

## Living in Hope with the One Leader Study Series

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### Title: ***Certainty in the Midst of Uncertainty***

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*“Our natural inclination is to be so precise—trying always to forecast accurately what will happen next—that we look upon uncertainty as a bad thing. We think that we must reach some predetermined goal, but that is not the nature of the spiritual life. The nature of the spiritual life is that we are certain in our uncertainty.”*

—Oswald Chambers

**As humans we love to know our future, plan our activities, have fun, and be active. We are a world busily on the move. Behind this frantic pace we seek and love control, to call our own shots. When our world and our thinking rests on certainty, we can make plans and go forward. Without this certainty we tend to become frozen in our thinking and stuck in place, both of which cause frustration and angst. Behind this pursuit of certainty is a desire for freedom and overseeing our situation and circumstances so we can do what we want, when we want.**

### Let's consider four things:

1. How can we handle the **Tension** of living in the world of the known and unknown?
2. In spite of what we think, what are the **Uncertainties** we must accept?
3. What can we be **Certain** of regardless of the circumstances?
4. How do we **Apply** God's Word and then live in this world?

### Tension can leave us stuck, indecisive, and erratic.

We must learn to live in a tension or a tug of war between desiring control and yet not being in control. These verses highlight the difference of man's way versus God's way. **Isaiah 55:8-9** says, *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”* We will never know what God knows or, even less, why God does things the way He does.

There also exists for the committed believer a tension or balance of man's planning his way and God's directing his path. **Proverbs 16:9** says, *“The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.”* We participate in God's purposes, yet we don't make them happen; He is working in and through us.

The greater tension is that the Lord is in total control. He is at work and has been so before time. He has a grand plan for this world. Amid this, God creates man and invites him to participate in His bigger plan. That is all good until man desires to do his own thing and go against the Lord's plan. Man, now, thinks he is in charge and

calls the shots. The Bible is clear on who wins this contest, yet at any moment, for every believer and nonbeliever alike, the issue of who is in control is there.

We must understand that there are things we can be certain of, while much remains that is uncertain from our viewpoint. Let's consider three things from God's perspective: what we are uncertain of, what are we certain of, and how best to apply God's Word so we can truly live. We will reflect on God's Word as the foundation and backdrop to these questions.

### **Uncertainty creates worry, anxiety, busyness, and reactions.**

We can be certain that our world and our lives are full of uncertainty. Uncertainty creates worry and anxiety because we don't know the future. It also can lead to busyness, which can be a distraction or diversion from the worry. Uncertainty can result in making things much more complex, because we end up trying to find solutions out of our challenge.

Let's begin with our view of time. The Word is very clear: We don't know what tomorrow will bring or if there will even be a tomorrow. **Proverbs 27:1** says, ***“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.”*** We are told not to worry about tomorrow in **Matthew 6:34**, ***“So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”***

We don't know the future, but we do know Who holds the future. So, make the most of every moment, make the most of every day. When you rise in the morning, ask the Lord to meet you, fill you, and guide you. When you retire at night, thank the Lord for His presence and that He was with you always. Do not worry about the future, enjoy the day.

Likewise, we do not know our future and when our life on earth will end. **Ecclesiastes 9:12** says, ***“Moreover, man does not know his time: like fish caught in a treacherous net and birds trapped in a snare, so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them.”***

In fact, we often never know the real impact our lives make. We are cautioned not to think too highly of ourselves nor to take ownership of the outcomes. **James 4:13-14** says, ***“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.’ Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.”*** We must realize that fruit takes time to ripen and mature. In this uncertainty, don't seek to gain your identity by counting or comparing your fruit. We are not called to be fruit inspectors.

Another uncertainty is the condition of others' hearts—whether they are good or bad. We don't fully know another's motives. **Jeremiah 17:9** says, ***“The heart is more deceitful than all else, and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?”*** So, be careful not to judge others' motives or intentions.

We also don't know the plans and schemes of the enemy. Satan lies and is the father of lies. **John 8:44** says, ***“You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”*** What we do know is that we are dealing with the essence of falsehood and deception and that the enemy wants to destroy us.

The Word also says that there are mysteries in the spiritual life, things we don't know and can't fully understand. We must be okay with not knowing and place our confidence in God, who is the author of those mysteries.

We live in a world of uncertainties, and if we only focus on the unknown and the mysteries of life, we will worry, be anxious, and become immobilized in thoughts and actions. Uncertainties can also move us to complexity or busyness. We keep moving as a distraction. We must accept the uncertainties as coming from the Lord and then consider what we know to be true, right, and good—focusing on the Lord.

### **Certainty creates security, peace, and confidence.**

Certainty comes from that which is known, true, unchanging, eternal, and everlasting. Only the Lord can embody and reflect these attributes. The world and man are temporal and limited. With certainty comes a sense of security, peace, and confidence—all of which do not originate with us and come only from the Lord.

Reflect on the following verses and reaffirm your view and your relationship with the Lord. This will solidify your heart and link to the One who is permanent and loving. The Bible is full of many passages outlining both who the Lord is and what HE is doing, both of which give us confidence in that He holds the future.

**God’s love is unconditional and infinite; forgiveness is total and forever.** – John 3:16 says, *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”*

**God is on the throne and in control.** – 1 Chronicles 29:11-12 says, *“Yours is the mighty power and glory and victory and majesty. Everything in the heavens and earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as being in control of everything. Riches and honor come from you alone, and you are the ruler of all mankind; your hand controls power and might, and it is at your discretion that men are made great and given strength.”*

**The Lord wins the battle; He is our victory.** – 2 Corinthians 2:14 says, *“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.”*

**God is always at work for our good and our best interests.** – Romans 8:28 says, *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”*

**Heaven and eternity are real and forever, and they are our future.** – John 14:1-2 says, *“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.”* John 10:27-28 says, *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.”*

**Christ will return.** – Luke 12:40 says, *“You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”* John 14:2-3 says, *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”*

**God knows us, formed us, watches over us, and is with us.** – Psalm 139:4-5 says, *“Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, O Lord, You know it all. You have enclosed me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me.”*

**God will guide us and has a future for us.** – John 16:12-13 says, *“I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”* Jeremiah 29:11-13 says, *“‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. 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.’”*

## Application

If we are to live in the uncertainty of life with a certainty of who the Lord is, we must take to heart the above verses and apply them to our lives. In other words, we must change our thinking and then our actions to live out what God says. Let’s look at seven ways in which we can apply these verses.

1. **Rest.** Matthew 11:27-29 says, *“All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”* Resting is letting go of trying to do something with a frantic pace of activity. It is being quiet and still.
2. **Walk by faith.** 2 Corinthians 5:6-7 says, *“Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight.”* Walking by faith is trusting and following where the Lord leads us. It is not being stuck or immobilized in our thinking and activity.
3. **Abandon self.** Luke 9:23 says, *“And He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.’”* This is a critical step as it requires surrendering our desires, ways, and even our fears. It is putting the Lord first and foremost.
4. **Become like children.** Matthew 18:2-4 says, *“And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, ‘Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.’”* The essence of walking with the Lord is to be childlike in our faith. Just as children don’t know the future and are not burdened with responsibility or striving to do things, they do trust and follow their parents. They have complete trust.
5. **Trust the Lord.** Proverbs 3:5-6 says, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”* Trusting the Lord is having complete and full confidence in who He is and that He has our best interests at heart.
6. **Commit your plans to the Lord.** Proverbs 16:9 and 19:21 says, *“The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps....Many plans are in a man’s heart, but the counsel of the Lord will stand.”* Following the Lord is an ongoing process. It is not static or momentary. We plan and then hold our plans before the Lord to do all of His will.
7. **Seek first the Kingdom.** Matthew 6:25-34 says, *“For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will*

*put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?...But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*” When we seek the Kingdom of God, our focus is on Him and not on ourselves. We let go of tomorrow and live in the present.

## Conclusion

Uncertainty will always be with us, as we are finite and limited. This will create a tension of not knowing and yet desiring to know as well as to control. We must accept the uncertainties, knowing they are temporary and that the Lord is in full control and holds the future in His hands. So, can be certain that the Lord is working and preparing our future. *Ephesians 2:10* says, **“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”**

Take hold of the promise that the Lord is at our right side and we will not be shaken, and with this we are glad and secure. *Psalm 16:8-9* says, **“I have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will dwell securely.”**

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