

Finding Stability through  
God's Comforting Peace

WHEN  
LIFE TURNS  
DOWN  
.....  
UPSIDE

John A. Younts

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Foreword by Tedd Tripp

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God's Comforting Peace

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When Life Turns Upside Down:  
Finding Stability through God's Comforting Peace

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*Over the years, Jay Younts has been my personal  
Gandalf, my Mr. Miagi, my Paul.  
With fatherly wisdom and genuine care, Jay offers us  
this prayerful life-guide, showing us how to live life  
from God's perspective and not our own, keeping us  
right-side up in a world that feels upside down.*

*KIRK CAMERON  
ACTOR, FILM PRODUCER*

*Younts turns our attention to hope found in the  
mercy of God and the provision he has made for  
mankind in the sinless life and sacrificial death  
of his Son, Jesus Christ. This book will provide  
encouragement and hope in these scary times.*

*DR. TEDD TRIPP  
AUTHOR, PASTOR, CONFERENCE SPEAKER*





# Foreword

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## An Upside-Down World

**T**he week of March 16, 2020, our world was turned upside down. By the end of the week, schools and businesses in the United States were forced to close. People were encouraged to avoid social gatherings. Scores of churches suspended corporate worship, choosing to provide virtual worship their congregants could access from home. Psalm 46 came to mind:

God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear though the earth  
gives way,

though the mountains be moved into the  
heart of the sea,  
though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

*Psalm 46:1-3, ESV*

We are not the first generation to face a deadly pandemic. In the second century, smallpox claimed five million lives. Twenty-five million succumbed to the bubonic plague in the middle of the first century. In the middle ages, the same plague claimed another 75-200 million souls. Twice in the nineteenth century and once in the early twentieth century, cholera slew millions more. In 1918, Spanish flu accounted for up to fifty million deaths. We live in a dangerous world. Disease, suffering, and death are part of the curse under which fallen humanity lives out its days.

Of course, it is not only unknown pathogens that can turn our world upside down. As Job reminds us, *“Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward...”* Financial reversals, betrayal by friends, natural disasters, wasting illness, loss of loved ones, and all manner of circumstances can make us feel like the ground has fallen out from beneath us.

The realization that our lives can be turned upside down in a moment leaves us humbled and perplexed: humbled by our weakness and seeming insignificance,

and perplexed about how to interpret and respond to circumstances that upend our lives. Jay Younts has done us a great service by bringing perspective rooted in God's unchanging truth. He reminds us that God is at work in all things for our good and for his glory. Younts turns our attention to hope found in the mercy of God and the provision he has made for mankind in the sinless life and sacrificial death of his Son, Jesus Christ. This book will provide encouragement and hope in these scary times.

*Dr. Tedd Tripp*  
*Author, Pastor, Conference Speaker*



# Introduction

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## Prayer Keeps Life Right-Side Up

**T**his book is about living life from God's perspective and not your own. This cannot happen without consistent, informed, faithful prayer. Praying constantly for God's wisdom and discernment is a lifestyle habit that will keep your world balanced. Your heart can remain right-side up, regardless of the circumstances you encounter.

Paul commands all of us to pray constantly, continuously. To do this, we must see how God has prepared us in his Word, by his Spirit, to respond to the unexpected events of life. I have written this book to provide you with scriptural truths that will help you pray and think in ways that will transform

your perspective to see God's good purpose in all that happens. Embracing these truths will enable you to remain right-side up instead of upside down! The immediate context of this book is set against the Corona Virus outbreak in 2020. But the biblical principles are timeless and have helped God's people throughout recorded time to remain faithful and upright in a turbulent world.

It is not the traumatic and sudden events of life that turn our world upside down, but rather our responses to these events that make all the difference and determine our perspective. Life becomes traumatic and overwhelming when we choose to follow our own natural responses instead of embracing God's perspective. Your daily prayer life plays a huge role in your ability to keep life-altering events from becoming life-dominating in a way that *really* turns your world upside down.

Allow me to offer a personal experience to illustrate this truth. In 2010, my wife, Ruth, was diagnosed with advanced Glioblastoma, the most lethal form of brain cancer. She embraced this diagnosis with gratitude to God and determined to live the rest of her life, however long that would be, to pray for and encourage others with God's faithfulness. Through excellent care from the Brain Cancer Center at Duke University, she lived another three and a half years. Not once during that

time did I ever hear her say, “Why, me?” or anything close to it. She was fifty-six years old when she was diagnosed. She was a beautiful, faithful mother and wife. She was a brilliant Old Testament scholar. We had planned that she would be able to spend years teaching, writing, and encouraging people to train their children to love God’s Word—but he had other plans. Ruth rejoiced in this new direction. Her life did not turn upside down. Rather, her faith has become a rock to many.

This is best illustrated by a precious memory that will always be engraved in my heart—the memory of the day Ruth told her mother about her diagnosis. Ruth’s mom, Genevieve, is still alive today. Ruth was like her mom in that she was a woman of strong faith and minute-by-minute prayer. They both loved God’s word. It was and is the foundation of their lives.

One afternoon in early April 2010, Ruth and I walked up to her mother’s home to tell her what God was doing. I was confident that the conversation would go well. But I was totally blown away by what I heard. I listened in the kitchen as Ruth and her mom talked in the living room. They rejoiced at the good providence of God and were thrilled that they knew God had planned this moment before time began. They both took great comfort in the fact that God could be trusted. I heard joy, laughter, and praise that, at



moments like these, their loving Sovereign God could be trusted. That moment was the result of both Ruth's and Genevieve's solid trust in the good providence of God. There were no tears that afternoon, except mine. These two women, living testimonies of faith, rested in the secure knowledge that their God was being faithful to them. They were comforted and secure in knowing they did not have to fear the days ahead.

This little book is all about how to walk before God in prayer and faith so that you will be able to remain right-side up when life appears to be upside down.

# 1

## Who Controls Tomorrow

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Do Humans Control Tomorrow?

**H**umans are obsessed with tomorrow. This obsession feeds the illusion that we can actually control tomorrow. In times when life is “normal,” this illusion has an appearance of realism, much like a mirage in the desert. Thus, we act as though what we do actually controls what happens tomorrow. For example, if we spend all the money we have today, we won’t have any money tomorrow. If we get good rest tonight, we will be better prepared for tomorrow. If we schedule wisely for the next day, it will likely be a more productive one. But these efforts to stay in control are only illusions that often dissolve in the busyness of life.

Jesus decisively put things in proper perspective against these illusions when he said,

Can any of you add one moment to his life span by worrying? If then you're not able to do even a little thing, why worry about the rest?

*Luke 12:25-26*

*So much of the energy, money, and planning in our culture goes to extending our lives.* But Christ tells us that we cannot even add an hour to our lives which, to him, is a very little thing. Rather, he challenges us to seek first the righteousness of the kingdom of God. Why? Because the events of tomorrow are in God's hands, not yours and not mine.

Think back with me to 9/11. In the space of a few hours, life all over the planet was radically changed by something that almost no one saw coming. Pearl Harbor in 1941, altered the course of world history in a single morning. Recently, the global spread of the Corona Virus has brought life to a virtual standstill with business forced to shut down, travel all but eliminated, and schools closed. The careful plans of people and institutions all over the planet for tomorrow have literally been turned upside down!

Despite all our careful planning and abilities as humans, we have to conclude that we do not control

what happens tomorrow. This is our reality check. We are not in control!

This brings us back to the question that no one really wants to answer:

### Who or What Is in Control of Tomorrow?

Many would answer there is no rational answer because all life is random. Nothing is predictable. Such thinking is debated in philosophy classrooms. But it is discounted by Christians and non-Christians alike who may say: “Everything happens for a reason.” But of course, we want something more substantial than just a hopeful phrase when faced with something as ominous as a pandemic or large-scale “natural” disaster. You could go back to the philosophy classroom for answers or to the many deterministic theories, but you will not find any sense of peace or justice. Instead, you will only find more variations on the themes of random chance, hopeful karma, or blind fate. None of these new or ancient schemes will ease the agony of loss or mend a shattered dream. The hard truth is that randomness or determinism cannot offer comfort for troubled hearts.

*So what is left?* Just the enduring, beautiful truth that the healing hand of God controls tomorrow by his power and by his love. Over 2,700 years ago, the

prophet Isaiah wrote these words about how God can be trusted:

Do you not know?  
Have you not heard?  
The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the whole earth.  
He never becomes faint or weary;  
there is no limit to his understanding.  
He gives strength to the faint  
and strengthens the powerless.  
Youths may become faint and weary,  
and young men stumble and fall,  
but those who trust in the LORD  
will renew their strength;  
they will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not become weary,  
they will walk and not faint.

*Isaiah 40:28–31*

*The Living God knows about tomorrow and exactly what tomorrow will bring.* His understanding is not limited by boundaries of human thought. In practice, this means that a virus or an earthquake is not a random event. We will go into this idea in more depth in the next chapter. Our focus in this opening chapter is to know the One who makes

tomorrow happen. His acts are not random. He is not playing catch-up. Something like the Corona Virus Pandemic did not catch God by surprise. He was not on coffee break. If he is a God who keeps his word, then he knows all about tomorrow.

You see, Isaiah knew what the psalmist knew:

All my days were written in your book and  
planned before a single one of them began.

*Psalm 139:16b*

The Bible teaches about a loving, faithful, committed, honest God who controls tomorrow. This God cannot be bribed by wealth. He cannot be influenced by promises of fame.

The apostle Paul built on this reality when he was challenged about God's existence by the leading philosophers of Greece. Speaking before established and respected thinkers who knew little or nothing of his God, Paul chose to begin with God's power and his control over the events of all people. Rather than be timid or anxious about telling these intellectual giants about how powerful God is, Paul went right to the point of all human history. He told these great thinkers that his God not only determines where all people live, and not only does his God give everyone their next

breath, but that he does all of this so that people would seek him and reach out for him. Paul tells them that this God they are asking him about is actually very near to them. Here is the exact answer that Paul gave some two thousand years ago:

The God who made the world and everything in it—he is Lord of heaven and earth—does not live in shrines made by hands. Neither is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives everyone life and breath and all things. From one man he has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. He did this so that they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

*Acts 17:24-27*

What a beautiful expression of hope! Nothing is random. Whether you are facing a pandemic or are overwhelmed with dread for tomorrow, God has this. Tomorrow is not an unknown for him. Rather, tomorrow is filled with opportunities to reach out to the God who does all things well. You and I can trust his good care!

In the next chapter, we will examine how God controls the unexpected events of tomorrow to help us gain perspective for what is truly important in life.