

# Hope: Understanding Its Power & Purpose

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# Hope: Understanding Its Power & Purpose

Faith...Hope...Love. The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 13:13 that these three will endure forever, with love being the greatest. For we know that God is **love** (1 John 4:7). As His children, we have His love in our hearts that makes it possible for us to love one another. Jesus said that this is how the world will know that we are His disciples, if we have love for one another (John 13:35). So how will the world recognize His love in us? They will see it in how we live, how we speak, and how we treat others. If we love our neighbor as ourselves, we will do no harm to them (Romans 13:10). Our love will be evidenced in the good that we do in His name, and it will bring glory to our Heavenly Father.

God also gives a measure of **faith** to each of us (Romans 12:3). That means that He has given us faith to trust and depend upon Him. We can't say that we don't have the faith to do what He wants us to do. He promises that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). There are times when He will stretch our faith in Him in order to prepare us to believe Him for greater things that He wants to do in our lives. Hebrews 10:38 says that the just shall live by faith. With the Lord, we can walk in faith, living by what we believe in God's word and not by what we see (2 Corinthians 5:7, NCV). In Hebrews 11:1 faith is described as the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. If we need to see it to believe it, then we don't need faith. Everyone experiences doubts, and there are many examples of this in the Bible. Jesus never condemned people for having doubts as long as it led them to search for the truth. Doubts can motivate us to seek Him more so that we might know His ways. And, as we grow in our relationship with the Lord, we will develop greater trust and experiential understanding of His faithfulness that will enable us to develop greater faith in Him.

## What is Hope?

Just as we cannot live the abundant life Jesus died to give us without love and faith, we cannot live it without hope. Hope is expecting something good that is presently unseen. Hope is what motivates us to get up in the morning. We have the hope of a new day and new opportunities. We go to work in hopes of attaining the rewards of our labor by being productive and getting paid. We don't always see the rewards immediately, but we expect them. We go to school in hopes of completing our education and beginning our careers. Hope is the driving force behind major decisions we make. We get married in hopes of sharing and enjoying our lives with someone we love. Hope gives us strength to go on. It

keeps us from quitting or giving up. Hope empowers us to believe that change is possible, dreams come true, and miracles happen.

## **The Source of Hope**

God is the God of Hope. We can abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit that is in us. The only requirement is that we believe, and the God of hope will fill us with joy and peace (Romans 15:13).

To have enduring hope is to know and trust in God. He is the source of all hope. David acknowledged God as His hope when he said, “And now, Lord what do I wait for and expect? My hope and expectation are in You” (Psalm 39:7, Amp.). We hope in Him knowing He is faithful, merciful, and good. The prophet Jeremiah comforted himself in remembering God’s unfailing love and goodness: “This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. ‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘Therefore I hope in Him!’” (Lamentations 3:21-24). Though my portions on earth are temporal, I can be assured that no matter what happens in this life I can have hope because He is my portion forever.

## **Hope in the Truth**

We can put our hope in God’s word and in His promises. God is faithful and unwavering. He watches over His word to see that it is fulfilled (Jeremiah 1:12). God’s word brings light to our darkness. “The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple” (Psalm 119:130). God’s word can restore and revive us. In Psalm 119:25 (TLB), David cried out to the Lord saying, “I am completely discouraged—I live in the dust. Revive me by your word.” The God of hope can bring us back to life, pulling us out of hopelessness, doubt, confusion, discouragement, and restoring us to renewed health and vigor. God’s word is powerful and living. It has the power to break the yoke of bondage and set the captive free. If we abide in His word, we will know the truth that will make us free (John 8:31-32).

## **Waiting is a Part of Hoping**

Hope requires waiting and it is often what sustains us when we must wait. The Bible tells us in Romans 8:24-25 that hope that is seen is not hope. If we look forward to something that isn’t in our present reality yet, we must wait patiently

and confidently. Waiting can be compared to experiencing birth pangs during pregnancy when a woman's body yearns for deliverance. The Message Bible goes on to say, "We are enlarged in the waiting. We, of course, don't see what is enlarging us. Be the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy." When we are hopeful, we are willing to wait for the fulfillment of our hope in Him. Like David, we can wait expectantly for the Lord. "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope (Psalms 130:5). "I waited patiently and expectantly for the Lord, and He inclined to me and heard my cry" (Psalms 40:1).

When waiting becomes more and more difficult, we begin to get impatient. When we begin to get impatient, we begin to lose hope. Doubt seeps in and we might resort to worry, fear, complaining and negativity. In our unbelief we might make choices that are not in God's will or timing, or we might fall into despair, lose our hope, and want to give up. Remembering that God's timing is perfect, He is in complete control, and He always answers our prayers (even when it is "no" or "not now") will help sustain us in our times of waiting.

## **Hope & Faith Require Action**

Hope inspires motivation, dreams, and love for life. Hope is not wishful thinking. People who see themselves doing or having something that they deeply desire and hope for anticipate it to come to pass. This is where faith is required. Faith is to believe that what we hope for will become a reality. However, without some corresponding action, faith is worthless. In the book of James we're told that if people say that they have faith, but they don't do anything, their faith is worthless and dead (James 2:14-17, NCV). And, their hope won't last very long. For example, if someone confidently expects and believes God for a new job, yet they passively wait for a phone call or knock on the door, their faith is accomplishing nothing. Faith requires that we actively use our God-given gifts and resources, seek His direction, trust His timing, and hold fast to His promises.

## **The Deception of Hopelessness**

To be without hope is to be without God. Without hope we are lost and in darkness, open to deception. Hopelessness is a lie that says there's nothing good to look forward to and life is void of meaning and purpose. A person who feels hopeless doesn't expect good things in their future, and they might believe there's no solution to their problems. They might expect only more pain, disappointment, or emptiness. People who lose hope give up and quit. They stop trying and believing. For some, it can lead to deep depression or even suicide.

This is the ultimate deception—that there is no hope. If we don't give up, we will find that God always comes through. He promises to never leave us or forsake us no matter how we feel. He wants to help us in our unbelief and restore our hope and faith. He wants us to internalize His truth in Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." God's word is His promise. He is the God of hope and there is a hopeful future for every single person He created.

## **Enduring Hope: A Spiritual Lifeline**

To have hope in God is to have a strong and steady anchor for our souls that enables us to make it through the storms of life and trust that He is able to sustain us and work all things together for the good (Romans 8:28). The promised hope we have in God is "an unbreakable spiritual lifeline, reaching past all appearances right to the very presence of God" (Hebrews 6:19, Msg.). It doesn't matter how seemingly hopeless a person or situation might seem. With God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26). Is there anything too hard for the Lord? (Genesis 18:14). Knowing that He is an omnipotent (all-powerful, omniscient (all-knowing) and omnipresent (always-present) God, we can be assured that our hope in Him is truly our spiritual lifeline by which He demonstrates His almighty power and purpose.