



## Higher Hope

*Robert Whitlow*

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**Higher Hope** Robert Whitlow

**The Tides of Truth series follows one lawyer's passionate pursuit of truth--in matters of life and the law.**

Competition is tough at the Savannah law firm where Tami Taylor serves as a law clerk. But Tami's work sets her apart--and the firm's partners see something special in her. So they assign her to a libel case against an abrasive, outspoken preacher who is either a prophet or a lunatic.

On the surface it appears to be an open and shut case; the preacher seems fully outside the bounds of law. And Tami's strict religious upbringing could be the firm's ace-in-the-hole. But as the investigation continues, Tami is troubled by the preacher's uncanny prophetic abilities. And their client seems to be hiding something.

Tami returns to her hometown, struggling with several critical choices--as two very different men from the firm vie for her heart. Just when the challenges seem insurmountable, hope for Tami arrives from a surprising place. And it's a higher hope than she's ever imagined.

## Higher Hope Details

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Author : Robert Whitlow

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## From Reader Review Higher Hope for online ebook

### Anne says

The second in Whitlow's Tides of Truth novel series. I know I read the first one, but have only vague recollection. Whitlow does a good job of mentioning the past story line, but it has little to do with this one. Higher Hope could be read without reading Deeper Water. I assume all three books could be read out of sequence.

Higher Hope refers to a "hope that can't be destroyed by what happens on earth. Circumstances of life will challenge it, voices will deny it, but its walls can't be breached unless we open the gate." So says that prophetic/lunatic preacher lady. It does speak of the hope we have in Jesus despite the crazy circumstances at play round us. And this is what appealed to me in this story. Tami comes from a rigid fundamental background that sets certain ethical standards for behavior--particularly for a woman's behavior. Tami's determined morality is constantly challenged--at the law office (thus jeopardizing her opportunity for associate partner in the firm) and at home where she cares for an elderly dementia patient.

While the plot moved along, it didn't conclude with any great fanfare. It cried for more resolution of the Paulding drama. There were hints that the allegations of Sister Dabney were true...how did they come to the light?

But again, I appreciated the development of Tami's character more than I appreciated the plot. I also liked that Sister Ramona, though her tongue was sharp, was a compassionate, caring Christian woman. In the end she couldn't be painted as a crack-pot. She truly was who she claimed to be.

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### Cathy Bryant says

Higher Hope by Robert Whitlow is a legal thriller in the style of John Grisham, and his second book in the Tides Of Truth series.

Set in beautiful Savannah, Georgia, it tells the story of Tami Taylor, a summer law clerk for the Braddock, Appleby and Carpenter law firm.

Because of her strict religious upbringing, she is assigned to a case involving a caustic preacher-turned-prophet, who goes by the name of Sister Dabney. This poses a huge moral dilemma for Tami. Will her conscience allow her to take part in a case against one of God's anointed?

In addition to this quandry, she has not one, but two honorable Christian men vying for her attention--Zach Mays, an associate with the firm, and Vince Colbert, another summer intern. Several chapters near the beginning of the book cover the experience of Tami taking Zach to Powell Station, Georgia, a rural community where her parents, two sisters and two brothers live.

These chapters are tense and full of conflict since Tami's parents have raised her to respect their religious views concerning relationships with people outside their church. Even though Zach is a Christian, his own upbringing in a California communal-type church (and the length of his hair, which he wears in a ponytail) stand in sharp contrast to her parent's beliefs.

These opening chapters also serve to help us understand why Tami is the way she is, which helps us understand her behavior and reactions in later chapters of the book.

Here are some things I especially enjoyed about this book:

(Read the rest at <http://wordvessel.blogspot.com>)

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### **Sarah says**

If I tried to explain this book to a friend, they would say it was boring. However, this book is gripping, compelling, and so different from most of the books in the Christian-fiction market. I highly recommend it. The homeschool family was a bit over the top, but still a mostly positive view on homeschooling and conservative values.

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### **Amanda Damron says**

Very good!

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### **ML Couch says**

#### **Good read.**

This was a good read and I will definitely read the next book in the series. That said, I didn't enjoy this story as much as I have many of Whitlow's other stories. I do recommend reading if you have read the first in this series.

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### **Chris says**

Personally, I liked the first book better, however, still good 3.5+

THIS SUMMARY/REVIEW WAS COPIED FROM OTHER SOURCES AND IS USED ONLY AS A REMINDER OF WHAT THE BOOK WAS ABOUT FOR MY PERSONAL INTEREST. ANY PERSONAL NOTATIONS ARE FOR MY RECOLLECTION ONLY

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Tammy has changed her name to Tami, and is a law student in a large firm in Savannah. Her romance with a young lawyer in the firm, Zach Mays, is blossoming and they began to "court". Tammy is working a case with Mr. Carpenter involving the local "strange" preacher Sister Dabney who is able to see sins and call people on them. A local developer wants a good bit of property including Sister Dabney's church and she won't sell. Further, she starts harassing him because she knows he's a crook. Tammy's firm is representing the developer but she has a conflict of interest when she befriends Sister Dabney.

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"Higher Hope" is the second installment in the Tides of Truth series, following our hero Tami Taylor as she continues her summer clerkship at a prestigious Savannah law firm and continues her journey of choosing between two single male suitors. Interestingly my biggest criticism of the first installment in this series--too much interpersonal drama--is the biggest strength of this story. Part of it could be that since part one dispensed with introducing us to Tami, her family and her worldview, this novel has more room to get down to the business of telling its story. And the moments in which Tami is torn between her two suitors are some of the strongest in the novel. Whitlow makes an interesting choice of making you both root for and against both suitors at various points in the story and not telegraphing who Tami's eventual choice could or should be.

Meanwhile, the legal aspect of the novel is where the novel let me down. Tami is brought in on a case of a local preacher whose church is on a site desired by a local developer. The preacher has made some comments that could be meet the legal definition of slander and the plan is to use the system to get the land from her that way. Tami is brought in because of her religious convictions as a ringer on the case and the more she discovers, the more torn she becomes about whether or not she's doing the right thing and how this case could impact her pursuit of the law in later years. At times, the story is a fascinating, insightful one--mostly when we're looking into Tami's motivations and internal conflict. Where things fall down a bit are when Whitlow shifts the point of view to the preacher or during some of the legal maneuvering being done to try and win the case. And since the legal system and its nuances have been a strength of many of Whitlow's previous novels, it makes that shortcoming in this story even more apparent.

In the end, Tami is left with some decisions for her life and while the novel does wrap up one story, it leaves a lot of things open for the next installment. The first novel had one pretty dramatic unresolved situation and this one has at least two.

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Higher Hope refers to a "hope that can't be destroyed by what happens on earth. Circumstances of life will challenge it, voices will deny it, but its walls can't be breached unless we open the gate." So says that prophetic/lunatic preacher lady. It does speak of the hope we have in Jesus despite the crazy circumstances at play round us. And this is what appealed to me in this story. Tami comes from a rigid fundamental background that sets certain ethical standards for behavior--particularly for a woman's behavior. Tami's determined morality is constantly challenged--at the law office (thus jeopardizing her opportunity for associate partner in the firm) and at home where she cares for an elderly dementia patient.

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On the surface it appears to be an open and shut case; the preacher seems fully outside the bounds of law. And Tami's strict religious upbringing could be the firm's ace-in-the-hole. But as the investigation continues, Tami is troubled by the preacher's uncanny prophetic abilities. And their client seems to be hiding something.

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**Sample of Sister Dabney:**

I'm not sure what memories we take with us when we leave this life, but you'll be part of the ones I keep.

By the second book, I have come to know and appreciate all (if not most) of the characters. (I particularly like some aspects of Sister Dabney.)

Life is challenging. The Christian life (lived out daily out loud -- not just as a small function of ones life) even more so.

But most of all?

Most of all I love the focus on ethics (which, sadly, is often challenging in the field of law) and the eternal perspective.

To be able to live a life where you have made such a difference that someone speaks those words to you?

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**Elisabeth Turner says**

**Outstanding Christian Courtroom Drama**

Sister Dabney and Tami jump off the pages and into your heart, while the legal proceedings swirl around them. What a page-turner.

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**Pamela Poole says**

I had "higher hope" for this series, because I like the author and saw a lot of great food for thought in the first book that I expected to be explored in the series (it's also the only title whose cover seemed to have anything to do with the story--but that's typical of big publishing houses and beyond the author's control).

This story and the next, "Greater Love," promised a lot that never came through. Both had some good moments and I enjoyed some laughs out loud at certain interactions, but I was truly disappointed and felt cheated from the reward of a good story. I never encountered a "walk through fire" that was promised for Zach or a "storm" that was promised for Tami, and finally, in exasperation, I went to the end of the last book to determine if I even wanted to spend time reading the series. I ended up scanning and reading what I thought might be worthwhile, and even then, was disappointed. So much time was spent on a setting and relationship with an elderly lady and with Tami's family that bogged down the story and did nothing to reward the reader for toughing it all out.

I want to think that the author's manuscript was simply a product of an editor with a machete. This could have been SO much more.

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## Michael says

It's always interesting to skim the list of people who add or add review a book on their feed. Sometimes you find a new perspective on an old favorite or a reason to pick up something you couldn't or didn't finish anew. Other times, you take a moment to reconsider a book or consider a new take on a book.

And then there are times when you wonder if you're not exactly the target demographic for a certain title.

As I skimmed the reviews and readers for Robert Whitlow's "Higher Hope," I felt this might be the case. And I can see how a novel about a young woman's personal journey both professionally and romantically might not be the first book of choice to a lot of male readers. But since the series is by Robert Whitlow, one of my favorite authors, it wouldn't matter to me--I'd still pick up and read the book.

"Higher Hope" is the second installment in the Tides of Truth series, following our hero Tami Taylor as she continues her summer clerkship at a prestigious Savannah law firm and continues her journey of choosing between two single male suitors. Interestingly my biggest criticism of the first installment in this series--too much interpersonal drama--is the biggest strength of this story. Part of it could be that since part one dispensed with introducing us to Tami, her family and her worldview, this novel has more room to get down to the business of telling its story. And the moments in which Tami is torn between her two suitors are some of the strongest in the novel. Whitlow makes an interesting choice of making you both root for and against both suitors at various points in the story and not telegraphing who Tami's eventual choice could or should be.

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## Tom Robinson says

Another super-read by Whitlow has been devoured, enjoyed, and shared. Tides of Truth series is great for young and old, alike, and is rich with real people, concerns, relationships and challenges - and, most of all,

real faith. Thanks, Robert, for your work here; may your pen continue to beckon you to write His words, for His children, everywhere.

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### **Kaylia says**

On the cover of the book, there is a quote from WORLD Magazine that says “Writes in the style of John Grisham, combining compelling legal and ethical plotlines... but Whitlow has explicit spiritual themes.”

First of all, WORLD Magazine obviously never read John Grisham. Maybe WORLD Magazine read the back of a John Grisham novel and deduced that why yes, this is a book about legal stuff.... Therefore it will be perfectly applicably comparable to any other book about legal stuff. I know this because Whitlow and Grisham have only a few things in common: they both write about legal stuff involving young lawyers and they write based in the South. Other than that? Nope, not so much.

Also, the second part about Whitlow having “explicit spiritual themes” is true... but totally irrelevant. Well, okay, irrelevant in matters of if this book is good, if the characters are compelling, if it is an enjoyable read, if you would recommend it to a friend... because all those things are going to be in or not be in a book with or without ‘explicit spiritual themes’ and I, for one, would like to think that we read books because we enjoy the plot and the characters not because the characters and the author happen to believe in the same spiritual superstitions that we do.

Maybe that's just me.

Let me put it out there front and center. I don't agree with the faith or value system of the main character (Tami) in regards to her political views, her gender relations views, her religious views.

But, again, all that stuff is irrelevant because had the book been written well it wouldn't have mattered. In fact, it still doesn't matter I just know someone out there is going to say I am picking on this book because I don't agree with her religious beliefs and since the book is seeped in her religious beliefs, I can't be a fair judge.

So, let's take out the religious part. Let's just look at it in terms of actual literary devices such as narrative devices, narrative flow, character development and motivations. Is the book good based on these criteria?

A resounding No.

Narrative flow is a staple of novels. It is what ties the story together, giving us the information we need to follow along. It is the pacing, the structure of the book and it employs narrative devices like flashbacks, foreshadowing, symbolism, point of view, etc. In this case the narrative flow was constantly (read: practically every other chapter) interrupted by a switch in point of view.

We would have a chapter written in the first person (“I walked down the hall. I felt dizzy with anticipation.”)\* from the main character Tami's point of view. This worked well enough; as readers we perched ourselves in her head and watched the story unfold with all her impressions, thoughts, and emotions laid out before us. She took her place as our protagonist.

Then the next chapter would jolt us out of our comfortable first person view and thrust us into not only a

different character's view... but into the third person omniscient point of view. Suddenly it was "She (not Tami, a different she) sat in her rocking chair and thought about her life. She was tired."\* The other she, Sister Dabny, is not our protagonist but neither is she the antagonist... and she isn't even a symbolic foil for Tami, she is just another important character.

Now, an intentional play with the narrative structure like this could have worked if there had been a pay off at the end. The switch between two different characters can be done, if done right,,, perhaps by being in first person for both so that the story can run on parallel tracks telling the same story from two different sides... which can be engaging. But in this case because we got so much more emotion and general character development (such as it was) in Tami's case, the fact that we switch to third person for the competing story of Sister Dabny actually stifles the narrative flow taking us out of the story and leaving us bitter and unsettled. At the climax of the book we stay in Tami's head and then don't ever go back to Sister Dabny throwing the idea of parallel structure out the window and leaving us thinking Whitlow simply either couldn't make up his mind or simple didn't care.

The other thing that hurts this book is the lack of decent character development. Had the story been about a "normal" young lawyer, the author could have gotten away with a bit of sketchiness on the development side of things, counting on our general knowledge of young women raised in the south and such to cover any gaping holes in who she is. But Tami is special... she has this huge aspect of her personality that is driven by a very unique and very not at all mainstream religion that permeates her psyche and dictates her thoughts, feelings, actions. Yet it is never really explained to the reader. We follow her story getting bits and pieces of how her beliefs affect her and the world through her eyes but her actual motivations for believing what she does and how that translates through her actions is lacking.

And then Whitlow breaks his own rules in regards to Tami's faith.

We have hundreds of pages preaching to us about what she will and will not do because of her belief system... but then there are two examples of her acting so out of character that we either think Whitlow went out to lunch one day and forgot who Tami is or that he was just lazy enough to think he could get away with having her do actions extremely out of character and hope his readers were lazy enough to not notice. The infractions are small enough that they could have gone unnoticed in any other character, but in Tami's case we spend so much of the book getting beat down by the rigidness with which she lives her life that these moments stand out in sharp relief.

Again, had this been in some way obviously intentional, such as a way of showing the reader that Tami's beliefs are crumbling or that she is changing; that could have saved it. But there is absolutely no indication of either thing and we are left scratching our heads and being generally frustrated.

And then we have the climax. Or rather, we get about half of the climax. The story focuses on a few things: a case Tami's firm is bringing against Sister Dabny, Tami's romantic entanglement with two young (highly unbelievable) men, and Tami's decision about her career path. Only one of these story lines is wrapped up (and not in a very satisfying manner either) leaving the other two just out there... twitching and demanding attention.

Because of course there is a sequel to Higher Hope, the final page of the book tells us, called Deeper Water and if we really want to know what happens to Tami, if 413 pages wasn't enough we can go out and buy it!

I think I'll pass.

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### **Helen Pickering says**

#### **Higher hope**

Love everything I have read written by whitlow an amazing writer loved this book I always enjoy courtroom drama and he is the best Christian writer

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### **Chuck says**

This book challenged me, entertained me, and fascinated me. It caused me to turn back to my first love. I eagerly anticipate reading the next book in this trilogy. Whitlow inspires me in ways I have needed for years.

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### **Jessica says**

this book seemed very illogical and strange. It follows the main character as she works as a summer clerk in a law firm. The confusing part is her super conservative faith- i never quite figured out if the author is applauding her hard core conservative faith or using it for shock value... And because of that faith, i had several questions: 1. what is a super conservative doing becoming a lawyer? 2. Why bother "courting" if you are going to lead on 2 guys anyway? She agrees to court Zach (a lawyer at the firm) though still sees Vince and is "torn" between the two, not sure which she's supposed to be with. Isn't courting a decision to see one person with the end goal being marriage? i think the author was confused... and seriously, what law firm ends up with three solid christians? and when in the world would 2 men, both interested in the same woman, work together to give her "space" and then apologize together because it was a bad move, not to mention meeting together to talk about her and pray for her? Very unbelievable and unrealistic. Not looking forward to any other books by this author.

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### **Denise says**

A good story with a law background. I read this not realizing it was the in a series but didn't have too much trouble with the storyline. I liked how the author portrayed Tami's family as quite conservative but not overly judgmental. I look going back to the other books in the series.

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