

HOPE *Prevails*

BIBLE STUDY

INSIGHTS FROM A DOCTOR'S
PERSONAL JOURNEY

Through Depression

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PERSONAL JOURNEY

Through Depression

DR. MICHELLE
BENGTSON



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Praise for Hope Prevails Bible Study	vii
A Prayer as You Begin.....	xvii
Introduction.....	xix
When the Whole World is Laughing but You.....	xxiii
A Letter to My Depressed Self.....	xxvii
Chapter 1 – This Thing Called Depression.....	31
Chapter 2 – You Are Not Alone	37
Chapter 3 – The Underlying Causes of Depression.....	45
Chapter 4 – Recognize that You Have an Enemy.....	55
Chapter 5 – Recover Your Joy.....	63
Chapter 6 – Reclaim Your Peace.....	71
Chapter 7 – Re-establish Your Identity	81
Chapter 8 – Know Your Worth	93
Chapter 9 – Remember Your Secure Destiny.....	101
Chapter 10 – Be Confident that Nothing Separates You from God’s Love	113

Chapter 11 – God Uses Your Pain	125
Chapter 12 – The Way to Hope	133
You Have a Gift to Give	147
How to Help a Depressed Loved One	153
Closing Prayer	157
Leader’s Guide.....	159
Contact Information	181
Endnotes	183



PRAISE FOR HOPE PREVAILS BIBLE STUDY

The Hope Prevails Bible Study is like having your own personal psychologist leading you through the tangled thoughts of a depressed person. The insightful and probing questions allow the reader to unwrap those thoughts, exposing them to the light. It offers practical exercises, which when followed, can open up doors to understanding and healing depression. Dr. Bengtson understands the tyranny of depression because she was once severely depressed herself. She approaches this subject matter not only as a doctor but also as one who's been there. She does it with easy-to-understand language, with compassion, and with wisdom. Unlike many doctors who treat only the physical, mental, and emotional aspects of this condition, Dr. Bengtson has the courage to address the spiritual aspect. She does it masterfully, having discovered the importance of the spiritual component in any healing scenario.

Peg Bradley, Author, *The Tree: When Pride Takes a Fall*

Dr. Michelle Bengtson has done it again. The *Hope Prevails Bible Study* delivers the same great authentic connection, raw insights, and powerful truths that we received from her book *Hope Prevails: Insights From a Doctor's Personal Journey Through Depression*. Being in church ministry for many years, and now a lead pastor, I see this study not only as a great resource for individuals, but it would be highly beneficial to both church and counseling groups.

Dr. Bengtson is not just a neuropsychologist; she is a person who has also experienced the journey from depression to health. Her experiences allow her to uniquely sympathize with people in the midst of depression. The *Hope Prevails Bible Study* combines her experiences and knowledge to infuse strength and hope into anyone who participates in it.

Pastor Debbie Kitterman, Founder of Dare 2 Hear Ministry
International Speaker and Author, *Releasing God's Heart
through Hearing His Voice*

Dr. Michelle Bengtson has a gift for sharing her vulnerability through her personal battle with depression. Using her personal and professional experience, Dr. Bengtson bridges the gap between hope and despair for her readers and leads them straight to the heart of God where healing can begin. This Bible study is beautifully crafted as a companion or independent resource to *Hope Prevails* and is an invaluable resource essential to any library.

Donna Hughes

Prior to reading *Hope Prevails: Insights from a Doctor's Personal Journey Through Depression*, I was always at a loss as to what to say to someone held in the grips of depression. Nor was I equipped to handle my own moments of deep insecurity and pain. Reading *Hope Prevails* gave me a better understanding of depression and how it affects a person's entire being – mind, body, and soul. But it was when I worked through the *Hope Prevails Bible Study*, taking the time to really look inside my own heart and beliefs that I gained greater awareness of how deep the spiritual roots of depression truly run. This Bible study helped reveal in my own life an awareness that I am not immune to believing many of the lies of the enemy that keep me from truly seeing myself as God sees me. Though I may never have been given a diagnosis of depression by a doctor, I need to do the work contained in the pages of the *Hope Prevails Bible Study* to be set free from strongholds in my life that have held me captive for far too long. And I truly believe that the truths from God's Word that are presented in this Bible study can set you free as well!

Gina Kelly

Dr. Bengtson takes our hand, as she promises, and walks us out of the lies that the enemy has whispered in our ears—sometimes for our whole lives—that have led to our depression, self-doubts, and brokenness. Having learned for herself, through many storms and trials, that He is always our healing path and ultimate answer, she gently and skillfully applies God's truth to wounded places of the heart. Her vulnerable personal

stories, along with her doctor's perspective, let us know she's been there, too, and she knows what she's talking about. The questions lead us to delve into the Word of God and do the work we need to do for our own healing to begin.

Mary Lee Morgan

The Hope Prevails Bible Study is so very timely. May God use it to take His people deeper into His Word and release them from the bondage of depression.

Ray Comfort, Evangelist,
Founder Living Waters Publications

It's impossible to overstate how much Dr. Michelle Bengtson's "*Hope Prevails Bible Study*" has meant to me. The Bible study is a companion for her book, "*Hope Prevails*." I'm a mentor and both works have been invaluable tools in leading women to understand the roots of depression, their true identity, and the very certain hope that they can return to a life filled with joy and purpose. Few medical professionals love as well or put themselves in as vulnerable a position in order to help others find freedom from the torment of depression. Dr. Bengtson walks you step by step through the healing process, while addressing your spirit, soul and body. Hope prevails because God and His Word always will. So pull up a chair, pick up your Bible, and prepare to be understood and made whole.

Cindy Miller, Women's Mentoring Leadership Team,
Gateway Church

As a huge fan of the book *Hope Prevails*, I was excited to hear that Dr. Bengtson was releasing with a companion Bible Study. Both are unique in a couple of ways. First, Dr. Michelle's personal view of depression, as a clinician and as one who has suffered severe depression herself, gives credence to her message. Second, her focus on the spiritual roots of depression, as well as chemical and genetic components, is something I've never seen in a book on depression before.

The Bible study takes us even deeper than the book (which is very comprehensive in itself). Answering the chapter questions will be powerful as a group study. As former freedom in Christ directors, my husband and I know many people suffer from depression within the church. We've also experienced the truth of the exhortation of James 5:16 (KJV), "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." Since pain shared is always pain lessened, I know that this Bible study, used in a group setting will be life transforming and sure to bring healing to many.

I highly recommend the *Hope Prevails Bible Study*, as a companion to the book or as a stand-alone study.

Patricia Krank, Speaker, Former director at
Freedom Session International

This is a powerful scripture-based Bible study filled with insight into becoming free from depression. Certainly Dr. Michelle Bengtson has addressed areas of hopelessness that can become fatal to a believer and their faith in God. Her transparency gives hope and the tools to step into a transformed life. I

highly recommend the *Hope Prevails Bible Study* to individuals, church groups, small group Bible studies, or counseling groups everywhere.

Jan Aderholt, Ph.D., speaker, teacher, music artist

There was a time after our boys were born when my wife struggled with anxiety, panic attacks, and increased heart rate. In time, she found herself fighting off depression daily, resulting in visits to the best cardiologists and neurologists. But none of them could find anything physically wrong. After nearly two years of immense struggles, we were introduced to a Biblical teaching like *Hope Prevails*. I am so thankful that the Lord is moving on the hearts and minds of authors like Dr. Michelle Bengtson to address medical and emotional ailments with Scripture. Dr. Michelle has combined her amazing academic training and Biblical revelation to produce a lifesaving book and now the *Hope Prevails Bible Study*. This resource should be required reading for anyone struggling with depression and for all ministry personnel. It not only offers wonderful information and revelation, the thing I love most about it is that she keeps the focus on Scripture and the healing work of the Holy Spirit. She does a masterful job of engaging the reader and leading them to the healing waters that only Jesus can offer.

Stephen Emerick, Executive Senior Pastor
Embassy City Church, Irving, Texas

There are numerous books on depression and what has been missing is a solid bible study on this topic. Truthfully, I wish “*Hope Prevails*”, both the book and Bible study had been available when I walked through my dark night of the soul. Dr. Bengtson combines her training, knowledge, and wisdom to gently take us to the only place we can find healing—God and His Word. She provides authentic stories from her own journey, insightful questions and gives us the doctor’s perspective toward Biblical emotional health. *The Hope Prevails Bible Study* is a prescription to not just learn to survive but to overcome the unwelcome stronghold of depression. You won’t be disappointed. It is an excellent study for a small group or a one on one conversation.

Cynthia Cavanaugh, Speaker and Author of *Live Unveiled: Freedom to Worship God, Love Others and Tell Your Story*

Dr. Michelle Bengtson has written the *Hope Prevails Bible Study* not only from a neuropsychologist’s point of view but also from a woman’s heart who has personally walked out of the dark valley of depression by trusting God even when He seemed far away.

As a Pastor’s wife and mentor I am thrilled for this material to be available to use as a guide to help others who find themselves on the same journey that Dr. Bengtson writes of. This study will not only benefit those who are going through depression but also those who are walking alongside those who are personally experiencing depression.

Every home around the world is touched in some way by anxiety and depression. The information and insight contained in this Bible study is material that God can use to bring deliverance and restoration.

Norma Miller, Speaker, Mentor, Pastor's Wife, Northside Church, Texarkana, Texas

I have known Dr. Bengtson for several years. I love her writings. Being a Pastor, I appreciate her Biblical perspective. I refer many people that I counsel to her book and now with the Bible Study companion, this is a grand slam for God!!!! I have never seen so many people looking for hope in my time as a Pastor and Dr. Michelle answers that need of so very many, and gives pastors another resource.

Pastor Dewey Moede, Founder
For God's Glory Alone Ministries

When someone is willing to share their story from struggle to healing I can't help but connect to them in my journey! Reading Dr. Michelle's book brought many, "ME TOO!" moments from my own struggles with depression and restoration.

I am delighted that Michelle is bringing us the "now what" in the form of this wonderful Bible study! This study helps provide insight to our own healing journey and takes us from hurting to healing! I love the reflective questions and key thoughts which help bring everything together. The worshipful playlist helps shift the focus onto our Creator! Be ready to be transformed!

Polly Hamp
Author, NLP Practitioner, Freedom Coach

Freedom. Isn't that why someone sees a neuropsychologist—to be freed of what torments them?

Combine that freedom with a Bible Study and imagine the power when Jesus is the Healer. That's what Dr. Michelle Bengtson addresses in the *Hope Prevails Bible Study*. The whole person—the physical, emotional AND spiritual health of the reader.

Whether you are dealing with depression or other physical, emotional or spiritual strongholds, I heartily recommend what “the Doctor orders” in *Hope Prevails!*

Susan B Mead, Founder of His Girls Gather



A PRAYER AS YOU BEGIN

Dear heavenly Father,

You know the heart and the needs of the one who has picked up the *Hope Prevails Bible Study* and now holds it in their hands. Even Jesus asked the lame man if he wanted to get well, in part because He knew that true healing often requires effort on our part. Father, it is *not* Your will that any of Your children suffer from depression. In fact, You say in Your Word that it is Your desire that we would be in health and prosper even as our soul prospers. So Father, as Your precious child begins to do the work of reading this book and answering the questions in this Bible study, I ask that You would illuminate lies that do not align with Your truth, that You would bring comfort and healing to the broken places, and that the bondage of depression would be broken so that joy could return in the morning. Because of and in the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.



INTRODUCTION

I attended more years of school than I want to count. There is one thing that I learned: When I actually read the texts, studied the lecture notes and assigned reading, and did the work, I learned the material so much better than when I just sat in class or skimmed the reading. The courses I fully invested myself in are those I remember the most today, decades later.

Another thing I know to be true: there was a reason Jesus asked the lame man if he wanted to get well. He knew that (1) getting well would require some work on the lame man's part, and (2) He knew that being well would be an adjustment for the man. He would have to assimilate himself into society and discard the label, habits, and coping mechanisms he had grown accustomed to all those years. He had a choice to make: Did he want to be well badly enough to be willing to do the work?

I regularly see this issue in my office. Patients come in, undergo an evaluation, and then receive a diagnosis and prescription for treatment. Frequently, however, patients leave with prescription and treatment plan in hand and then never follow through, only to return a year or two later in worse shape than when they originally came in. Why? Because they weren't willing to do the work. One can only assume they didn't really want to get well, although they said they did when they first walked in my door.

So the question I pose to you as you crack open this Bible study is this: Do you want to get well? If your answer is yes, then I encourage you to do the work: Pray and ask God to reveal what He has for you between the covers of *Hope Prevails: Insights from a Doctor's Personal Journey through Depression* and this study written as a complement to *Hope Prevails*. You can do the Bible study alone, but it'll be more impactful if you go through it as you read *Hope Prevails*.

If you want to get the most from this Bible study, I recommend you read the original book, *Hope Prevails* on which this study is based, listen to the playlists, read the prayers as if they were written just for you, take time to memorize the verses in the Your Rx sections, and answer the questions in this Bible study. You'll find that these in-depth questions will help you pinpoint where you are and how to get where you want to go.

I wrote *Hope Prevails* to share the comfort that God gave me when I was in the valley of depression and needed to know I wasn't alone and there was a way out. God helped me through it. The Bible tells us that He is no respecter of persons, which

means He doesn't play favorites. If He did that for me, He will do it for you as well.

So let's start this journey out of the valley together—you've been there long enough!

Because of Him, hope prevails!
(Dr.) Michelle Bengtson



WHEN THE WHOLE WORLD IS LAUGHING BUT YOU

“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

To someone who is going through hardship or heartache, two of the most comforting words anyone can say is, “Me, too!”

“Me, too” welcomes you into a community. It breathes life back into a sagging soul. It breeds acceptance where feelings of rejection linger. It kicks isolation to the curb. It gives you a hand to hold and a heart to beat with you.

We can face any difficulty with greater determination and strength if we believe we are not alone in the fight. Unfortunately, when I walked through my own valley of depression, it felt like the whole world was laughing but me. What I most

longed for was for someone to come along side me and say, “Me, too.”

Part of the reason I wrote *Hope Prevails* and this Bible study was to assure you that you’re not alone because I’ve been there. Even as the professional, the doctor with all the alphabet soup after my name, I wasn’t immune to depression. I’ve gone through it and am on the other side now.

I want to share with you how I got here and how you, too, can get to the other side. I want to dispel some of the lies and myths surrounding depression. And I want to offer hope, a hope that prevails.

Just hold on a little bit longer, take my hand, and walk through these pages with me. Together, we’ll get to the other side. And depression can be a distant memory for you as well.



1. If you are struggling with depression, what do you stand to gain by shedding its cloak?

2. Hope was the thing that got me through my period of depression. For me, without hope I’d have no reason to live. How would you define or describe hope?

Key Thoughts

- Depression often feels like the whole world is laughing but you, but you are not alone.
- Someone else understands.
- Hope gives us a reason to keep going.

Recommended Playlist

Music helped me so much in my healing journey, so at the end of each chapter, just as in the original *Hope Prevails*, I will offer you songs I think will encourage you in your healing journey.

“Broken Vessels (Amazing Grace),” Hillsong Worship, © 2014 by Hillsong Church

T/A Hillsong Music Australia

“The Best Days of My Life,” Jason Gray, © 2014 by Centricity Music

“Walls,” Cody Carnes, © 2012 by Gateway Create Publishing

“You Invite Me In,” Meredith Andrews, © 2008 by Word Records



A LETTER TO MY DEPRESSED SELF

“Who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can
comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves
receive from God.”
2 Corinthians 1:4

Time has a way of giving us perspective. As I’ve gotten older, experience and the wisdom that comes with age have shown that so many of the things I concerned myself with as a younger woman don’t hold the importance I once thought they did. Have you ever looked back on a situation with awe and amazement at how you made it through or what God did during that time that you couldn’t have known in the difficult moments?

Have you ever received a card, e-mail, or text message of encouragement just when you needed it? That has happened to me on a couple of occasions, and when it did, it felt like a hug