



UNEXPECTED

a journal of faith

CHRISTINE CAINE

JOURNALING THE UNEXPECTED

God wants us to learn how to accept every unexpected event as an invitation to trust him and his Word, to expect his goodness all the way through whatever we're facing. To stay in a place of always remembering that God is good, God does good, and God is always working all things for our good. That's part of the mystery and adventure of following Jesus. A life lived trusting like that is one of the most powerful forces on the planet, because it builds a momentum of courage and faith that propels us into new places where we fulfill all the purpose God placed inside of us.

As you write in this journal, record the unexpected moments of your days...the unpredicted shocks, the unplanned blessings, the happy surprises and the upsetting moments that you never saw coming...and then put God's Word into action...by praying it and speaking it, believing he will walk with you all the way through every unexpected moment, that he will grow you through every experience, using each one to prepare you for what he's prepared for you.

Together, let's always keep the objective of our Christian walk in our sights: To live fully alive here on earth and make every second count for God and his kingdom purposes. To live out our purpose on purpose for his glory. To embrace and expect the unexpected with faith and joy!

God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.
-Ephesians 3:20, The Message

“Most people want to be circled by safety, not by the unexpected. The unexpected can take you out. But the unexpected can also take you over and change your life. Put a heart in your body where a stone used to be.”
-Ron Hall

If we stop and think about it, every day is filled with the unexpected, with the unanticipated. We make our “to-do” lists. We set out thinking our day will go according to plan. But it doesn’t because interruptions that we never saw coming invade our lives and usher in the unexpected. But as surprising as the unexpected is to us, we need to remember that our unexpected is never unexpected to God. God knew this day would come in my life, and he was already in this day waiting for me. What recent unexpected event recently challenged your faith? Describe that moment and then how God wants to move you through it.



For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.
-2 Timothy 1:7, NKJV

“True stability results when presumed order and presumed disorder are balanced. A truly stable system expects the unexpected, is prepared to be disrupted, waits to be transformed.”
--Tom Robbins

Whether we ever understand why or why not, the only way through any unexpected shock is through. No matter how much we wish we could go around a situation, under it, over it or be delivered from it, there are times God wants to walk us through a process, because that is what’s best for us.

The challenge then becomes choosing not to allow the enemy to use these unplanned and upsetting events to rob us of life. The enemy wants to derail our lives from the plans and purposes of God—if not for a lifetime, then at least for a season. He wants to pull our focus away from God’s promises and divert it to our crisis. He wants to paralyze us in the present and veil our vision and hope for our future. What are you walking through today? Write out a promise from God’s Word that can help you refocus and look beyond where you are today?

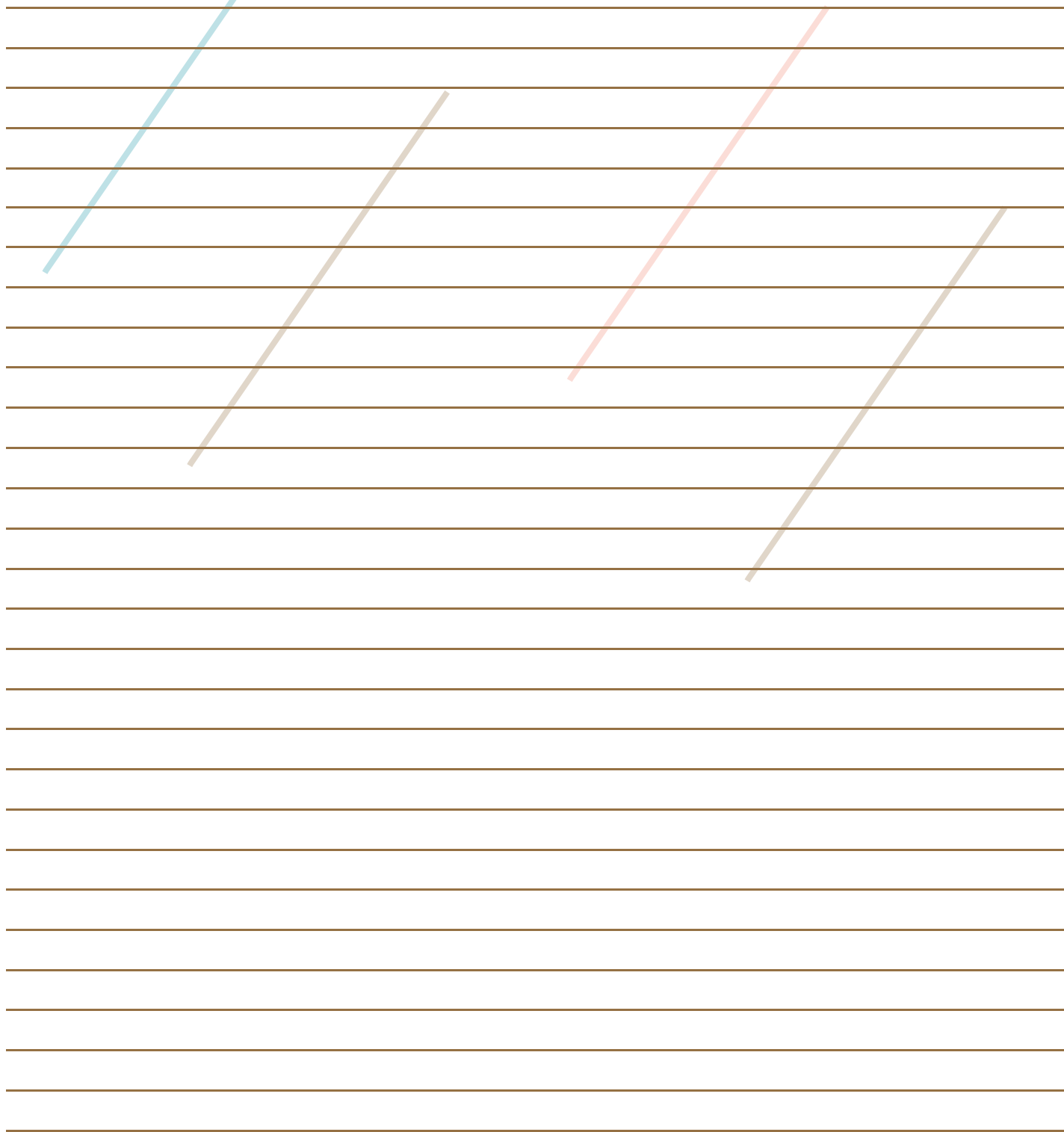


“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
-Jeremiah 29:11

“We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.”
-Martin Luther King, Jr.



When we rely on the Holy Spirit, we can take heart, because we are not fighting alone. We fight the good fight of faith in God's power, not by focusing on fear and trying to defeat it in our own strength, but by relying on God, knowing he is faithful. The more I trust my heavenly father, the more fear is defeated in my heart and in my mind. If I focus on God more than the unexpected circumstance, then it is God who becomes biggest in my heart and mind, and peace is always my outcome. Remember a time when you know God was faithful to you? Reflect on that today in light of what you're facing and rejoice that he is just as faithful today as he was then.



May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
-Romans 15:13

“A keen sense of humor helps us overlook the unbecoming, understand the unconventional, tolerate the unpleasant, overcome the unexpected, and outlast the unbearable.”
-Billy Graham

When we feel like we're losing heart, God wants us to lean into him: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). In this verse, to have trouble means "to be squashed." Unsolved problems, ongoing problems, tend to squash and suffocate us. They overwhelm us. They try to keep us in a state of perpetual fear, but we have to learn how to fight the good fight of faith in spite of how we feel. So take heart and put your hope and trust in God—the one who is in us has overcome the world. What unexpected happened today? He has already overcome it and he's got you! As you journal your thoughts today, write a declaration expressing your confidence in God based on John 16:33. Declare that in him you have peace!



Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
-1 Timothy 6:12

“The unexpected is usually what brings the unbelievable.”
-Mandy Kellogg Rye

Imagine how free we'd feel if we learned to truly believe that in every situation, trust was the antidote to fear, that consciously trusting God would cause our moments of anxiety and panic to be short-lived. Imagine if we could grow to a place where trusting him was our first reaction. Focus your heart and mind on trusting him today. In every challenge, say it aloud to him, "I trust you, God." Then watch him settle your heart and straighten your path. And then, take it one step further. Write out exactly what unexpected event you are entrusting to him today.



“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”
-Proverbs 3:5-6

“Odd, how life makes twists and turns. I never would have guessed that I’d end up where I am now,
but I wouldn’t trade it for the world.
I wouldn’t trade this path I’m on for the whole solar system, for that matter.
If I’ve learned anything these last several months, it’s that sometimes the most scenic roads in life
are the detours you didn’t mean to take.”
-Angela Blount

God does not always do what we want, when we want, or how we want, but he is always ready to do exceedingly, abundantly, above and beyond anything we could ever ask or think (Ephesians 3:20). He who promised really is faithful no matter what it looks like in any season of our lives—and the way we keep moving forward anticipating and experiencing new opportunities is by living hope filled. If we lean into him, if we risk hoping and trusting him again, he can move us from our place of pain into a new wide spacious place of purpose. He can move us into a destiny we never might have considered. What unexpected event has opened up a whole new world you never thought about before? How can you respond so that you can fulfill your purpose in the midst of it?



Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.
-Hebrews 10:23



“It’s strange how new and unexpected conditions
bring out unguessed ability to meet them.”
-Edgar Rice Burroughs

I’ve learned that the unexpected growth God wants for us is in the stretch—not in our pulling back. The grace and the blessing are in the stretch. To do what God has called us to do isn’t possible without the stretch. He’s calling us to stretch past our fear, past our insecurity, past our convenience. He wants us to stretch so we can move forward. How can you stretch today? What unexpected moment can you embrace and stretch toward a new future?



And now, Lord, what do I wait for and expect? My hope and expectation are in you.
-Psalm 39:7

“No matter what, expect the unexpected. And whenever possible BE the unexpected.”
-Lynda Barry

God has not forgotten you. The dreams, visions and plans God places in our hearts take time, lots of time. And during all that time, God is working in us so he can work through us. Our part is to exercise faith and patience. Faith is believing God, believing that God is who he says he is, and that he will do what he said he would do. Patience is our capacity to tolerate delay—our ability to wait. It’s trusting that God is good, God does good, and God knows what he is doing, no matter how long it takes—no matter what our purpose is. What dream or plan is requiring more faith and patience than you expected? How can you entrust more to God today?



We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.
-Hebrews 6:12