God says about me. I am blessed. I will live and not die. My children will be mighty in the land. My latter days will be greater than my former days.*

You may not see anything happening week after week, month after month, maybe even year after year. It doesn't matter. Your attitude is: *My thermostat is set. I'm not moved by what I see, by what I feel, by what people tell me. I'm moved by what I know. And I know that when I believe, the incredible greatness of God's power is activated. I know that when I believe, strongholds are broken. Favor, healing, promotion, and restoration are coming my way.*

Do You Believe?

In the Scripture, the prophet Ezekiel was facing an impossible situation. There were dead bones

in a valley. God had promised those bones would come back to life. Dead bones represent dreams and goals that we don't think will come to pass. God had the power to bring these dead bones to life, but God needed a person who believed so He could work through him.

God asked Ezekiel, "Do you believe that these dead bones can live?"

Isn't it interesting? God wanted to know what Ezekiel believed. Ezekiel could have reasoned it out and said, "God, the bones are dead. I don't see how that's going to happen."

In the same way, you could say, "The medical report doesn't look good, God. Business is slow. This is a big problem."

I can imagine God saying, "Ezekiel, I'm not asking you all of that. All I want to know is: Do you believe?"

All at once Ezekiel shook off the doubt, and he said, in effect, "Lord, I believe." Then the Spirit of God came on him. He started prophesying,

and somehow, some way, those dead bones came back to life.

God is asking us what He asked Ezekiel. “Do you believe you can live a blessed, prosperous, successful life? I have the power. I’m just looking for someone who believes.”

Do you believe God can turn that situation around? Do you believe you can overcome past mistakes? When you get in agreement with God and believe, that allows God to release the incredible greatness of His power.

“Even Now” Faith

In John 11, when Lazarus was very sick, his two sisters, Mary and Martha, sent word to Jesus and asked if He would come to their home in a different city and pray for Lazarus. But Jesus waited four days, which was too long. Lazarus had already died when Jesus finally showed up.

Martha was very upset. She said, “Jesus, if You had been here sooner, my brother would still be alive.”

Have you ever felt God showed up too late for you? You prayed. You believed. But you still didn't get the promotion. You worked hard. You had a good attitude, but the company still let you go. You stood on God's promises. You quoted the Scriptures, but your prayers were not answered.

That was the way Mary and Martha felt. They were discouraged, depressed, and probably a little bit bitter. Jesus looked at them and said, “Take Me to the place where you have laid him.” In other words, “Take Me to the place where you stopped believing. Take Me to the place where you decided it was over.”

You have to go to that place in your life and ask yourself, “Is my God still on the throne? Is my God still all-powerful? Is my God still El Shaddai, the God who is more than enough?”

You have to stir up your faith. God said,

“Mary. Martha. It looks bad, but it’s not over. If you will start believing once again, I will show you My power in a greater way.”

Faith began to rise in their hearts. Martha said, “Jesus, if You would have been here, my brother would still be alive. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give it to You.”

Sometimes you have to have “even now” faith where you say, “God, it looks impossible. It looks like it’s over and done, but I know You are a supernatural God. I believe even now You can turn my finances around.”

“Even now You can heal my body.”

“Even now You can restore this relationship.”

Mary and Martha shook off the doubt and started believing once again. You know the story: Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

Back in those days, the Sadducees, who were against Jesus, believed that the spirit left the body on the third day after a person died.

It wasn't a coincidence that Jesus waited for the fourth day to show up. He waited on purpose so that when He raised Lazarus there wouldn't be any doubt. They would know that it was a great miracle.

Sometimes God will wait on purpose, not only so you know that it's His power, but so your doubters, your naysayers, and your unbelieving relatives won't be able to deny that God has done something amazing in your life.

Moments before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He said to Mary and Martha, "Did I not tell you if you would only believe you would see the glory of God?"

Mary and Martha at first were disappointed because Jesus didn't show up in time to heal Lazarus. They were disappointed that their prayers weren't answered in the way they wanted. But all along, God knew what He was doing. He wasn't planning a healing. He was planning something better. He was planning a resurrection.

Keep Believing

Just because you believed and it didn't work out your way or on your timetable doesn't mean that it's over. It means just the opposite. God is planning something better. You believed, but you didn't get the promotion. You believed, but you didn't qualify for the new home. Keep believing. God has something better coming.

You believed, but your child hasn't turned around. Keep believing. God will use your child in a great way.

You believed, but your year hasn't been that great so far. Keep believing. It's not over. God is still on the throne. Even now God can still turn it around.

Keep the thermostat set. Right now, behind the scenes God is working in your life, arranging things in your favor. Don't be intimidated by the size of what you are facing. Stay in faith, and the

Lord your God will make sure that it comes to pass.

Let this take root in your spirit. Because you are a believer, all will be well with you. All will be well with your family. All will be well with your finances. All will be well in your health. All will be well with your career. You need to get ready because God's promises are about to come to pass in your life.

It may not have happened in the past on your timetable. That's because God is not planning a healing. He is planning a resurrection. It will be better, bigger, and greater than you've ever imagined.

Be a believer. Take the limits off God. Keep your faith stirred up. I believe and declare you are going to see God's goodness in amazing ways!

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