

Waiting for the Second Shoe to Drop

The phrase “waiting for the other shoe to drop” began with a literal interpretation. In the early 1900’s, there were many poor people in the USA who lived in poorly constructed buildings with thin ceilings and wooden floors. When someone from upstairs would take off his shoes, the people downstairs would hear the first one drop loudly. So, instinctively, the people downstairs would wait for “the second shoe to drop.” Even if the second shoe didn’t drop, the anticipation and tension of it dropping any second developed that stuck with people. They were literally waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Over time, this expression became figurative. Instead of waiting for a literal shoe to drop, it came to mean anticipating an inevitable follow-up to bad news. It is the sense that after a first unwanted event happened, there would surely be a second undesirable incident, and it was almost exclusively negative.

Even today, this expression is used to anticipate anything negative, even if an unwanted event hasn’t recently happened. We tend to anticipate that even though everything is going well right now, sooner or later, something awful will occur. Perhaps your health is superb right now, but there might be an underlying thought that eventually, something will go wrong. Or maybe you are doing well financially at the moment, but there is an unspoken fear that prosperity won’t last. Eventually, you’ll be right back where you were and lose it all. This even shows up in relationships. If someone has struggled with a close friend or family member and things have been improving, there might still be lurking nearby the idea that it will all go wrong eventually, leaving us devastated, and quite frankly, afraid to hope for good. This lingering nastiness not only causes anxiety, but it can also prevent us from fully enjoying the success we are currently experiencing.

There is a reason we think like this. Partially, because it is true. You might be surprised that I would write that, but the truth is, anyone who has lived very long at all and has sustained disappointments in life, knows that both good and not-so-good things happen to everyone. It is the natural course of existence on this fallen earth filled with natural disasters, sickness, and people who are clearly not being led by the Spirit of God, who live selfishly and even with evil intent, which result in others being hurt.

It is important for us to understand that God is not sending nor allowing these things to happen. He doesn’t control them. He has given everyone freedom of choice. People choose to do evil with no inspiration from God whatsoever, and bad weather and sickness are facts of life.

So, since in this life on this fallen planet, there are second shoes to drop, how do we as believers rise above this underlying anticipation of the second shoe dropping?

The good news is, believers in Jesus Christ have many reasons not to be waiting for bad things to happen, AND we have many resources, or you might even say weapons, to fight against living in dread. Here are some we use. As

you read this list, I pray you will be set free to practice these truths and allow God to remove the dread of falling shoes.

1. **Recognize the problem.** If you have an underlying anticipation that something awful will eventually happen, admit that to yourself before God.
 - “Father, things are going great in our family right now, but we’ve experienced so much trouble in the past that I am living in underlying fear that more trouble is surely on the horizon.”
 - “Father, thank You for your bountiful provision right now, but because my finances have been so wobbly in the past, there is this acceptance that eventually, I’ll be back to living in financial instability. It keeps me from enjoying what You’ve given me, even makes me hesitant to give.”
 - “Father, I’m doing so well physically right now. Thank You. But to be honest, I wonder what will fall apart in my body next. It seems the older I get, the more battles I face.”
2. **Recognize that our God is the God of all hope.** Hope means “anticipation of good.” That is the complete opposite of waiting for another shoe to drop—of anticipating bad. Consider this verse and the expanded version based on Greek definitions.

Romans 15:13

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Expanded

Now may the God of hope (joyful anticipation) fill you (completely) with all (every) joy (cheerful delight) and peace (prosperity, quietness, rest) in believing (in Him), that you may abound (superabound) in hope (confident expectation) by the power (miraculous might) of the Holy Spirit.

Even though this world is falling apart, we serve the God of all hope—hope that anticipates good, not bad. When we find ourselves with underlying fears of dread, we can choose to turn to Jesus, whose plans for us are good, who is for us, not against us, who freely gives us all things. We not only have hope, but we can superabound in hope. Not only do we not anticipate evil to occur, but we can begin to expect good from God instead.

- “Father, I thank You that You are the God of hope. You know my thoughts. You know I am expecting something bad will eventually happen, but Father, I choose not to live in that defeated mentality. Instead, I will joyfully anticipate good from You. Thank You that Your

plans for me are good. I will walk in joy and peace by your miraculous might!

3. **Even though we know troubles exist in this life, we need not live in dread of them.** No matter what comes our way, He will be there to help us. We can have confidence when we ask for deliverance, knowing He will give it to us.

Psalm 3:1-6

Lord, how they have increased who trouble me!

Many are they who rise up against me.

*² Many are they who say of me,
“There is no help for him in God.” Selah*

*³ But You, O Lord, are a shield for me,
My glory and the One who lifts up my head.*

*⁴ I cried to the Lord with my voice,
And He heard me from His holy hill. Selah*

*⁵ I lay down and slept;
I awoke, for the Lord sustained me.*

*⁶ I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people
Who have set themselves against me all around.*

Our God will not abandon us or leave us helpless. The enemy will try to tell us that there is no hope for us in God, but we can choose to believe what is actually true. God is our God. He is our shield. He is the one who lifts our heads out of despair and sets our feet upon a rock. Even with trouble all around us, we can sleep in peace and wake with confidence. So, instead of expecting that things will get worse, we can look to our Father as our deliverer and provider.

- Father, this storm is intense. But there IS hope for me in You. Instead of expecting something even worse to happen next, I choose to believe that you will not only deliver me from this situation, but I confidently anticipate that good will come next.

When we detect our tendency to expect another shoe to drop, and confront that sort of thinking, knowing we serve the God of hope, not despair, we can put our trust fully in the knowledge that God is for us, not against us. His plans for us are good plans. Let us rise above the worldly tendency to expect the worst and begin to anticipate with joy the good that God will do. This choice—to live in faith, not dread—pleases our Father. Sometimes knowing that we are bringing joy to our Father is reason enough to hope in Him. He deserves that we receive all that He died to give us.

4. **After we've cleared out the cobwebs of our thinking, let us do as He instructs us: Ask.** Ask in confidence that He will give to us what we need and desire—not that He will give us something bad, but only good.

Matthew 7:7-11

*“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸**For everyone who asks receives**, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!*